

Trinity, Rutland Vestry Minutes

August 18th, 2026, 5-7pm

Present in Person: Lois Castonguay, Brandy Blosser, Diane Novak, Shannon Hill, Melissa Alarie
Present on Zoom: Holly Webb, David Rugger, Judy Hall, Cassi Whitcomb

Call to Order/Opening Prayer – Mother Sarah opened with a prayer at 5:05pm.

Auditor's Report – with Bruce Howard

Bruce reported a successful audit of our accounts. He shared the purpose of the process and explained some of the ways Trinity handles unique arrangements like separate accounts for the Women of Trinity/Discretionary Fund and then the money counting process. He advised that historical deposits are so consistent that should there be any significant change, it would be noticed and addressed immediately. There are appropriate checks and balances in place for these extraordinary situations. All expressed gratitude for the auditing team. Bruce will also help Trinity update its inventory of assets. *Diane motioned to approve the audit report. Melissa seconded. Unanimous approval*

Rector's Report

Sarah thanked all for the support she received while addressing her family circumstances with her parents. She advised how her absence the first week of September will be covered but also shared that Trinity needs to be looking at recruiting others who can perform Morning Prayer, especially since Nanci's passing.

Sarah noted that we have several other ministries at Trinity needing to be filled. After speaking with Wendy, Sarah+ pitched the idea of hosting a Ministry Fair instead of Homecoming Sunday on September 20th. Several ministries need more participants. There was a positive response to the idea from the Vestry. The Vestry discussed ways that this could succeed:

1. Have tables about each ministry with sign-up sheets for specific needs (rather than general needs). E.g. There's no Coffee Hour Team for the Second Sunday of odd months. That's the slot to fill.
2. Have goodies at ministry tables rather than at one big table so people circulate.
3. Nametags are strongly desired: have a nametag making station.
4. Diane and Brandy will work with Sarah+ and (likely) Wendy on the logistics.

Sarah mentioned that the bulk of the Rectory work is done and that she suggests it might be good to hold an open house so parish members can see what has been done to preserve, upgrade, and care for the property. October may be a good idea for this, since September is very full for the parish.

Approval of June Minutes

Lois motioned to approve the June minutes and Diane seconded. Unanimous approval.

Treasurer's Reports and Finance Team Business

- June and July Treasurer's Report: *Melissa motioned to approve the reports and Brandy seconded.* Discussion involved recognition that we are on target and on track as to budgeted items. The Jubilee Fund is working in a very successful way and doing good things for our ministry goals. *Motion was made to accept the budget. Unanimous approval.*
- Finance Team Money Transfer: The finance team requested the Vestry to put \$70k (of the 91k currently in M&T Savings) in the Fidelity Core account, which is invested in the Fidelity Money Market fund if, after research into CDs, Fidelity is the more sensible option. Sallie researched this issue before the Vestry meeting and concluded that a transfer to the Fidelity Core account makes more sense than a CD. Sarah+ affirmed this plan since there are some anticipated but undetermined expenses pending for both furnaces. *Diane motioned and Shannon seconded the transfer of \$70k to the Fidelity Core account. Unanimous approval.*
- Treasurer Transition – at the end of the year, Linda Fay will be transitioning out of the treasurer position. All expressed gratitude for her excellent, faithful service. Given his industry and familiarity with our finances, Bruce Howard is willing to help the parish navigate the transition process and reorganize (as needed) the treasurer role. The job needs of the position have expanded immensely since Linda took it on and the position needs more support--especially with the creation of the Jubilee Fund and the ever-complex and consuming employee compensation processes which are dependent on diocesan regulations out of our control.

Emergency Preparedness Plan Draft - Cassi and Sarah+

Cassi and Sarah+ presented a draft of an Emergency Preparedness Plan. Further work is needed in the subgroup, but Sarah+ wanted to ensure we had the right information for the Contacts and Community Resources. This can be posted asap. In review, Sarah realized that Johnson Energy is incorrectly listed as our gas utility provider. (Johnson is our fuel provider.) She'll follow up to get the right gas company and fuel company listed. Otherwise, the contact sheet is set. Sarah+ emphasized that Canon Susan Ohlidal is available 24/7 as our contact for the diocese.

