



**Minutes of Trinity Cathedral Vestry Meeting
January 20, 2026– 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; The Rev. Canon Adrienne Koch, Canon for Mission and Transformation; Megan Allen-Miller, Priest Associate;

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

Guests: Allison Hauserman, Leader – Faith Formation Mission Team

Absent: Dan Hout-Reilly, Controller; Cheryl Williams, Director of Development and Community Programming

- The Vestry meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m.
- John Chapman led Vestry in the opening devotional.

Formation

- Mission Team Update: Faith Formation

Allison Hauserman, Leader of the Faith Formation Mission Team, provided an update on the work of the mission team. She reviewed the charge of the mission team and highlighted the programs spearheaded by the team. Church Next was utilized for Bible study, and Bob Fowler presented a series on the Gospel of John. Other offerings highlighted the Book of Exodus, Bible tradition, Anglican rosary making, exploration on the social and political climate of the time and ended the year with a ten-session class on Handel's *Messiah*. The mission team also supported some of the Dean's Forums. She also highlighted the programs and activities of the children's and youth groups.

Church Next will continue to be utilized in the coming year. Allison also previewed some of the offerings for the upcoming programming season. Canon Koch encouraged Vestry members to recommend the *Walk in Love* series to congregants that wish to inquire more about the Episcopal tradition. The Labyrinth sound bath is also scheduled to return for Good Friday. Vestry members were invited to ask questions and provide input.

- Dean's Report – Dean Owens
 - Ginger Bitikofer's Retirement – Her retirement begins at the end of January 2026. He reiterated that restraint is necessary for calling Ginger and tapping her for roles on teams, committees, and events. Preparations to adjust operations have been ongoing since her retirement announcement. A celebratory tea is planned for Sunday, January 25, 2026.
 - Archive Work – Under the guidance of the Diocesan and National Ministry Team, Lynette Williams and Bill DiTirro have been asked to assist in developing an archival plan. A rough sort of items will be the first step. Expanding the number of people involved in helping will occur over time.
 - Greater Cleveland Congregations – A celebration on January 25, 2026, will focus on the founding of the organization. The three founding clergy will be present, including The Very Reverend Tracey Lind, previous Dean of Trinity Cathedral. Dean Owens encouraged Vestry members to attend both events scheduled for that afternoon.
 - Clergy Gathering – Dean Owens attended a gathering of mainly suburban clergy to talk about immigration. The focus of the conversation was on addressing the reality of immigration enforcement as it is currently occurring. A Dean's Forum on immigration is scheduled for March 1, 2026. Clarifying questions were asked, including in regards to the legal rights Trinity Cathedral has if immigration enforcement arrives on campus. Canon Koch requested having individuals anxious about the situation referred to the clergy.

Fiduciary Work

- Adoption of Consent Agenda

- December Meeting Minutes

John Chapman moved, “to adopt the consent agenda.” Toni Ponzo seconded the motion. The motion passed.

- Treasurer’s Report

Melody Hart, Treasurer, submitted the draft year-end financials. They are not yet audited and reviewed by the Finance Committee as of the Vestry meeting. Changes in operating results are not expected and the investment statements for December 2025 have not yet been received, but changes are not expected. Pledge fulfillments continued to improve, but still trailed the budget. Grants were better than budget. Endowment draws for operations were less than budgeted, coming to 6.93%. The capital draw was lower than budget, due to delayed projects. Expenses ended 2025 favorably.

Trintiy Commons income from operations was better than budget, primarily due to space rental for outside events. Expenses were better than budget. Utilities continued to be worse than budgeted. She also presented the cashflow forecast. Capital draws are not yet projected and included in the document.

Jeff Spiess moved, “to approve an additional endowment draw of \$150,158.02 for 2026 operations.” Kim DeNero-Ackroyd seconded the motion. The motion passed.

- Cathedral Ministries Committee

Kim DeNero-Ackroyd shared that the Vestry retreat (March 13-14, 2026) will be finalized at the next meeting on February 5, 2026. The Mission Team retreat is scheduled for May 17, 2026.

- Property & Sustainability

Mark Biddlestone extended gratitude to Vestry from the committee for their support in the work the committee has conducted in 2025. Coordination with Jon Silvis, Operations Manager, continues regarding the scheduled projects. Clarifying questions and input were offered by Vestry members, specifically about updates on the Euclid Avenue doors restoration, HVAC systems, and stained-glass window restoration. Diane Hexter shared that there have been showings of the storefront space that was occupied by Cleveland State University (CSU).

- Stewardship Update

Cynthia Ries provided the monthly Stewardship Dashboard update. The stewardship stretch goal was not only met early but exceeded. The average pledge was up and the number of pledging households increased. She provided a reminder to submit a membership intent for the inaugural class of the Legacy Circle by the annual meeting. Clarifying questions were asked.

- Annual Meeting & Vestry Elections

Jeff Spiess reminded Vestry members that the annual meeting is scheduled for Sunday, February 1, 2026. The meeting will commence after the 10:00 am service. The ballot is contested for both Vestry and Nominations Committee. Members of Vestry offered their input, compliments to the Nominations Committee, and questions. A meeting of the Vestry, returning and newly elected, will be held after the annual meeting to elect Wardens.

Generative Work

- Capital Campaign Update

Dean Owens continues to have conversations with individuals that may be best suited for leadership roles in the campaign. Cynthia Ries shared that meetings continue to be held. The feasibility phase is transitioning to a more active planning phase. Cultivation events are being planned. The “silent phase” continues.



- Cathedral Hall

Jeff Spiess shared that the contract with Marous Brothers has been signed, pursuant to the December 2025 Vestry meeting. They will be working on the design phase of the project. Pro bono work has been provided to look at the contract language and provide independent input.

Vestry Goodbyes

Appreciation was shared for the work of vestry members completing their terms: Beth Billings, Marie Curry, Kim DeNero-Ackroyd, and Marilyn Valencia. Each individual shared their reflections. Dean Owens also expressed his gratitude for Jeff Spiess serving as Senior Warden for three years. Jeff has chosen to step back from the role at the conclusion of this Vestry year.

Closing Prayer

John Chapman led Vestry in a closing prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Next Vestry Meeting: February 24, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.

**Note: This is a week later to accommodate Shrove Tuesday.*

Respectfully submitted,



Darrell Lausche, Clerk of Vestry

