



**Minutes of Trinity Cathedral Vestry Meeting
April 22, 2025 – 5:30 p.m.**

Present:

Vestry Members: Jeff Spiess, Sr. Warden; Beth Billings, Jr. Warden; Mark Biddlestone; John Chapman; Marie Curry; Kim DeNero-Ackroyd; Martin Hermes; Diane Hexter; Audrey Hudak; Cynthia Ries; Marilyn Valencia; Antoinette Ponzio

Staff: The Very Rev. Bernard Owens, Dean

Appointed Officers: Melody Hart, Treasurer; Darrell Lausche, Clerk of Vestry

Absent: The Rev. Canon Adrienne Koch, Canon for Mission and Transformation

- The Vestry meeting was called to order at 5:37 p.m.
- Martin Hermes led Vestry in the opening devotional.

Formation

- Dean's Report
 - Staff Updates

With the hiring of a Priest Associate and the upcoming retirement of Ginger Bitikofer, Associate for Membership and Congregational Life, shifts in staff responsibilities will occur. Eric Travis will become the Associate for Congregational Ministry, retaining his role with Children's and Youth Ministry. Other responsibilities will shift to the new Priest Associate. The search for a Priest Associate is going well. Additional updates will be shared by Dean Owens prior to his leaving for Sabbatical. A forum on creative liturgy will be held on Sunday, May 11, 2025, with an eye towards the Abundant Table service.

- Sabbatical

Dean Owens shared more about his sabbatical hopes and plans upon his return with the Vestry.

- Vestry, Administration During Sabbatical

Dean Owens discussed how he is encouraging Trinity members to make their questions, concerns, and ideas known during his time away. Pastoral and liturgical care are transferred to Canon Adrienne Koch. The Senior Warden, Jeff Spiess, will be assisting with administrative and personnel issues. Guest preachers are scheduled throughout the sabbatical period. He will communicate with the Trinity community prior to leaving before his sabbatical.

Fiduciary Work

- Adoption of Consent Agenda
 - March Meeting Minutes, March
 - April 13, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes

John Chapman moved, "to adopt the consent agenda." Mark Biddlestone seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- Treasurer's Report
 - GTF Transfer

A \$150,000 endowment draw needs to be approved. This is the first installment of what has already been budgeted for the year. **Jeff Spiess moved, "to approve an additional endowment draw of \$150,000." Marie Curry seconded the motion. The motion approved unanimously.** Melody reminded Vestry that it is important to attend to reducing the draw on the endowment.

- Monthly Financial Statements

Melody Hart, Treasurer, provided Vestry with the monthly financial statements for both Trinity Cathedral and Trinity Commons. Cathedral expenditures are below budgeted at this point in the year. All financial indicators are positive for the Cathedral. The Trinity Commons income is favorable. Expenditures are favorable as well. The cash flow is in line with expectations. Trinity Cathedral received a clean audit from the auditors.

- Cathedral Ministries Committee

Kim DeNero-Ackroyd shared information about contacting new leadership potential in the Trinity membership for Mission Teams. There has been a favorable response to the conversations. The Mission Team Retreat is scheduled for Sunday, May 18, 2025, allowing new team members to have the summer to adjust to starting their work instead of when the new program year is already underway. Clarifying questions were asked.

The retreat agenda is almost finished. It will be held after the 11:15 am Choral Eucharist service. Dean Owens shared how hiring a Priest Associate will allow for revisiting the Mission Team structure and making appropriate adjustments.

- Stewardship Update – Cynthia Ries
 - 2025 Campaign Goal

The Stewardship Committee is recommending a goal of \$430,000 for the fall campaign. The goal has been created as a stretch goal. Clarifying questions were asked. Vestry will discuss the goal at a future meeting.

- Committee Composition

There is a goal to add three to four members to the committee to help provide more help in the work of the campaign.

- Property & Sustainability

Mark Biddlestone discussed the stained-glass window project in terms of prioritizing windows based on new observations. Conversations will occur with Whitney Stained Glass. The cathedral crack report was revisited, and exploration of monitoring costs is occurring. Another vendor for wood door restoration has been found and a quote is being waited on for submission. Waterproofing issues have been found in the basement nursery. That issue has specifications being drawn up and submitted for approval. The heat pump motors project is complete.

- Cathedral Hall Update

Jeff Spiess led discussion regarding architect planning work for Cathedral Hall. Marous Brothers Construction was approved by Vestry at a special April 13, 2025, meeting to work on designing the project. A committee of Trinity members will work with the company to discuss vision and possibilities for the project. A meeting has been scheduled for April 23, 2025. Jeff entertained questions and concerns from Vestry members.



- Nominating Committee

Jeff Spiess, Senior Warden, reminded Vestry about the composition of the Nominating Committee. Two people are elected at the annual meeting. Two members are appointed by Vestry. Jeff welcomed Vestry volunteers to the committee. Audrey Hudak and Diane Hexter talked about their experience of being on the committee in the past year. Dean Owens shared lessons learned during the process. Interested individuals were encouraged to contact Jeff Spiess or Beth Billings.

- Choir Stipends

Beth Billings, Junior Warden, provided information about proposed choir stipends. Information was gathered through informal means and Beth created a spreadsheet with the information to compare Trinity Cathedral to seven other area churches that employ professional singers. Trinity is a little below 80% of the average hourly rate of pay. Total costs per year were calculated with and without the diocesan assessment for a variety of increases in pay. Beth advocated for an increase in the pay for the paid choir members. She stressed that the professional musicians are what the entire choir repertoire and organization “hang on”. The members of Vestry added their questions, concerns, and thoughts. **Beth Billings moved, “to increase the call rate for choir members by \$5 per call, totaling an additional \$2,700.00 for the remainder of 2025.” Audrey Hudak seconded the motion. The motion passed with one abstention.**

- Cleveland Orchestra Chorus

Beth Billings, Junior Warden, shared that the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus has expressed interest in rehearsing at Trinity Cathedral. Staffing of the cathedral would be taken care of by the music department. The income will be split between the cathedral and the music program.

- Cleveland State University (CSU) Veterans Space

Mark Biddlestone shared information about retail/office real estate agencies looking at the space to provide ideas and potential income levels that could be received. Dean Owens talked about the process needed in referring to the diocesan Standing Committee for guidance and approvals, since that is the body that addresses real estate throughout the diocese. Additional questions and concerns were raised for consideration.

Generative Work

- Hospitality Guild

Jeff Chapman was asked by Dean Owens to help create a Hospitality Guild that would help empower the membership of Trinity Cathedral as Ginger Bitikofer’s prepares for retirement. Organizational meetings have begun. The coffee hour would be the starting point this summer. The guild could expand for memorial services, special events, etc. as capacity grows. There is a possibility that hospitality teams would be organized to help spread the responsibility across Sundays and events.

Dean Owens talked about how space utilization is being explored. He shared the adjusted use of the conference rooms and Chapter Room beginning Sunday, April 27, 2025. He acknowledged that there will need to be flexibility in how spaces can be utilized to build community.



Strategic Work

- Major Gifts Campaign

Cynthia Ries announced that the updated timeline was made available in the Vestry Dropbox. Dean Owens shared that the scope work will be revisited, and priorities will be made on potential projects.

Closing Prayer

Martin Hermes led Vestry in a closing prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Next Vestry Meeting: May 20, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darrell Lausche", is written over a horizontal line.

Darrell Lausche, Clerk of Vestry