Ministry Oversight Team Updates

Stewardship - Diane and Sarah+

- Sarah+ pitched the "Plenty Good Room" resource from The Episcopal Stewardship Network. Our "generate a curriculum from scratch formula" for crafting stewardship campaigns was successful for several years, but a fresh perspective and process seem

timely. The TENS resource presents the following campaign's theme: Reflections on 1. God's Abundance, 2. Radical Welcome, 3. Singing our Faith – Plenty Good Room, 4. Beloved Community, and 5. Celebration and Sending could be explored in Story Shares, sermon conversations, and letters. The Vestry expressed support for the program idea and there was a special appreciation for the suggested activities. Bruce H. Diane N., and Keri Franzoni have voiced interest in helping. We hope to find at least two more people to help Mother Sarah on this team[HW1]. There was a suggestion that as part of our stewardship campaign that we find a means by which we can communicate that folks from other cultures are welcome to try us out to see what we have to offer.

- Fundraising: Holly shared some ideas from the Fundraising Team that they'd like to produce in the fall: 1. Concert Dinners, 2. An Expanded Apple Pie Operation, 3. A Fall foliage trip in October, 4. A Halloween parade hotdog bar. There's a hope to have a Haunted House fundraiser at the parish next year. It is important we get the word out immediately that volunteers are needed to carry out these events if they are to be successful. The Fundraising Committee Requested financial support for initial costs. *Brandy motioned to approve the request for \$1,500 to seed fundraising projects and Diane seconded. Unanimous approval.*

Worship – Lois and Holly

Lois and Holly will gather a team to meet soon to examine our program.

Evangelism -David R. and Melissa

- David reports that there will be three Trinity Presents concerts in the upcoming Fall/Spring season.
- A suggestion was made that we get updated photos of people and doings at Trinity to display at designated places around our buildings that demonstrate what we do that look inviting to others seeking to find a church where they could get involved and feel at home.

Education Melissa, Brandy, and Sarah+

- Youth Group: Sarah+ reported that youth group on Monday evenings no longer works for several families. There is a possibility that this may move to Sundays after church. Sarah+ also pitched the idea of having a monthly "Youth Sunday" where we ensure that youth are visibly present in worship as acolytes, readers, and in other settings where they will thrive.
- Adult Formation: There is a desire to host more formation for adults after worship also though the pull for casual fellowship during coffee hour seems to be stronger in the

parish. While many initially participated in twice-monthly Christian education sessions after church, the parish hall was found to be an unfriendly acoustics environment for large-group sessions. Participation dwindled significantly when sessions moved to the library.

Pastoral- Shannon

Nothing much new to report. Visits are going well and the “In Stiches” knitting ministry is also a growing joy.

Property - Judy and Lois

- Vermont Historical Preservation Follow-Up – Lois shared information about grant opportunities with the Preservation Trust and related organizations. Many of the deadlines for big grants are in September, so this will be a process to explore next year. Grants are available for accessibility updates, general building repairs, and enhancing security.
- Lois advised that we currently have several boiler issues that need to be addressed so that they are in service and ready for winter. Several critical components have failed or are in danger of failing. There are questions whether these systems can be upgraded or will need replacement.

Regarding the Narthex, we need to clean up all the extra clutter that doesn't need to be there so the space is more welcoming and useable. Insofar as extra unused pews, it was suggested that some of the pews currently in Nourse Hall could be replaced by extra ones in better condition. Storage of unused pews in the basement was discouraged as they deteriorate there.

Service and Outreach - Judy, Brandy

- Brandy informed the Vestry that the Women of Trinity and Friends will meet on September 13th to report back on their findings from WOTF Day and discuss their way of “being.”
- Brandy further advised that a discussion of holding a greens party on November 21st (the day before the parish Thanksgiving celebration Sunday) would occur at the 9/13 meeting.
- Also mentioned was the need to designate a useful place for nametags so that they're accessible and can be re-used. Suggestion was the Chapel Narthex. We should also investigate the style of tags available as the ones that go around the neck are unpopular.
- Judy shared an idea to ask the WOTF to support the purchase of some nice artificial flowers to supplement the flowers for big holidays like Christmas and Easter. Despite the attempt to find a good home for the plants we order for big services, some of the highly expected plants (like lilies and poinsettias) are difficult to place. This gets wasteful.

Critical Projects for 2026 Check-In

Organ Project – David reported that Larry Nevin’s evaluation of the organ is complete. Larry is available between October 5th-9th to schedule a 2–3-hour report back. David will help organize the team who will be present.

Capital Campaign Working Group – Larry Jensen will prepare a report presentation for the Vestry meeting in September.

Rectory -David and Lois continuing loose ends from Phase I; siding materials purchased but project pushed to Spring 2027 due to staffing. Due to their availability constraints, there is a desire to find a handy person to help with this work.

Adjournment: *The Next Vestry Meeting will be September 15th at 5pm.*