

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Vestry Retreat
Official Meeting Minutes
April 13, 2026

PRESENT: The Rev. Caleb Lee (Rector), The Rev. James Green, Barbara Ellington Banks (Rector's Warden), Steve Bucci, Tori Cannon, Karen Day, Mait DuBois (People's Warden), Shelley Jonik, Anne O'Dell (Clerk), Cecelia Peers, Scott Sheble (Treasurer), Rhonda Stroud, Leon Tillery, Brad Van Amberg, Frank Wolf

OPENING PRAYER: Fr. Lee called the meeting to order at 5:58 pm and opened with the Collect for the Universal Church, prayed on Good Friday, at the Easter Vigil, and at every ordination.

APPROVAL OF MARCH MEETING MINUTES: Karen Day made a motion, seconded by Tori Cannon, to approve vestry meeting minutes dated March 9, 2026. The minutes were unanimously approved as written.

RECTOR'S REPORT: Worship attendance rebounded after a brief decline in early Lent. The numbers were strong for the second half of Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. Good Friday and Easter Vigil attendances were up. On Easter Sunday attendance at 8 am remained unchanged from last year at 31; at 10:30 am every seat was taken and folding chairs were brought in to accommodate an estimated 350-375 worshippers. The one service that was marginally down compared to last year was Maundy Thursday, perhaps because the Schola Cantorum sang, reducing the number of choir members in attendance.

With deep gratitude, Fr. Lee reported that St. Paul's recently received a \$50,000 unrestricted gift from an anonymous donor. The funds were placed in the Special Gifts account. Flores & Foley was on campus Tuesday, March 10, 2026, to inspect the church and parish house roofs. In a report dated March 19, the company detailed its findings and proposed a comprehensive plan to address the problems, which included:

- Remove and replace damaged/missing slate shingles; reset slate shingles that have slid out of place.
- Remove exterior metal conduit that poses a potential threat to the Agnus Dei window.
- Remove rust and repaint metal roof stack.
- Seal exposed fasteners with Titebond Roof Sealant.
- Clean stained areas on roof with soft wash detergent.

The total cost of this project is \$30,117.83 and reflects the savings generated by the planned replacement of damaged and missing slates with slates found in the church basement. Fr. Lee and People's Warden, Mait DuBois, are recommending that we move forward with Flores & Foley as they are a preferred vendor with a good performance record at St. Paul's. In addition, Flores & Foley is the only local roofing contractor qualified to repair our slate roof. Additional bids would have to be pursued in the Triangle area which would belabor the process and prove burdensome to St. Paul's. The Executive Committee is recommending that we use a portion of the funds from the above noted anonymous gift of \$50K to pay for the roof repairs.

Karen Day made a motion to approve the contract with Flores & Foley and use funds from the \$50K anonymous gift to pay for the roof repairs. The motion was seconded by Brad Van Amberg and unanimously approved by the vestry.

The Estate of Mark Tedesco has been settled, and as sole beneficiary, St. Paul's received a check for \$157,330.74, with no restrictions on its use. Special thanks to Don Bobo, who was instrumental in helping Mark get his affairs in order several years ago. Don continued to serve as a mentor for Mark, and after his death, Don served as executor for Mark's estate. Settlement of the estate was anticipated this year, and \$50,000 of the proceeds have been earmarked for the operating budget. From the remainder of the funds, Fr. Lee suggested that the vestry consider a gift of 4-5% to the Endowment Fund and a memorial gift to honor Mark. Several ideas for a memorial gift were discussed but no decision was made.

The Market Street façade of the church needs attention. Swan Masonry Company submitted a proposal dated March 30, 2026, to repair, repoint and paint the exterior south wall and to repair, replaster and repaint the interior south wall around the Market Street doors and inside the stairwell to the choir loft. The total cost of the project is \$34,850. Stress fractures and voids in the existing exterior stucco, combined with deterioration of the joint work, need to be repaired to prevent further water incursion. Efforts to secure a second bid are underway but may prove difficult. Dale Haynes is a preferred masonry contractor among general contractors in the Wilmington area, which limits his availability. It may be possible for our general contractor Chambliss & Rabil to subcontract the façade repairs to Dale Haynes as part of our construction project, but that is TBD. The façade repairs need to be completed before the installation of the canopy over the Market Street doors. Last week, the canopy design was approved by Wilmington's Historic Preservation Commission. Thanks to Mait DuBois for his work on this project.

