

**St. Francis Episcopal Church
March 17, 2025 Vestry Meeting**

The Vestry convened on-line on Tuesday, March 17, 2025, at 7:30 p.m., Fr. Mark presiding. Members attending: Mr. Ruf, Senior Warden, Ms. Byam, Ms. Davis, Mr. Harper, Mr. Hunter, Dr. Schneider, Mr. Tester, and Ms. Warren. Also attending: Pastor Allison and Mr. Smith.

Invocation

Fr. Mark offered an invocation.

Devotion

Mr. Hunter led the Bible Study on Romans 5:1-5: This scripture concerns how our faith sustains us and justifies us giving us peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. This especially important to us in these uncertain times. The vestry said this passage shows our frailties and vulnerabilities that impact on us, but we are able to walk through life in the knowledge of God's glory that shapes our character and gives us hope. The passage also serves as a yardstick to evaluate difficulties and for us to look ahead rather than focusing on our past.

Videoconferencing

Pastor Allison said the church had received a \$12,000 grant from the Lilly Foundation through the Narthex Project (an initiative of Christ Church, Denver) in December 2025 for church technology uses. The grant covers four needs: (1) \$6,000 for the website redesign, including the website redesign; forms set-up; social media improvements, and livestream tie-ins; (2) \$3,000 to hire Kevin Sims, a videographer, to cover his six visits plus editing clips; and placement online, for use on the website; (3) \$1,600 for livestream equipment, including a choir microphone and installation; and (4) \$1,400 for social media and direct communications to upgrade the current Constant Contact account (including direct texting capability) for \$240/year; social media management tools for \$240/year; and paid social media ads and event promotion for \$920.

The committee has already received a bid for the project from Worship Times (which has a relationship with the diocese and has created several websites for other Episcopal churches), but they need to obtain a second bid to follow the property approval process/

Pastor Allison has asked Lisa Ruf, Lisa Swain, Peter Zhang, Sarah Tester to work with her as a committee on this videoconferencing project, including reviewing these bids. The Outcome Goals for this grant period are: to have more effective tools for communicating the Gospel, sharing information about the church's events for target audiences and for those outside the congregation, including younger members of the community who've moved into the area or have left religious observance, and immigrants from China and Eastern Europe; to make the social media content more visually attractive and more current; and to have more effective outreach and communication to connect with the growing community north of St. Francis.

Ms. Warren said she would like to some of this grant money to move choir's floor microphone replaced with one hanging from the ceiling.

Rector's Report

Fr. Mark said all suppliers of columbarium plaques have increased the price from \$375 to \$400, which is a plaque's actual cost. He recommended that the vestry set the plaque fee (part of the funeral fees) at cost to avoid the need to ask for repeated fee increases.

Parish Administrator Authorizations

The vestry is asked to approve and appoint Maria Steyn, parish administrator, as administrator on vestry accounts with PNC Bank (the status held by Ms. Nanan before her resignation). This gives Ms. Steyn full authority to open and manage church accounts. Maria currently sets up invoices in our bill paying service, which Mr. Ruf approves as senior warden, and Mr. Tester pays, as treasurer. Ms. Steyn is also responsible for preparing the regular property maintenance report for the vestry's property portfolio.

The vestry also discussed a personnel matter.

Motion to Approve Items on the Consent Agenda

Mr. Ruf made a motion, seconded by Ms. Byam, to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion to Approve Kevin Sims, Videographer, of Visuals, LLC, to Update the Church Website

Dr. Schneider made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ruf, to hire Kevin Sims, videographer, of Visuals, LLC to update the church's website as part of the \$12,000 grant the church has received. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion to Increase the Price of Columbarium Plaques

Ms. Warren made a motion, seconded by Ms. Byam, to set the funeral fee for plaques at cost (which currently means an increase in price from \$375 to \$400). The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution to Add Maria Steyn, Parish Administrator, to the Church Officials Authorized to Sign Documents at PNC Bank.

Mr. Ruf made a motion, seconded by Dr. Schneider, as follows:

Resolved, that Maria-Francesca Steyn, parish administrator, is appointed as administrator on the accounts of the Vestry of St. Francis Episcopal Church, Potomac Parish (also known as St. Francis Episcopal Church and St. Francis Episcopal Church, Potomac Parish) at PNC Bank, with full authority to open and manage accounts. She should also have the same level of responsibility and authority as her predecessor, Shanti Nanan, in managing St. Francis Episcopal Church, Potomac Parish's account at Schwab and its bill-paying system. The motion carried unanimously.

Financial Report

Mr. Tester, treasurer, provided the church's monthly financial report. He said pledge receipts had dropped from the previous year, which he attributed to pledges for 2026 being submitted in 2025 for tax purposes, but pledged income continues to be strong. Property expenses were down by \$67,000 over last year in January and \$42,000 in February. General and administrative costs are down \$12,000 in January and \$2,000 in February. The budget is still on target following the

church's "cash basis" financial plan, and overall revenue is in line with the planned budget, with no additional unanticipated expenditures.

Motion to Approve the Financial Reports for January and February 2026

Mr. Harper made a motion, seconded by Dr. Schneider, to approve the financial reports for January and February 2026. The motion carried unanimously.

Glenolden House and the Rectory

Heating for Glenolden House remains satisfactory. There is a problem with the rectory's heating and with the heater's water tank for the boiler, which need to be replaced at some future time.

Organ Screen

Dr. Schneider raised the issue of replacing the organ screen that Mr. Widmann, church organist, has urged as the screen's replacement as it impedes sounds from the organ pipes and the humidity level in the organ chamber that affects the leather covers for the organ stops.

Replacing the screen is not a budget action item.

Motion to Adjourn

Ms. Byam made a motion, seconded by Dr. Schneider, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

Fr. Mark led the Vestry in the closing prayer:

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this day and night, and give thine angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for thy love's sake. Amen.

Respectfully submitted,

Les Smith
Clerk