

# Trinity Rutland Vestry Meeting Minutes

October 16, 2025, 5-7pm

Present: Rev. Sarah Ginolfi, Shannon Hill, Diane Novak, Brandy Blosser, Melissa Alarie, and Holly Webb, Clerk  
Zoom: Judy Hall, Lois Castonguay  
Absent: David Rugger.

- I. Call to Order/Opening Prayer – 5:03 p.m.
- II. Daily Prayer for All Seasons  
From the “Watch” liturgy provided with vestry materials.
- III. Rector’s Report
  - A. Check in/Review of this past month.

Sarah advised Dave Thurmer has resigned from the vestry. Sarah offered gratitude for his ministry and acknowledged that Vestry work has been a heavy for the last several years he has served us.

For this month’s Rector’s Report, Sarah advised she wants to spend more time listening than speaking. She was surprised when she took a time out to look at and reflect upon all that she is managing at home and at the church. She has recently been communicating with our primary leadership bodies--the wardens, vestry, and finance team--all that she is trying to carry, balance, and navigate. She requested the thoughts of those present.

Lois: Sarah needs to be less involved in all that is happening at the rectory as that is affecting her ability to be effective in her pastoral duties. It is making her unable to manage her ministry time effectively.

Shannon: Notes that she had no idea that Sarah is living under such adverse conditions at the Rectory; that this is an embarrassment and we need to rectify this.

Brandy called to the vestry’s attention the statistics that Sarah has had 36 different roommates, has moved 13 times since she left home for college and told us that Sarah had shared with her that this is one of the most difficult living situations, she has ever lived in. She keeps asking for it to be addressed, but it keeps getting put off, delayed, or not addressed. Brandy noted that some of the issues are potential health hazards. Brandy told Sarah that we treasure her, and for her to feel like we are not addressing this, not only for Sarah, but also for Christina and her daughters, is simply unacceptable. When one cannot go home and find peace, that’s a problem. An apology is in order--for expecting her to live under these conditions.

Diane: Noted that communication providing accurate details of these issues has not been effective or consistent. Ineffective communication between the vestry and the finance committee has resulted in the Finance Committee not achieving understanding as to the circumstances Sarah and her family are living with.

Melissa: We are going to make this right. It has not been handled well and that has to be corrected.

Judy noted we need to have an effective plan in place for ongoing care and maintenance of the rectory and develop a budget to do so.

Sarah acknowledged the Vestry's role in caring for the Rectory. She affirmed, however, that appointments that require access to the interior of the Rectory need to be coordinated with her in advance of being scheduled. Recent appointments scheduled without her consultation first were problematic and disruptive to her schedule and rest. This cannot continue. Sarah is asking for both help and collaboration in resolving conflicts in this respect.

Sarah noted that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Trinity has had nine different clergy. Based on what she has learned and experienced, she strongly suspects that Trinity does not have a consistent or constructive way to manage conflict with either its priest, other members, or in some instances its staff. She posited that the condition of the rectory—issues both inherited and managed in her tenure--may illustrate a fundamental fracture in Trinity's relationship with its priests. She shared that it's hard enough to find rest as a small-town priest without all the disruptions in her living environment. She affirms that we can work through this together yet acknowledges that we need better ways of managing and resolving conflicts and, in the immediate, care of the rectory. Finally, Sarah would also appreciate assistance from leadership to help limit a noticeable pattern of "secondhand feedback" wherein Sarah primarily learns about a conflict with her leadership or the leadership of others indirectly and through another person. Allowing and perpetuating this behavior does not result in a healthy or constructive reconciliation process.

#### B. The Vocation of a Priest (APPENDIX A)

Sarah called our attention to the "Appendix" she provided with the Vestry materials for further reflection by the vestry.

#### C. Ministry Oversight Structure Check in

Sarah is encouraged with participation in the new Sunday School program. About a third of those attending worship are transitioning into the Sunday School program which is a strong percentage showing.

### BUSINESS SESSION

#### I. Approval of September Minutes

Motion to approve made by Diane, seconded by Melissa, followed by brief discussion. There were no edits. Minutes were unanimously approved.

#### II. Treasurer's Reports for September

Sarah noted the \$50K withdrawal from Smith-Benson Fund hasn't been deposited yet, but it will likely occur next week at which point the funds will go into the operating accounts and disbursed with \$47K repaying the Jubilee for its loan for roofing and the remaining \$3K will go into the building fund.