Archivist Ellen Weig discovered that St. Paul's owns three contiguous burial plots in the historic Whispering Pines section of Oleander Gardens. These plots were given to the church by the Burwell family in the 1980s and currently retail for \$14,995/plot. The gift stipulates that the plots may be used at the rector's discretion or they may be sold. If we choose to sell the plots, church canons do not require diocesan permission to sell. The administrator at Oleander Gardens recommended FaceBook Marketplace to sell the plots. Another option is to offer them for sale to parishioners in the Enews or bulletin. The resale value is at least \$10,000/plot, which could cover a large part of the façade repairs. The only potential cost to the church (depending on the negotiated deal) could be a Quitclaim Deed(s) at \$695/sale.

Scott Sheble made a motion to sell the three plots at Oleander Gardens; it was seconded by Frank Wolf and unanimously approved by the vestry.

The Market Street doors will be installed on Thursday, April 16. We will also be getting new exterior doors for the 16th Street entrance to the narthex, costing \$15,000 and funded by an anonymous donor. The grant team's request to the Catherine Kennedy Home Foundation for \$10,000 to support capital campaign improvements for senior accessibility was denied.

Fr. Lee introduced two Endowment Board items:

1. Each year, the vestry requests \$12,000 from the Lehto Organ & Building Maintenance Fund to help cover the church's energy costs. The organ requires a controlled environment to prevent damage and maintain tuning, and it is estimated that these needs account for about 70% of the church's total energy use. With energy prices rising, the finance office projects total 2026 energy costs of \$24,000–\$25,000, with organ-related costs of roughly \$18,000.
2. The Kauno Lehto Scholarship Fund awards \$1,000 each year to any St. Paul's college student who applies; it is not based on merit or financial need. Under the fund's terms, the vestry may consider whether continuing these \$1,000 scholarships is the best use of the distribution or whether it should support another purpose, such as funding Children, Youth & Families programming. Any change requires the approval of the Endowment Board, but first the vestry needs to ask the Board as the fiduciary to explore and discuss this matter.

Leon Tillery made a motion to ask the Endowment Board to (1) increase the annual disbursement from the Lehto Organ & Building Maintenance Fund to \$18,000 to subsidize the electricity for the maintenance of the organ, and (2) examine the Kauno Lehto Scholarship Fund and how it best serves our youth. The motion was seconded by Steve Bucci and unanimously approved by the vestry.

We have extended an offer to Nick Kohlmann to join St. Paul's as a full-time associate priest, Nick has accepted and an announcement will be made, pending the completion of the Letter of Agreement by the diocese. Nick was the search committee's top choice; he is very qualified for the position. Nick will be ordained to the diaconate on May 2 in Kinston, and six months later he will be ordained to the priesthood. Nick is scheduled to begin at St. Paul's on June 14.

Fr. Lee advised the vestry that he had to call the police after staff and on-site contractors experienced threatening encounters with an individual who has apparent mental health and/or drug problems. Fr. Lee did not make this decision lightly and not before offering the person assistance, which he refused. Further research revealed that the individual has a criminal history, and Fr. Lee has an obligation to protect staff and parishioners. The police issued the individual, [REDACTED], a No Trespassing Order for one year. A photo of [REDACTED] was circulated, and vestry members were advised to call the police if he is spotted on the church campus.

Fr. Lee has been nominated to be a delegate at General Convention which will be in Phoenix, Arizona from July 3 – 8, 2027. Fr. Lee also announced that he will be away next week for continuing education, first at the diocesan clergy conference and then at the Mockingbird Conference in New York City. He plans to attend the ordination of the new bishop in New Bern on May 23, and he will be on vacation from June 3-11.

