

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Vestry Meeting Minutes
September 8, 2025

PRESENT: The Rev. Caleb Lee (Rector), Barbara Ellington Banks, Tori Cannon, Karen Day, Mait DuBois, Carol Field (Rector's Warden), Steve Haughey (People's Warden), Anne O'Dell (Clerk), Cecelia Peers, Scott Sheble (Treasurer), David Tousignant, Frank Wolf

ABSENT: Steve Bucci, Denise Sheehan

OPENING PRAYER: Fr. Lee called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and introduced the newest vestry member, Mait DuBois. Fr. Lee shared a prayer in recognition of the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

APPROVAL OF AUGUST MEETING MINUTES: A motion was introduced by Karen Day and seconded by Carol Field to approve the Vestry Meeting Minutes from August 11, 2025. The motion passed unanimously, and the minutes were approved as written.

RECTOR'S REPORT: We welcome Mait DuBois to the vestry. He joins the class of 2027, filling the vacancy created by a former vestry member's resignation due to relocation. Summer worship attendance was steady, with approximately 90% of the faithful continuing to attend services. Many churches hold a rally day in early September, welcoming members back after a summer hiatus, but we have not found it necessary to do so given our strong summer attendance. The program year has begun: Sunday school is back in session with good attendance, and the choir has resumed its weekly rehearsal schedule as it gears up for a busy season. The first of two scheduled Choral Evensong services is Sept 14 with High Tea to follow, the second is Feb 1, 2026, honoring new inductees to the 1858 Circle. Vestry members are encouraged to attend. EYC kicked off its program year last night. Isaac McDowell has a great year planned for our youth. As reported last month, the WAY, a newly formed group for Wilmington area youth from all the local Episcopal churches, has plans to hold quarterly events, including a retreat at Trinity Center in November.

Hospitality is back with some minor changes. On Sunday mornings after the 8:00am service, full breakfast will no longer be served; instead, we will offer pastries and coffee at the "Koffe Klatch." The Ministries Fair for adults is scheduled for September 28 and will be headed up by Karen Day and Lisa Sanders-Park. The theme is the same as this year's stewardship theme: Tell Out My Soul. The fair's primary purpose is to celebrate all that we are doing and show parishioners, especially newcomers, the many ways to become involved.

October's vestry meeting will take place via Zoom as Fr. Lee will be at Trinity Center on diocesan business.

There has been significant movement on the building front. The construction committee, which is made up of 3 contractors who worship at St. Paul's, has met with Mona Clites, toured the church, met with Gray Hudson, and consulted as a team to identify four contractors. RFPs were sent out and to date we have received three responses. It is hoped that construction will begin next summer, when there are the least number of disruptions. The construction committee, through the Long-Range Planning Committee, is expected to recommend a contractor to the Vestry for approval in November. The finance committee and treasurer are exploring ways to move forward with construction financing if it becomes necessary. (For additional details, see Committee Reports: Capital Campaign/ Building Update.)

Nancy Bobo, Don's wife, died August 30, 2025. Fr. Lee has met with the family, and the funeral will be September 27 @ 10:30 am. Please keep Don and his family in your prayers.

James Green continues to be a welcome addition to St. Paul's. He is progressing with his training and will be teaching an adult formation series this fall on the Book of Common Prayer. As previously reported, James does not want to be paid for his work as a deacon at St. Paul's, but per the diocese, we will pay him a minimal amount and cover his diocesan travel expenses so that he can qualify for the pension plan.

Fr. Lee and Fr. Michael Singer (Interim at St. Andrews On-the-Sound) have agreed to cover for each other in pastoral care emergencies. If, for example, Fr. Lee is out of town and a critical need arises, Fr. Singer will address the matter and vice versa. Compensation will be \$30/visit to cover travel and mileage expenses.

Security measures are changing at the 8am service. Our Sunday Sexton, Christian Bridges will now lock the ramp doors at 8:05 and put out the sign directing people to the front entrance of the church. Christian will remain in the narthex during the service. The ramp doors will be unlocked at 8:30 am for the benefit of choir members and others arriving early to serve or participate in faith formation classes.

Fr. Lee received a letter from Forward Movement inviting St. Paul's to participate in a 3-part survey. We were identified as one among a select group of Episcopal churches that has gone against the trend of declining attendance. The goal of the study is to find out what is being done in congregations like ours that the larger Episcopal church can learn from. While vestry approval is not required, all present supported moving forward.

Bishop Henry Parsley, former Bishop of Alabama, will be our guest preacher on October 19 for stewardship.

We need to fill two openings for lay deanery representatives. Fr. Lee will check first with the convention delegates and alternates to gauge their interest, and if there are no takers, the matter will be revisited at the October meeting.

