

St James Episcopal Church

Vestry Meeting

November 18, 2025

Present:

Barbara Bateman, Ryan Collins, Gene Goff, Sharon Hansen, Kathy Hutchinson, Chris Mycek, Candy Nyce, Geoff Pinney, Sue Rice, Mark Schultz, Peggy Spinnozzi, Janice Tabbut

Absent:

Tanya Millet, Fr. Mike Sowards

The Meeting was opened with a prayer by Chris.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. A **motion** was made and unanimously approved to accept the October 2025 vestry minutes as written.
2. Between meetings, no e-votes were taken

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Financial update
 - a. Mark reviewed the September 2025 financials. We had a \$28.3K loss, driven by capital campaign spending. Capital campaign pledges thru September were \$293.4K, with \$173.3K collected. Income and expenses were higher than budget, both driven by the capital campaign. The Church Foundation showed a gain of \$1.7K, with a \$9.2K distribution. Our new short-term investment account has a balance of \$45K. A **motion** was made and unanimously approved to accept the September financial reports.
 - b. Mark will distribute the October financials and would like a subsequent e-vote to approve.
2. Advertising
 - a. Janice indicated that Colonial Theater has raised their rates and no longer offers a non-profit discount. The new rates are \$200 per month and \$1,000 for 6 months. A **motion** was made and unanimously approved to run a one month ad for the 12/14/25 – 1/13/25 period. The placement of the six month ad campaign will be discussed in the budget process.
 - b. Per prior discussion, advertising in Happenings will be broken out into 3 categories: Vendors used by the church, parishioners with a business, and vendors parishioners recommend. A **motion** was made and approved with 1 abstaining vote to place an announcement in the church bulletin regarding the upcoming ad campaign, with questions directed to Janice or Ryan.
3. Miscellaneous
 - a. Chicken BBQ – Janice asked people to keep an eye out for any sales on 12x12 canopies and to notify Gene. Gene would like to use this rather than a large tarp next year.
 - b. Janice asked that we look at the source of heat for the 2 bathrooms near the school entrance as they do not seem to be working.

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- c. No vestry meeting will be held in December.

Committee Updates:

1. Member Ministry

- a. Chris spoke with the publisher of "Living in Lower Providence", and she's agreed to do two articles on St. James next year, maybe February or March building into Holy Week. One story will be on our 325th anniversary regarding the USA's 250th birthday, and then another more personal piece TBD. She also provided advertising proposals for 1/4, 1/2, and full page ads. Full page ads would run \$2500 per month.
- b. Sharon and Chris have been working on identifying new people to the area, but the process is a little time intensive. They need assistance and will look to form a sub-committee to aid in the endeavor.
- c. A **motion** was made and unanimously passed to accept the member ministry report.

2. Outreach House – Candy provided a written report. A **motion** was made and unanimously passed to accept the Outreach House Report. Highlights:

- a. We now have 205 clients. The loss/uncertainty with SNAP benefits is a driving factor.
- b. The Scout drive was very successful – almost 14K pounds delivered. Other community organizations have also been donating.
- c. 212 mittens for children were received.
- d. A group of Pfizer employees completed a day of service and helped with fall cleaning.
- e. Tish moved her end date up to February. One person will take over the Dollar Tree ordering of personal hygiene supplies. We still need someone to take over the other order process. Candy will place an announcement in the bulletin.

3. Fellowship – Peggy provided an email report. A **motion** was made and unanimously passed to accept the fellowship report:

- a. Veterans in recovery dinner was held 11/12.
- b. Future scheduled events:
 - i. Christmas Pageant Reception – 12/21/25
 - ii. Christmas Eve Dinner - 12/24/25 – a suggestion was made to possibly open up the dinner to community members, but determining the amount of food required would be difficult
 - iii. Chili cook-off – 1/11/26
- c. A "Souper" Bowl Sunday is also being planned. Both the chili cook-off and this event may be fundraisers, via voting, to support fellowship activities.

4. Buildings and Grounds - A **motion** was made and unanimously passed to accept the Buildings and Grounds report. Items discussed:

- a. The window tinting at the Outreach House was completed.
- b. Window work at the history center is almost complete.

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- c. There are holes in the ground at the cemetery that will need to be filled. There is also a tree that will need to be removed next year.
- d. Barbara received a complaint from a neighbor regarding the bright lights and drainage that occurs into their property following the church parking lot repaving. Gene will look at setting timers to go off at 10pm, except for evenings when we will need later turn-off.
- e. Since they only billed when mowing occurred, TSF enterprises' landscaping contract is 6K below budget for the year. They have been using a vacuum to collect leaves on the properties. A **motion** was made and unanimously passed to skip Blue Jean Sunday this year and allow them to continue to vacuum the leaves up.

2026 BUDGET Planning:

Prior to the budget discussion, Mark informed the vestry that due to revenue, we most likely will be subject to outside audit, which he has budgeted for. As such, it is really important that we follow the defined process regarding reimbursements by obtaining vestry approval before expense reimbursements go to Mark.

During the meeting, we reviewed a budget proposal submitted by Mark. Modifications were made. Mark will distribute the revised budget via email, with an e-vote requested for completion the first week in December.

Proposal:

1. Line item revenue discussion:
 - a. The budgeted amount for Pledges/Donations is set conservatively. Due to the capital campaign drive, the stewardship drive will be asking for contributions at the 2025 level. Unlike 2025, we have no matching pledge commitment.
 - b. Hofsas trust remains conservatively invested.
 - c. The Church Foundation Income increase is primarily driven by the increased withdrawal rate to support the Capital Campaign Loan repayment.
2. Line Item expense discussion excluding compensation:
 - a. An additional \$250 for altar supplies (vestments) was requested.
 - b. Related to advertising, we included \$1K to run a 6-month ad at Colonial theater beginning mid-March. We also included \$5K to purchase 2 months of ads in "Living in Lower Providence". Both of these expenses are reflected in communications.
 - c. Pilgrimage funding was confirmed to be \$3,000.
 - d. \$7,500 was added to professional accounting fees or potential audit expenses.
 - e. A question was raised as to whether the capital campaign revenue needs to be included in the Sacred Gifts calculation. Mark will review.
3. Staff Salaries

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- a. Diocesan set COLA for 2025 is 3.7%. The diocese also provided data on minimum and average rector's compensation based on experience and church income levels. Father Mike is below minimum based on this criteria. The vestry agreed we need to rectify this and will embark on a path to bring him into the appropriate range.
 - b. A **motion** was made and unanimously approved to increase Father Mike's salary by 13.7%, Lauren's by 5.0%, and Sara's by 3.7% while also providing 2 weeks vacation. Additionally, the sexton's hourly rate was raised by \$0.50/hour and the nursery's hourly rate was raised \$2.00/hour.
4. Mark will send the revised budget to the vestry and a subsequent e-vote will be held.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Mark – distribute October financials and revised budget, both subject to e-votes. Also, determine with Father Mike if Sacred Gifts to the Diocese includes Capital Campaign revenue.
2. All –keep an eye out for 12x12 canopy sales
3. Janice – place announcement of advertising campaign in Happenings
4. Candy – place announcement of need for someone to inventory, order, and receive deliveries for Outreach House in lieu of Tish's departure
5. Sharon/Chris – define help needed with new member sub-committee
6. TBD – define vestry approval required for reimbursements per expense type

Vestry Meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7:30pm in Platt's Hall.

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

The Meeting was closed with a prayer by Chris.

Next Vestry Meeting – January 20, 2026

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Hutchinson

Vestry Secretary