Isaac McDowell has organized another fundraiser for the youth mission trip to Glory Ridge. On Wednesday, May 27 from 6-8 pm, Fr. Lee will be performing along with some other members of the parish at Bowstring Burgers & Brewery in Wilmington. According to policy, fundraisers need vestry approval. Cecelia Peers made a motion to approve the fundraiser for Glory Ridge, featuring the Rector & Company in concert at Bowstring on May 27. The motion was seconded by Karen Day and unanimously approved by the vestry.

PEOPLE'S WARDEN REPORT – MARCH 2026 *(Submitted in writing prior to the meeting.)*

Parish Hall & Church

- Sentinel replaced 2 fire detectors in Church.
- Completed sandblasting, welding and painting the first level of the fire escape. Total cost was below the vestry-approved amount.
- Flores & Foley flew drone over church campus to evaluate shingle damage and obtained cost estimate.
- Changed all HVAC air filters, repaired leaking pan on church air-handler and replaced water-soaked insulation.
- Replaced 3 lights in church over west choir. Sanded Parish Hall window sills, will stain and varnish.
- Pressure washed the 16th St retaining walls to remove the mold and dirt. Iron stain remains.
- Bob Belaustegui and I met with Darren Jones to better understand how existing comm. systems will be protected or moved during construction. He wants another meeting with all affected parties and vendors.

Ormond Center

- GNP repainting front door and picture window frame.
- New scanner installed in Lynne's office.

Grant Update

- Catherine Kennedy Home Foundation Grant - \$10K (accessibility) has been submitted and it was denied.

Looking Ahead

- Market St doors have been painted and varnished. Doors will be installed after Easter.
- On 4/9/26, attending a Historical Preservation meeting to get permit for the Market St Canopy.
- Replacing 16th Street narthex double doors will commence in mid-April. A donor has agreed to pay for replacing the doors. Stein & Stevens submitted a \$11,000 cost estimate (Total cost = \$14,000).
- Swan Masonry offered a turnkey price to repair the Market St exterior wall and repair the interior stucco. If decision is made to repair Market St walls, we will delay installing canopy until repairs are completed.
- Unless vestry approves having a professional company repair & repaint the red doors, the GNP will attempt to repair doors starting with the least damaged doors. Repainting will extend the doors and is cheaper than buying new doors. Bid price for professional repairing and painting = \$7,795.
- Based on drone pictures, Flores & Foley estimated 20-25 missing roof shingles with a large number of loose shingles that need to be repaired. The price is a turnkey price and includes: manlift, removing loose electric conduit near the Agnus Dei stain glass window and chemically treat all mold from the roofs. They will provide 2MM liability insurance and disposal of damaged shingles. Estimated cost - \$30,000. Installing two chimney caps is not included in the price.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE: The vestry welcomed Mona Clites, Chair of the Construction Committee, and Darren Jones, committee member, at 7:08 pm. Mona began with an update of the required asbestos testing: it is still in

process and once completed a report will be issued and shared with the vestry. At this point in the design process, more detailed information and analysis has led to some minor modifications in the plans.

- On the main level, the sinks and toilets in men’s and women’s restrooms have been moved from the north wall to the south wall which requires the relocation of the doors. The entrance to the women’s room will now be from the gathering space, not in the hallway between the church and parish hall. The entrance to the men’s room will still be from the hallway.
- Because of the presence of a load bearing wall which is too costly to remove, the nursery will occupy the space currently occupied by The Source, and The Source will need to be relocated to a location yet TBD. Given the nursery’s proximity to the restrooms, there was discussion about whether to add a bathroom inside the nursery space. A full ADA bathroom is too large, but a small bathroom could work and would meet child safety guidelines. Several former teachers on the vestry spoke in support of adding a bathroom.
- In the gathering space outside the parish hall, a column will need to be added where the NE corner of the library currently stands. Reducing the size of the library to create the new women’s restroom will expose an existing support post. Removing the post is a complicated and expensive proposition. The most practical and economical solution is to build a column structure around the post. It will be trimmed out to be aesthetically pleasing, and it could possibly function as a bulletin board for church announcements.
- Plans to build a vesting room that connects to the west sacristy are proving to be more complicated and more costly than initially anticipated. If taken off the table, the church could save approximately \$250,000 and apply the savings to another part of the construction project.
- The size of the elevator will be smaller than previously planned. It will still accommodate a wheelchair and one or two additional people. As a result, the storage spaces near the elevator on all three floors will be larger.