PEOPLE'S WARDEN REPORT-AUGUST 2025 *(submitted in writing prior to the meeting)*

Parish Hall and Church

- We have experienced an uptick in HVAC service issues due to the summer heat and its' strain on our systems.
- SEHVAC installed a new compressor on HP-1B on August 8.
- Units #2&3 and #10 were out of service on August 5. SEHVAC investigated while HP-1B compressor was being installed. Frank Patz of SEHVAC was on site Wednesday August 20 to review the issues with units 2&3 and 10. Units 2&3 are not producing cold air after a recent service call. Technician returned on Thursday August 21 to inspect units 2/3 and found the system was left in test mode. They are now back online and AC is working again. Unit 10 is not draining properly due to an issue with the unit settling incorrectly. Waiting for SEHVAC to provide a recommendation.
- The Blessing Box has shifted on its side. A deeper hole and more secure footing (concrete) have been dug.
- The parking lot spaces were re-striped on Monday August 18. Handicap stencil has been purchased and will be painted next month.
- Silkwood was contacted on August 29 as a follow up on the peeling paint on the East and West Parish Hall windows.
- All unsold goods from the June Yard Sale were picked up by the Castle Street Rescue Mission on Tuesday August 26.
- Work continues on our Telecom Network review and layout.

Ormond Center

- The ceiling lights in the Admin and Finance Offices have been replaced to reduce the glare.
- The exterior of the Ormond Center was power washed on August 18.

Hospitality/Activities

- Fr. Michael Singer send-off on Sunday August 10.
- Blessing of the Backpacks on Sunday August 24.

Grant Update

- A Diocesan Grant for replacing the Market Street Doors was submitted on August 27. Grant will request new doors and installation hardware. A planned glass and metal canopy over the doors will be a 2026 Capital Expense request.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Scott Sheble presented the Monthly Treasurer's Report, which compares the proposed annual budget for 2025 to actual year-to-date figures.

For the eight months ending August 31, 2025, St. Paul's reported total income of \$609,374, which is 62.2% of the total annual income budgeted for 2025 (\$979,000). Total expenses for the same eight months amounted to \$600,552, which is 61.3% of the total annual expenses budgeted for 2025 (\$979,000). Net income as of August 31, 2025, was \$8,822.

Other account balances as of August 31, 2025, were reported as follows:

Wells Fargo Investments (Endowment Fund)	\$1,029,680
First Carolina Reserves	\$99,581
Wells Fargo Special Gifts	\$93,763

Scott also reviewed the status of the capital campaign as of August 31, 2025:

Total Pledges (2024-2027)	\$1,460,823
Total Gifts	629,513
Total Pledges & Gifts	\$2,090,336
\$2.5M	84%

We have raised approximately 84% of the \$2.5 million needed for Phase 1 & Phase 2 renovations. The outstanding pledge payments were as follows: \$5,721 for 2024; \$193,471 for 2025; \$367,059 for 2026; and \$16,667 for 2027. Letters to those with outstanding pledge payments from 2024 have been sent with hopes that the majority will be paid.

Since its inception in 2023 through August 31, 2025, the capital campaign has collected gifts, pledges and interest totaling \$1,562,141; total expenses amount to \$185,864 for net income of \$1,376,277.

The finance office has completed the migration from Church Windows to Realm. This fall we are hoping to unveil Realm to the congregation which will allow parishioners to view their giving history and receive their statements online thereby saving the church postage costs and processing time. There is some additional work that needs to be done on the membership side, but eventually there will also be a membership portal, providing access to the directory as well as other features. The capabilities of this software are immense, but at present we are doing what we can with the staff and volunteers that we have. Special thanks to Judy Wilson, Bob Crafts, Diane Matz-Kane, Lynne Rooks, and Karen Day who all worked to make Realm a reality.

With no further discussion, the Monthly Treasurer's Report was unanimously accepted.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: *(submitted in writing prior to the meeting)*

Membership: The Membership Committee is co-chaired by Karen Day and Lisa Sanders-Park, working closely with Head Usher and Head Greeter. We welcome newcomers and guide them through the process to membership. Membership also plans events to help old-timers forge new connections and to embrace newcomers into the church family.

PERIOD: 1/1/2025 TO 9/8/2025

Transfers In Since January 1, 2025: 16

Prospects

Definition: Newcomers or visitors who have signed guest book or filled out a visitor card

of Current Prospects: 61, needs to be culled based on usher/greeter input about attendance

of Active Prospects: 17 (attend regularly and some even serve on committees)

Events

- Monthly dinner groups: 40 signed up and assigned to 4 dinner groups. The season was kicked off at the Erways' on May 18. The four dinner groups have leaders and have met in June, July, and August. Next dinner dates have been set. These groups run themselves with each group deciding date and who hosts next at conclusion of each dinner.
- Occasional pop-up dinners: First pop-up dinners were held April 27 in three homes (Karen Day, Lynda and Ron Miller, Brian and Lisa Sanders-Park). We did not get enough hosts for the August 17 dinners to be held

in homes, so instead 26 people met in four restaurants: Covey, Henry's, Caprice, and Cape Fear Seafood/Leland.

