

Grace Episcopal Church
Amherst, Massachusetts
Vestry Meeting Minutes
March 18, 2025

A meeting of the Vestry was convened by the Rev. Megan McDermott on March 18, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Libby Maxey (recording), Mike Gralenski, Rachel Blain, Patrick Kelly, Cara Crandall, Tim Hampson, Nate Marino, Carolyn Collette, Tom Dougherty, Katie Schendel, Donna Devine, and Sarah Chadwick

Absent: Tom Synan, Kathy Glime, Peter Sikowitz, and Joe Hazlip

Libby opened the meeting with a meditation in the form of a poem, touching on the centrality of home—in our lives and in Lenten psalmody—and the opportunity for a more vibrant or more daring faith in a time of discomfort or displacement. Then we continued with individual check-ins.

Clerk's Report

Everyone has received the full schedule of opening meditations for the Vestry meetings between now and the 2026 Annual Meeting.

February minutes: approved unanimously with no emendations (Rachel moved, Tom D. seconded).

Finance Report

Tim reports that pledges are ahead of budget. The Executive Committee has talked about stewardship follow-up, looking back to see who pledged last year, but hasn't pledged this year, for whatever reason. Expenses continue below budget except, unsurprisingly, fuel costs. Tom D. will have more to say about some ways in which we're hoping to curb those costs in future years. The report was accepted unanimously (Tom D. moved, Rachel seconded).

Rector's Report

Tom S. is currently on retreat at St. John the Evangelist in Cambridge, but will be back before Sunday. In his absence, Megan shared notes on his behalf. Since our last meeting, Caleb Ireland held listening sessions at Grace after both services to collect thoughts about selecting a new bishop for the search committee on which he's serving. Pancakes were served at coffee hour on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, thanks to Tom and Kitty Dogherty, Doug Moore, and Diana Rogers. Four services were held on Ash Wednesday, all well attended, including a full chapel at 5:00 p.m. Megan is hosting her Monday meditation series, with poem selections inspired by the great litany, but this coming week, Megan will move the meeting to Tuesday because of Margo McMahon's memorial on Monday. The Sunday morning book group, reading Bishop Budde's *How to Brave* is now taking place between services in the parish hall. The turnout has been good so far, but people are still welcome to join. Lent also marked the beginning of the latest fundraiser for St. Matthieu's, the school Grace Church supports in Haiti. We hope to build a

9th-grade classroom, and if all the envelopes currently hanging in the connector are taken and filled, then we'll have raised the necessary amount. On April 5, Megan will host a young adult (18-40) quiet Lenten retreat day for the diocese from 10:00-2:00. She has five people registered, with hopes for a few more before the day arrives.

Reminders: Margo McMahon's memorial is Monday, March 24 at 11:00 a.m. at Grace Church; Randy Wilburn's is Saturday, March 29 at 11:00, *not* at Grace, but at Immanuel Lutheran—parishioners may need to be reminded! Palm Sunday is April 13, and Easter is April 20.

Senior Warden's Report

Kathy is traveling, and will be back in a few weeks. In her absence, Tom D. raised again her question of whether we might hold at least some in-person Vestry meetings. It looks like we may do one or two after the academic year is over, but for now, we'll stay on Zoom.

Junior Warden's Report

Tom D. reports that we're supposed to have an annual inspection by the fire department, and although the fire department wasn't represented this time around, Dave Cody, a town inspector, checked our fire extinguishers and emergency lights. Some of the lights needed new batteries, but those have been ordered and should be in no later than Thursday. Tom D. and David the sexton will install them.

We might be putting a composter on the church grounds again at some point. Tom D. and Jeffrey Desantis took down the old wooden one behind the kitchen because it was starting to fall apart, and it wasn't replaced because of the apartment building going up next door. As a number of rodent tunnels and a skunk(!) were discovered under the composter when it was removed, if it were replaced, Tom D. would look into a more contained plastic model. It's not clear, though, where one might best be placed; we would want it to be accessible after coffee hour, but there aren't many options. Tom will address this question to the garden committee.

Tom D. is still waiting to hear back from the insulation company about working on the rectory's attic and basement. He'll contact the company if he doesn't hear anything soon, since the projected wait time was four to six weeks, and we've already waited a month. Once that work is done, Tom D. wants to look into improving our control over heating on the church campus, especially in the Parish Hall and Parke House, so that we're not heating those areas more than we have to. The Parke House, in particular, is in use only a few hours per week, and could probably be kept at a lower temperature most of the time. Tom will talk to Sumner to find out whether we need to replace the thermostats we have in order to heat more efficiently.

Joan O'Brien and Noah Horn had been asked about moving donations for the St. Nicholas Bazaar and also the choir's robes, music, etc. out of the undercroft, but John Robinson has decided that those things can remain for now, as no work will be done in the space until 2026.

Megan closed the meeting with a prayer.

Next meeting: April 29 on Zoom.