

**St James Episcopal Church**

**Vestry Retreat Meeting**

**September 13,2025**

**Present:**

Barbara Bateman, Ryan Collins, Gene Goff, Sharon Hansen, Kathy Hutchinson, Tanya Millet, Chris Mycek, Candy Nyce, Geoff Pinney Sue Rice, Fr. Mike Sowards, Peggy Spinnozzi, Janice Tabbut

**Absent:**

Mark Schultz

The Meeting was opened with a prayer by Father Mike.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Not applicable, as this was planning meeting for 2026.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Stewardship Campaign – Since parishioners have been generous with the capital campaign and the economic unease some people may be experiencing, Father Mike will ask for pledges to remain at the 2025 level for 2026. Father Mike will pick the theme for the stewardship campaign.
2. Father Mike provided all vestry members with a Vestry Resource Guide published by the Episcopal Church Foundation.
3. Members broke into Committee teams and then reported on 2026 priorities:

Committee	Members	Responsibilities
Education	Father Mike and Kathy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Lauren continues her responsibility for Christian education. She has done an amazing job with the curriculum which 7 other churches have adopted.</li><li>2. Father Mike would like to grow adult education and increase participation in Christ and Coffee and Theology on Zoom. We may look to a different approach to market the meetings, including participants discussing their experiences.</li><li>3. Father Mike to hold a monthly rector’s forum between the 8:00 and 10:00 services.</li><li>4. Kathy will create a vestry cheat sheet to assist with vestry transition for new members, including responsibility of maintaining committee binders. This will be specific to St. James.</li></ol>
Outreach House	Barbara and Candy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Continue to increase visibility</li><li>2. Continue to apply for grants and hold fundraising efforts, including raffle baskets</li><li>3. Increase physical donations, possibly starting a “1 family, 1 donation” message for the basket outside Father Mike’s office.</li></ol>

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		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Increase awareness of donation needs by placing a shopping list in Happenings</li> <li>5. Looking at placing film on windows by the refrigerators and freezers to help with efficiency</li> </ol>
Buildings and Grounds	Gene and Geoff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue bid process for new jobs</li> <li>2. Manage preferred contractor designation list. Proposing new contractor in October for tree management. A diseased hemlock near the entrance to the church needs to be removed.</li> <li>3. Requesting that “if you see something, say something” form be a link on the website and also in happenings.</li> <li>4. Resume quarterly building and grounds advisory meetings to prioritize efforts</li> <li>5. Provide dates and manage blue jean Sunday for fall and spring clean-ups</li> </ol>
New Member Ministry	Chris and Sharon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Looking at ways to acknowledge new members</li> <li>2. Looking to increase membership:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Welcome basket for new residents to the area. Need to establish budget for next year.</li> <li>b. Setting up a table at community festivals</li> <li>c. Set up a separate table when Outreach House is set up in grocery stores</li> <li>d. Explore magnets for new and existing members</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
Rector’s Warden	Sue	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue identifying website pages for update</li> <li>2. Add communications to Happenings</li> <li>3. Provide assistance to fellowship when needed</li> <li>4. Assist Father Mike as needed</li> </ol>
Fellowship	Peggy and Tanya	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Looking at ways to assist Lauren with youth events, possibly utilizing sign-up Genius for larger events like the Easter Egg Hunt and Trunk or Treat</li> <li>2. Looking to create some new events:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Possibly “Souper Bowl” Sunday, but need to make sure it does not interfere with any youth fundraiser for the pilgrimage</li> <li>b. Mini-Golf Tournament. Possibly real golf tournament with Bill Kilgour’s assistance.</li> <li>c. Chili-Cookoff fundraiser in January</li> <li>d. Look into Reading Phils or Iron Pigs outing</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>3. ECW Soup Sale in February</li><li>4. Foyers if enough interest – 2 hosted at residences, 2 at restaurants</li></ul>
Communications	Janice & Ryan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Looking at putting together a list of businesses with 3 sections:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Vendors the church uses</li><li>b. Parishioner’s businesses</li><li>c. Businesses recommended by parishioners</li></ul></li><li>2. Provided a social media/internet strategy to increase presence with ongoing growth and optimization component. Adult and youth volunteers will be needed to assist:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Months 1-2 → Facebook and Instagram</li><li>b. Months 3-4 → Expand YouTube channel</li><li>c. Months 5-6 → TikTok</li><li>d. Ongoing → analytics, seasonal ads, outreach house showcase, digital events</li></ul></li></ul>

A **motion** was unanimously passed to adjourn the meeting.

The Meeting was closed with a prayer by Father Mike.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Hutchinson

Vestry Secretary