Sarah advised that there has been another \$10K gift to Trinity Presents. There has been a total of \$20K in donations just to Trinity Presents this year. We have already authorized Larry Nevin to come in for 3 days to examine and diagnose the organ. Sarah asked if we might consider taking the cost for this evaluation from the Trinity Presents donations to get this done and so that the organ can become a part of Trinity Presents offerings; and also if, at the recommendation

of David Rugger, we might consider getting more effective microphones for choral performances and perhaps some recording equipment.

Motion to approve the Treasurer's Reports made by Shannon, seconded by Melissa.

Discussion. Melissa made some comments on the two quotes from the siding companies. Sarah explained some of the details of the siding quotes to the vestry. We are not in a place to approve a siding bid by the vestry at this meeting. Due to a misunderstanding, Lois will make sure that Primo Corporation does not think they have an approved contract.

A vote was taken on the Treasurer's reports, and they were unanimously approved.

### III. November Traditions

- a. Sock Drive - Trinity collected socks for BROCC in November. No one on the vestry has accepted the responsibility for spearheading it this year. Sarah will ask the congregation for a volunteer, and we will proceed accordingly.
- b. Parish Thanksgiving – members of the vestry often cook the turkeys for this meal. Do we want to do that again this year? (Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup> is the day of the event). No one jumped at the chance to do this. Brandy suggested reaching out to Katherine Kenniston for her thoughts. Judy suggested that we might obtain the turkeys and do a cooking of them in the church kitchen. Judy offered to be a cooking captain if someone else would help. Sarah requested vestry members to email Judy if they can contribute time or money and Judy will discern whether this is doable. Judy will facilitate getting this done if she is able.

NOTE: Judy subsequently emailed Sarah and vestry members as reflected below:

“After much deliberation and prayer, I will not be offering my services to gather funds and cook turkey in the parish kitchen. I realize I have created problems by trying to fix things and make things better and this is clearly another attempt to make things better. Not wanting to make the same mistake over, let us do as we have in past.”

### IV. Ministry Oversight Team Updates: Sarah suggested that perhaps we can restructure the seven categories into three or four, so each area has a fuller team.

#### a. Stewardship (Diane and Sarah+)

This year's theme is “The Good Shepherd.” Dana has been facilitating and has been a great help. Sarah advised there will be a “soft opening” on Sunday, November 2. There are 5 Sundays in November. The official kickoff will be Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>. November 30<sup>th</sup> parishioners will be reminded to please get their pledges in, so we know how to plan accordingly.

Diane: The exact percentage increase for 2026 depends on the work of Diocesan Convention re Compensation and Health insurance. Help is needed in getting information as to budget requirements and the establishment of a percentage of increased pledging needed to meet budget, so that we can advise the congregation accordingly. That is the current focus.

#### b. Worship (Dave T. and Lois)

Lois: Noted having the piano in the sanctuary is fabulous and being able to incorporate it into the service is something we can look forward to.

c. Evangelism (David R. and Melissa)

David Trinity Presents Update

David R. was unable to attend the meeting and provided the following for inclusion in the minutes:

We had a great concert. There were about seventy-five people in the audience. Importantly, at least two-thirds of the audience were new people. The piano looks and sounds beautiful. Diana Fanning did a wonderful job and reports that the piano plays beautifully. The next two concerts are all arranged, though I will be seeking some help marketing the events. Donations for this concert specifically and for the concert series generally have been strong. This ministry can continue to grow without any risk of draining the parish's resources.

Sarah: Noted Outreach and Evangelism does not currently have a leader.

We need to solve this problem, but it is important for her not to rush to find the solution or take it on herself.

d. Education (Melissa, Brandy, and Sarah+)

Youth group – Sarah noted that there will be four of our youth group members attending the convention.

