



**Minutes of Trinity Cathedral Vestry Meeting
October 21, 2025 – 5:30 p.m.**

Present:

Vestry Members: Jeff Spiess, Sr. Warden; Beth Billings, Jr. Warden; Mark Biddlestone; Marie Curry; Kim DeNero-Ackroyd; 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

Absent: John Chapman; Martin Hermes; Cheryl Williams, Director of Development and Community Programming

In an email on October 6, 2025, **Jeff Spiess, Senior Warden, moved, “to approve \$8,800.00 to complete lighting work in the choir room and archives room.” Mark Biddlestone seconded the motion. The motion passed via email responses by all members of Vestry.**

- The Vestry meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.
- Diane Hexter led Vestry in the opening devotional.

Formation

- Welcoming the Reverend Megan Allen-Miller

Dean Owens asked the Vestry members to introduce themselves and share the Mission Team in which they serve. He asked her to share her initial impressions from beginning at Trinity Cathedral. She will be connected to the Invite, Welcome, Connect Mission Team, the Peace, Justice, and Mercy Mission Team, and the Community Partnerships Mission Team. She has discovered that there is an unmatched and high level of passion in the congregation and a desire to connect with their neighbors in new and varied ways.

- Mission Team Update: Peace, Justice, and Mercy

Marie Curry shared an update from the Peace, Justice, and Mercy Mission Team. The charge of the Mission Team was presented. A couple weeks prior to the Vestry meeting, the mission team presented a Sunday Schmooze. She highlighted the work of Greater Cleveland Congregations and the launch of the Racial Justice Rule of Life Circle. Additional areas of focus include gun violence prevention, food insecurity, safe and affordable housing, LGBTQ+ advocacy, and racial justice and reconciliation. Marie previewed upcoming events that will be sponsored by the mission team.

- Dean’s Report – Dean Owens
 - Communication Staffing – Trinity Cathedral is currently without a Communications Manager. Jo Nygard Owens had been assisting in the interim but has since had to refocus her work with her primary employment. There are additional individuals that are assisting in the interim. Adjustments are being made to how newsletters, capital campaign packaging, etc. in the absence of a full-time Communications Manager. A search is being conducted.
 - Feasibility Conversations – Dean Owens has begun initial feasibility conversations. The process will help to uncover lead gifts and identify fundraising possibilities. He has enjoyed the conversations that have occurred thus far.
 - Fall Programming and Engagement – Dean Owens is excited by what is being offered and has observed the high level of engagement by members of the congregation.

Fiduciary Work

- Adoption of Consent Agenda

- September Meeting Minutes
- September Special Meeting Minutes

Jeff Spiess moved, “to adopt the consent agenda.” Beth Billings seconded the motion. The motion passed.

- Treasurer’s Report

Melody Hart, Treasurer, submitted the monthly financial reports. Marilyn Valencia provided further information on the reports. Cathedral income and expenses are favorable to the budget. Trinity Commons overall operations and revenue is favorable to budget, too. A capital draw is expected in November to fund the stained-glass window phase 2A and the sealant work on the front steps of the cathedral. A draft budget will be presented to Vestry at the November meeting. A contract approval policy is being drafted for review at the November meeting.

- Contract Signing Authority

Jeff Spiess, Senior Warden, tabled the discussion pending the draft being presented at the November meeting.

- Garden Security Lighting

Jeff Spiess, Senior Warden, discussed security issues in the cathedral garden. An application for an emergency enhancement grant to address the needs of improving the lighting and security cameras. A proposal from Harrington Electric Company was presented for the lighting repairs and upgrades. **Mark Biddlestone moved, “to approve the expenditure of \$3,000.00 to improve the lighting in the cathedral garden.” Beth Billings seconded the motion. The motion passed.** Clarifying questions were asked prior to voting.

- Cathedral Ministries Committee – Kim DeNero-Ackroyd and Cannon Adrienne Koch

- Mission Team Structure – A document was presented with recommended edits to some of the existing cathedral mission teams and ministries. *Neighborhood Partnerships* mission team is to be renamed *Community Partnerships and Outreach*. The addition of a *Liturgy* mission team will help support systems of training and support for the various liturgical guilds. **Cynthia Riess moved, “to accept the new mission team structure and wording.” Marie Curry seconded the motion. The motion passed.** Clarifying questions and discussion occurred prior to voting. The committee will be working on developing both the Vestry retreat and the mission team retreat.

- Property & Sustainability

Mark Biddlestone explained that a lot of the committee’s work has been on the 2026 budget. Lighting in the archives room is complete, and the choir room is in progress. A vendor is being sought for security camera needs in the cathedral garden. An additional request for funds will likely be made for the trimming of trees and shrubs in the garden to improve safety. Euclid Avenue door restoration is expected to be able to be done by the end of 2025, pending Vestry approval after a sample is done. Frost Building Maintenance has completed the façade inspection. Some tuckpointing has been completed.

Dean Owens revisited a past conversation about improving the nave lighting, especially in the crossing. Beth Billings renewed her request for a new water fountain that includes a water bottle filler with the intention that it will get use from members of the congregation and the choir.

- Stewardship Update

Cynthia Ries provided the stewardship reports for October. Pledges are lagging at this point in the campaign, but pledge card mailings and additional communications are helping to put everything back on track. Congregants are invited to bring forward their pledges at all three services on Sunday, October 26, 2025.

- The Reverend Megan Allen-Miller Housing Allowance

Marilyn Valencia moved, “to approve a housing allowance of \$23,500.00 annually for the Reverend Megan Allen-Millar, with the allowance effective as October 1, 2025, and as outlined in the resolution presented at the October 21, 2025, Vestry meeting.” Toni Ponzo seconded the motion. The motion passed. Members of Vestry were reminded that the housing allowance does not come from the Trinity Cathedral budget but affects tax reporting.



- Nominating Committee Update

Nominations are currently open. Nomination forms are required, even from Vestry members seeking reelection. A list of potential leadership candidates has already been generated with exploratory conversations occurring. Four Vestry seats are open.

Generative Work

- Capital Campaign Update

Cynthia Ries provided the update. Nineteen individuals have signed up for the Legacy Circle. The offer to join the inaugural group will be extended to the annual meeting. A Dean's Forum on estate planning will be presented on November 16, 2025. Dean Owens has begun preliminary meetings with potential donors to discern the extent of funds that may be raised. The committee will be meeting to discuss events, types of solicitation, programming, etc. that are needed for the campaign.

Dean Owens asked Vestry to identify a pledge period for the campaign. He recommended a three-year timeline as being appropriate after consultation with Cheryl Williams, Director of Development and Community Programming.

Strategic Work

- Named Endowment Funds

Dean Owens facilitated the discussion. He led with a larger question of, "What is it that people are giving to?" He recommended creating the giving categories of cathedral, music, and mission & ministry. Developing broad categories may provide a vehicle for people to contribute to areas of interest and passion. These areas would be considered restricted funds within the larger endowment. Unrestricted donations will continue to be accepted. Discussion and clarifying questions were offered.

Dean Owens also brought up the topic of creating named funds as another vehicle for people to give to Trinity Cathedral. There would need to be a minimum amount for the gift to open the opportunity to name a fund. Discussion was held.

Closing Prayer

Diane Hexter led Vestry in a closing prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Next Vestry Meeting: November 18, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Darrell Lausche, Clerk of Vestry

