

## **Grace Episcopal Cathedral**

### **Minutes of the Vestry Meeting – February 17, 2026**

**Present:** Pam Alexander, Kathy Couch, Kevin Cassidy, Rick Backlund, Eva Jenkins, Steve Wolgast, Lawton Nuss, Vanessa Evans, Norman Nellis, Dean Torey Lightcap, Canon Jody Carroll, and Treasurer Lance Royer.

The meeting was called to order with prayer, followed by a welcome to new Vestry members and individual introductions.

**January Minutes:** *A motion was made and seconded to approve the January 2026 Vestry minutes. The motion was unanimously approved.*

**Elections and Appointments:** The Senior Warden is elected by the Vestry body each year, and is not appointed by the Dean. Traditionally, the Junior Warden from the year prior would step up as Senior Warden for the next year, however that is not an official rule and nominations are open for Senior Warden.

*A motion was made and seconded to elect Rick Backlund, 2025 Jr. Warden, as Senior Warden for 2026. Motion was unanimously approved.*

The Junior Warden is also elective, and serves alongside the Senior Warden throughout the year in preparation to potentially serve as Senior Warden the following year. Norman Nellis nominated Kevin Cassidy, Vanessa Evans seconded, and Kevin accepted the nomination.

*A motion was made and seconded to elect Kevin Cassidy as Junior Warden. Motion was unanimously approved.*

The Junior Warden, Senior Warden, Treasurer, Dean, and Canon serve as the Executive Committee of the Vestry, and usually meet a week ahead of the Vestry meeting. We will work to reschedule that as needed.

The Treasurer is an appointed position. Dean Torey reappoints Lance Royer as Treasurer.

The Vestry Recorder is also an appointed position. Dean Torey reappoints Cassie Carlson as Vestry Recorder.

**Treasurer's report:** For the month of January, operating income was \$112,132.07, and operating expense was \$100,723.38 resulting in a balance of \$11,723.38.

The Dean's discretionary account had an income of \$221.00 and expenditures of \$100.00, leaving a balance of \$2,174.35. The Canon's discretionary account had an income of \$115.00 and expenditures of \$505.00, leaving a balance of \$1,085.47.

Cash in the checking account on January 31, 2026, was \$15,913.26.

**Explanation of Discretionary Accounts –** The Cathedral has two discretionary accounts with funds held at Capitol Federal. One account is for the Dean and the other is for the Canon. These discretionary funds help meet a variety of unanticipated needs that arise throughout the year that we could not budget for in advance.

#### **Endowment Trustees**

Member Bob Happeny was asked to serve as appointed Chair of the Endowment Trustees. Bob may need to step down from that appointment for personal reasons. Dean Torey will ask Steve Page to reconvene one upcoming meeting in the interim until a new Chair can be appointed. Meanwhile, the Vestry needs to appoint a new member from its own to serve as liaison to the Endowment Trustees.

Lawton Nuss was a member of the Endowment Trustees until his term ended in January 2026. He was also serving as a liaison between the Vestry and the Endowment Trustees. A vote was initiated to re-elect Lawton Nuss as a Vestry representative to the Endowment Trustees for the year 2026.

*A motion was made and seconded to elect Lawton Nuss as Vestry representative to the Endowment Trustees. The motion was unanimously approved.*

## **Vestry Orientation 2026**

A presentation was provided to all Vestry members during the meeting. The presentation includes a deep dive into Vestry member expectations, time commitments, encouragements, tips, the Vestry Covenant, Senior Warden and Junior Warden responsibilities, Executive Committee, etc. A Vestry Retreat is scheduled for Monday, March 9 from 5:30-7:30 in the Bubb Room.

## **Sabbatical Update**

Steve Wolgast has been helping explore financial assistance opportunities for the Cathedral to help during Dean Torey's three-month sabbatical in 2027. The sabbatical is to be paid, so the goal is to find additional funds to help with some coverage at the Cathedral during the sabbatical. Dean Torey would attend General Convention at the end of June 2027 in Phoenix, Arizona, and then would begin sabbatical in early to mid-July, with the sabbatical scheduled to end in early October 2027. An application is being completed for a \$60,000 grant from the Lilly Foundation, and if awarded, then up to \$20,000 of that will be for Cathedral use to support Canon Jody as either additional compensation for carrying a heavier load and/or to cover the cost of bringing in support clergy to assist Canon Jody.

## **Canon's report**

- Eucharistic Visitor Training – Plan to ask the Diocese to license Marilyn Hines and Steven Couch, and they will later be commissioned as Eucharistic Visitors.
- Wednesdays in Lent – many volunteers and different voices from the pulpit.
- The Stephen Ministry recently went through Safe Church training.
- The Canon is spending a fair amount of time on the Council of Trustees (started back in Oct) which now serves as the Standing Committee in the interim between bishops. They have had great support from the national level, though it is still very time consuming.
- Diocesan Finance Committee – it has been interesting to serve on this committee especially due to her background in finance.
- The Diocese has hired a new Comptroller and Finance Manager, Couri Reinholtz.
- Adult Forum – Dean Torey recommended the book *A Full-Hearted Life* by Bishop Jake Owensby. The Canon will lead the first two sessions, and the third session will include a pre-recorded video interview between Dean Torey and the author. Sessions will be March 8, 15, and 22.

## **Dean's report**

- Asked Cassie to say a few words about the transitions in finance. Cassie affirmed that the training and transition between her and Kent have been going well. There were some pending items from December that needed addressed, and those have all been handled.
- Jeremy Kebert accepted the Facilities Manager position, and has been doing a great job managing projects and communicating with our vendors.
- HD Service Co. / Boiler update: the last employee who was out on worker's compensation with injuries from the boiler issue has gone back to work this week.
- Parochial Reports – will send to Vestry once complete and request updates or approval.
- Ash Wednesday – Services will be at 12:10 p.m. and 7 p.m.
- No Shrove Tuesday dinner tonight due to limited volunteers.
- Bishop search process continues and takes a lot of time. On March 4 applicants will be presented to the Standing Committee, and on March 9<sup>th</sup> the names will be announced across the diocese.
- Has asked Canon Jody to preach on Easter Sunday. This is necessary for her continued development as a priest and preacher. Confident that she is going to do a wonderful job.

## **Immigration Enforcement Policy**

Vanessa Evans requested that the information provided last year about potential immigration enforcement activities be revisited and redistributed, especially as there has been more immigration enforcement activity closer to Topeka recently. The Cathedral is not a public space unless it is open for services. The public spaces within the Cathedral do not include the offices, and certain other areas which we have started marking as "private."

**Wednesdays in Lent**

Vestry volunteered to provide the meal for the post-service dinner on March 11. Aim to bring food at 5 p.m. and help with setup and cleanup. Bring a medium-sized soup and some bread. Ministry Coordinator, Ruth Ohm, can help provide further information. Plan for roughly 35 attendees. The service is at 5:30, and dinner at roughly 6:00. Eva, Kathy, Rick will bring soup, Lawton will bring bread, Vanessa will bring butter, Pam and Kevin will bring salad.

**Request by Kevin Cassidy**

March ushers could use some additional support. There is a need for two to four more volunteers to become ushers for the 10:30 service for the March and September rotation.

The meeting was closed with prayer.

**The next meeting will be Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.** in the Bubb Room.

— Respectfully submitted by Cassie Carlson, *Vestry Recorder*