The Sunday Formation Sessions are still too new to qualify, but participation and energy are strong.

e. Pastoral (Shannon)

Nothing much new. As to pastoral care, Liz has this running smoothly. We have not gotten further on the prayer shawl knitting.

f. Property (Judy, Dave T, and Lois)

i. Rectory Inspection (Roof Leak RESOLVED, Pest resolution in progress)

Lois: We have seen the quotes on siding. We need to focus on the home inspection things identified. Need to focus on whether we are going to hold onto the rectory. Lois will communicate with some people at the diocesan level. Judy will be included in this, but we also need someone from the finance committee to be involved. We have to solve the pest situation right away; button up the house, soffits, and holes in the siding. We must deal with filling holes that allow pests, etc. into the house. The soffits need to be replaced and this cannot wait. But we need meaningful advice on what needs to happen and in what order. If we decide selling the rectory is the route we will take, we will have to consider whether we will sell it as is, or fix it. These are huge decisions to be made by a larger group of people participating in this decision. Sarah suggested bringing in Rich Jones as he has deep history with the

rectory - could function as a consultant, but not as the builder. Trinity needs to show deep gratitude to Rich, Jim, and Maria for all they have done.

We need to find a meaningful way to get through the winter because selling a house at this time of year isn't ideal.

Judy asked for details on what the pest control people have found, recommended, and details as to how they know what the pest is, and how do they know if the method of control is working. We need that feedback from the pest control folks. Nature's Way has been asked for a quote for remediation – what it looks like, what it costs. Sarah will get info and share it with vestry. If we decide to proceed with blown in insulation, that creates a pathway to do the soffit repair.

Lois: Advised the vestry that more information needs to be forthcoming and there will be some hard decisions to be made.

Sarah noted that Trinity needs to expand the number of people involved on the buildings and grounds committee beyond just people on the vestry. It is too much for one or two people on the vestry. There is a need to recruit. It is not the vestry's responsibility to do all of this and it is simply not sustainable with that few people participating. It's not good for the church, our leadership, the rector. Sarah's goal is, and she is looking forward to being more involved in being a priest and less a manager of our buildings, grounds, and problems. We simply need more people in our congregation to become involved in this overall, so we are not burning people out. Our expectations need to adjust to our actual reality as far as all the needs of the parish.

g. Service and Outreach (Cassi, Judy, Brandy)

No one has stepped up to be president of the Women of Trinity. This could mean that they are not able to vote on how funds are distributed – whether WOT can function without a president in place. Sarah needs to look at the bylaws to see what the structure of the organization is to see what must happen, what leadership is needed or might look like.

V. Critical Projects for 2025 Check-in

a. Organ Project. David R. provided the following for inclusion in the minutes:

We are in maintenance phase, not crisis phase. We need someone else to take over setting and managing organ appointments. The instrument needs to be tuned and is due for the evaluation (which would be about 3 days of organ work). Larry Nevin is lovely to work with and very competent. You do not need to be an organ or music expert to do this work now, but some basic familiarity helps.

b. Rectory (Siding/Soffits & Eaves/Heat Pumps, Paving, Loose ends from Phase 1)

David R. provided the following for inclusion in the minutes:

Those quotes for siding...yikes. I think we have come to a major inflection point with the rectory. In the short term, we need to take care of the pests and make sure Mother Sarah has a safe and comfortable place to stay. Lois mentioned a fix involving spray in foam/insulation. If this is considered best practice, would last, and block the pests, it seems like a viable option in my opinion.

Zooming out, when I look at the list of needs for the rectory and our balance sheet, I honestly question whether we have the organizational and financial capacity to keep doing this. Property management by committee is clunky and awkward, despite our best efforts and intentions. Increasingly, I have a hard time imagining a healthy future for Trinity that involves keeping this structure. I know it would mean a change to the Rector's salary and a pretty radical change, but we have to at least honestly wrestle with the possibility. Regardless, I do not think sticking with the status quo is a viable option. Some sort of change is inevitable. Let us make it a good one.

- c. Paving: This will not be happening in 2025.

Vestry was reminded not to lose track on getting the back parking lot paving done. We need to reach out to contractors we have used previously – get some emails out and start a bidding process. Lois said she could try to take this on. Sarah will confer with Lois.

Line painting: we need someone to reach out to a provider who does this because Bendig has never gotten to this. Shannon asked what was involved. Green Mountain Line Painting or GW Paving might be options. Shannon will see what she can find out.

- d. Parish Kitchen Hood – no discussion.
- e. Sunday Snow plan – no discussion.

VI. Adjournment 6:32 p.m.

*The Next Vestry Meeting will be November 20th, 2025.*