- Newcomers' Social: Lisa Sanders-Park and Karen Day need to plan for October. Since Fall 2024, we have 22 new members to welcome and 60 prospects.

Capital Campaign/Building Update: On 9/2/2025 Mona Clites reported the following: In June, Darren Jones, Rob Nipper and William Gwathmey were assigned with Mona Clites to continue to the next steps in the Long-Range Plan. Gray Hudson has completed a set of design development drawings as his next phase of drawings which are more detailed about the project and include details from engineers who have visited the site. The drawings were shared with the committee members for their review and understanding of the project. Mona met with them to describe the history of the project. The team took a tour of the church with Caleb Lee and Steve Haughey using the drawings to understand more fully.

There was one meeting with Gray Hudson to introduce them and preliminarily discuss the next steps to hiring a contractor that will be working with the committee and Gray. The committee has developed and refined an RFP to send to interested qualified contractors and will conduct interviews to make a presentation and then recommend to Vestry the contractor. On the recommendation of the committee members and based on their knowledge, four contractors were contacted to see if they were interested in the project. Three have indicated that they are and will be sent the RFP in early September. A timeline has been developed to work with Gray and conduct interviews in early October.

Stewardship: Nothing significant to report.

Community Ministries: Nothing significant to report.

Human Resources: The St. Paul's HR Committee met on Friday, September 5th, to finalize changes to the HR policy document. The changes include language on departures as well as inclusion of the Treasurer to the HR Committee. The modified Policy will be presented to the Rector next week and once approved by the Rector, the policy will be submitted to the Vestry for approval at the October Vestry meeting.

Children, Youth & Family:

September events include:

- EYC Kickoff on September 7th at 5:00pm in the Parish Hall! Parents and students are encouraged to attend this event to discuss the EYC calendar year and to ask questions.
- EYC Outing on Sunday, September 14th to the Cargo District Food Court & Arcade
- September 18th-21st: "Happening" at the Trinity Center
- EYC Coffee & Conversations begin on September 7th and continue on Sundays from 9:30 - 10:15am in the Gym Conference Room for students in grades 6-12. This is an opportunity to study God's word and to explore ways to apply it to our lives.
- Children's Sunday School begins on September 7th from 9:30-10:15am in the Children's Wing. "Touch & See" is offered to Preschool and Kindergarten children. "Weaving God's Promises" is available to students in 1st through 5th grades.
- Children's Choir also begins on September 7th at 11:45am. This choir is open to children of all ages and experiences.

Looking ahead:

- October 5th: Blessing of the Animals
- October 12th: Wilmington Area Youth Event at Airline
- October 19th: Children, Youth & Families Cookout
- October 26th: HallowEYC
- November 7th-9th: Wilmington Area Youth Fall Retreat at Trinity Center--an event that will include St. James, St. Andrews on the Sound, Church of the Servant and Christ Church in Elizabeth City
- November 16th: EYC Outing

NEW BUSINESS:

Crafters Silent Auction Fundraiser: The Saturday Morning Crafters are seeking approval to host a silent auction to raise funds for the Blessing Box. Items will go on display and bidding will begin November 23, the day of the Great Thanksgiving Parish Potluck. Items will remain on display through the first Sunday of Advent, and bidding will close after Advent Lessons & Carols.

David Tousignant made a motion to approve the fundraiser and its support of the Blessing Box. The motion was seconded by Cecelia Peers and unanimously approved.

Future of the Long-Range Planning Committee: The vestry is being asked to consider the future of the Long-Range Planning Committee (LRPC). Is it time to disband and regroup to form a Construction Committee? At present the Construction Committee is a subcommittee of the LRPC, which is cumbersome for doing business. In addition, many of the original members of the LRPC are no longer active at St. Paul's. Do we need renewal and what should it look like? A suggestion was made that the Construction Committee and the remaining members of the LRPC should determine an appropriate path forward and return to the vestry for approval. We will continue this discussion in October.

Requesting \$600 from the Endowment Board: The Endowment Board's Policies & Procedures provide for the use of Endowment Funds to help pay for the church's annual audit. Since the Endowment Fund accounts for over half the budget and was audited, the vestry is requesting \$600 from the Endowment Board to cover half the audit cost. A motion was made by Barbara Banks, seconded by Scott Sheble, and unanimously approved.

Nominating Committee Charge: Fr. Lee formally asked the four outgoing vestry members (Carol Field, Steve Haughey, Denise Sheehan, and David Tousignant) to form a Nominating Committee to discuss potential nominees to fill the vestry positions that they will vacate in January 2026.

OLD BUSINESS:

The vestry's request to the Endowment Board for \$1000 to cover the cost of shared expenses for the 1858 Circle Choral Evensong (2024) remains pending.

With no additional business before the vestry, the meeting was adjourned at 7:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne O'Dell,
Clerk of the Vestry