

St. Paul's Episcopal Church Vestry Meeting Wednesday, April 22, 2026

The Rev. Dixon Kinser called the meeting to order at 6:30 and gave a devotion. Those in attendance were Jackie Piscetelli, Kathy Ausen, Charlotte Broughton, Bill Davis, John White, Sheldon Fort, Ralph Womble, Salem Parham, Ben Baker, Betsy English, the Rev. Nick VanHorn, the Rev. Lucy Strandlund, the Rev. Erika Takacs, Grady Phillips, Julie Williams, Tom McDowell, and Betsy Reiners.

Dixon asked for approval of the March 25, 2026, minutes as presented. Ralph made a motion to approve and Sheldon seconded the motion. The motion passed.

St. Paul's Treasurer, Julie Williams reported on the April 21, 2026, finance committee meeting. The report said that parish pledge income is ahead of what was budgeted by \$194k, and this is due to a high number of prepaid pledges made at the end of 2025. Non-pledge income is also ahead by \$13k.

In expenses year to date, salary expenses remain slightly under budget by about \$22k. It is expected that this will balance over the year because of the upcoming months with 3 pay periods.

Maintenance expenses year to date are slightly over budget, but the overage was funded through temporarily restricted funds.

Utilities expenses are over budget by \$11k, primarily due to the extremely cold winter weather.

Worship expenses are over by \$22k, and these overages were covered by parishioner's gifts.

Overall income for the year is ahead of budget YTD by about \$174k.

A windfall gift of \$750k was received this month to be deposited into a WS Foundation fund, which will provide unrestricted annual income of \$30k starting in 2027. The Tower Fund will be over \$1M once this and other funds have been transferred. Tom McDowell explained that now that the Williams Fund has completed payment to the Capital campaign fund, the interest earned from the Williams fund will be available for B&G projects. Tom asked for a motion to approve the withdrawal of interest of the Williams fund on a quarterly basis. Ralph made a motion and Charlotte seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Jackie and Tom reported on the progress for upgrading the children's playground. Tom met with the Buildings and Grounds committee and the plan is for the project to be done in two phases: The construction/drainage phase and the equipment phase. The cost of the construction phase is at \$125k and would be paid through Buildings and Grounds designated funds held by St. Paul's and at the WS Foundation. Currently we have a B&G fund of \$140k held here at SP and there is \$80k in the Williams Fund for campus improvements at the WS Foundation. The B&G committee would like to add 10% to the cost for any possible overages. The vestry unanimously voted in favor of earmarking 140,000.00 for this phase.

The playground equipment phase would be funded by a fund-raising campaign in the Parish. Pre Covid, St. Paul's refurbished the upper toddler playground, in Paige Hill's honor, and raised over @\$60k. The scope of this phase of the project would be dependent on the financial commitments.

Dixon has engaged Saison Consulting for guiding the discernment process regarding the future use of the preschool wing. He requested approval from the vestry to spend \$6000.00 with the firm during an exploratory phase of what Saison might do for us. Bill made a motion to approve the expense and John seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Lucy announced a pilgrimage is planned for April 2027 that will offer 26 St. Paul's members the opportunity to travel to England to explore Canterbury. She needs \$3500.00 for the deposit for the trip with the travel agent. These funds would come from Vestry 'Undesignated.' Betsy E. made a motion to approve this expense and Sheldon seconded the motion. The motion passed.

In the rector's report, Dixon celebrated the beautiful worshipping done at Easter and at the bishop's visitation for confirmation. Another special service is planned for Sunday, May 31 at 5:00PM in which Matthew Phillips will be ordained.

Dixon reviewed the plans for the festival weekend of our Sesquicentennial commemoration and encouraged everyone to attend the Sunday service when Bishop Curry will preach. At the lunch following worship, Dixon and Bishop Curry and have a 'fireside chat.'

Lastly, Dixon told the vestry about the heaviness of the pastoral work being done by all the clergy and the need for a fifth priest to join the team.

In clergy reports, Erika said there were almost 800 people at the 9:00AM Easter service. The holy week services were well attended and appreciated. Erika did some figuring and said the flower guild worked 140 hours combined to decorate the church for Easter services. She said confirmation went well and that Bishop Jennifer commented on how well prepared we were. The flower sacristy renovation has been well received. The summer service schedule starts on May 17 when the times will be 8-10 and 5. Erika shared that ministry leaders are reporting a shrinking of volunteers.

Lucy said adult confirmation was great and she enjoyed teaching this year's group. The next class will start this fall, and she would like it to be available to anyone wanting to know more about the church even if confirmation is not part of their plan. Lucy and Nancy have planned an Eastertide retreat for the senior adults which takes place this Thursday. This weekend is the spring retreat with Jane Patterson: Christ Living in Me: Paul the Pastoral Mystic and the Icon retreat will be the week of June 1-5.

Nick was pleased with this year's youth confirmation class and was happy with some additions including asking the confirmands to participate in a church ministry and write an essay about their experience. The summer youth trip is June 7-11, and they will be gathering at a cabin near Blowing Rock. Nick and his team are currently planning the curriculum for the retreat. Nick said he is excited for the 150 Anniversary Youth Awards Show on May 3 at 6pm. Everyone is invited.

Sr. Warden, Charlotte Broughton told the vestry we now have noise cancelling headphones for children and adults who may have sensory challenges or find the volume of the service prayers and music uncomfortable. They are stored in the cabinets at the back of the church and can be checked out by a parent or adult by asking the ushers or the vestry person of the day. There is a sign-out sheet available so we can keep track of the headphones.

Jr. Warden, Jackie Piscetelli said Tom McDowell covered everything in his reports.

In liaison reports Ralph Womble shared in communication news that targeted advertising is planned for the Holy week and Easter services. The indoor/outdoor signage is looking good, and St. Paul's has received a \$12,000.00 Lily grant to create a sound room that will serve among other things, a place to host podcasts.

Betsy English said an ECW social is planned for Sunday afternoon, May 3 at 3pm in Colhoun B&C. All the women of the church are invited.

Outgoing youth liaison, Grady Phillips said May 11 is Graduate Sunday at church. He said the EYC hosted the Daring Disciples and showed them what they can expect next fall when they join EYC.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 with a Pastoral session to follow.