Leon Tillery made a motion to accept (1) the proposed design changes to the men’s and women’s restroom, (2) the addition of a small bathroom to the nursery, (3) the addition of a column to the gathering space, (4) the removal of the vesting room from the construction plan, and (5) the reduced size of the elevator. Steve Bucci seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by the vestry, with no further discussion.

Timeline update: The structural engineers will be done with their work by the end of this week. By next Wednesday, April 22, the architect will have final drawings to deliver to Chambliss & Rabil, who will have from April 23 to May 13 to complete final cost estimates. On May 14 and 15, the construction committee will meet with the architect and review the contractor’s proposal. The construction committee will then present the contractor’s proposal to the vestry during the week of May 18, and hopefully we can be under contract by the week of May 25. This week there are plans for a meeting with the rector, contractor, architect, and the construction committee to discuss scheduling in greater depth. Construction will likely begin by the end of June and is projected to last 9 months to a year.

Mona Clites and Darren Jones completed their report at 7:45 pm and left the vestry meeting.

TREASURER’S REPORT: Scott Sheble presented the Monthly Treasurer’s Report, which compares the proposed annual budget for 2026 to actual year-to-date figures.

For the three months ending March 31, 2026, St. Paul’s reported total income of \$297,096 which is 27.8% of the total annual income budgeted for 2026 (\$1,068,275). Total expenses for the same period amounted to \$235,462, which is 22.0% of the total annual expenses budgeted for 2026 (\$1,068,275). Net income for the three months ending March 31, 2026, was \$61,635.

Other account balances as of March 31, 2026, were reported as follows:

Wells Fargo Investments (Endowment Fund)	\$1,021,942
First Carolina Reserves	\$101,446
Wells Fargo Special Gifts	\$109,333

Scott also reviewed the status of the capital campaign as of March 31, 2026:

Total Pledges (2024-2027+)	\$1,644,691
Total Gifts	\$652,718
Total Pledges & Gifts	\$2,297,409
\$2.5M	92%

We have raised approximately 92% of the \$2.5 million needed for Phase 1 & Phase 2 renovations. Outstanding pledge payments were as follows: \$0 for 2024; \$8449 for 2025; \$305,230 for 2026; and \$166,667 for 2027+. Efforts continue to collect outstanding pledges for 2025; the anticipated collection rate is 90%, as \$5200 had to be written off. We are considering a mini campaign to reach out to new members and people who made one-time gifts in 2024.

Since its inception in 2023 through March 31, 2026, the capital campaign has collected gifts, pledges and interest totaling \$1,901,820; total expenses amount to \$228,710 for net income of \$1,673,110. The bulk of this money is kept in a money market account at Wells Fargo.

The 2025 Audit Report was clean; it found that we are in compliance with the Diocese Contract Audit procedures and the financial reports for the year ended December 31, 2025, fairly present the financial conditions of the church. Thanks to Lynne Rooks.

With no further discussion, a motion was made by Karen Day to accept the Monthly Treasurer's Report as well as the 2025 Audit Report. With no second required and no further discussion, the vestry voted unanimously to accept both reports.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Stewardship: We have exceeded our internal goal of \$650,000, with pledges from 146 households amounting to \$653,000.

Membership: Nothing significant to report.

Community Ministries: Steve Bucci

St. Paul's parishioners once again participated in a Lenten project, making Easter Baskets for foster kids. This was our third annual participation in this program to support Foster Pantry. The project was organized, set up, advertised, and operationally executed by Cecelia Peers and Michael Jonik. Thanks to their leadership and the willingness of our congregation to pitch in, St. Paul's was able to provide Easter Baskets to 60 foster children in the Wilmington area! Thanks so much to Cecelia and Michael!

Human Resources:

Year-end reviews for Lynne Rooks and Jeanne Fitzpatrick were successfully completed.

NEW BUSINESS:

Vestry Action Items: Vestry approval was required on a number of items. For clarity, votes were recorded within the context of the above report.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

With no additional business before the vestry, the meeting was adjourned at 8:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne O'Dell,
Clerk of the Vestry