

Trinity Rutland Vestry Minutes

September 18th, 2025

Present: Rev. Sarah Ginolfi, Brandy Blosser, Dave Thurmer, Shannon Hill, Diane Novak,
Via Zoom: Lois Castonguay, Cassie Whitcomb, Melissa Alairie,
Arrived late: Judy Hall via Zoom (5:14); David Rugger (arrived during executive session)

FORMATION SESSION

I. Call to Order/Opening Prayer
Meeting commenced at 5:05 pm

II. Daily Prayer for All Seasons
Prayer (Compline) for a service of Trust led by Sarah.

III. Rector's Report

On the topic of signs: There is a new banner for the lawn. It was supposed to be two-sided so a 2-sided one is coming; the one-sided sign can be used for parades and other similar events

IV. On the Sculpture: It has been installed and will be unveiled Friday 9/19.
Per the contract, a small garden around the sculpture will be installed at a later date.

A. Human Resources Check-in.
Motion by Diane, Dave T second to enter Executive Session
Vestry went into Executive Session at 5:24
Vestry came out of Executive Session at 5:57 p.m.

BUSINESS SESSION

I. Approval of August Minutes (COMPLETED via email)

II. Treasurer's Reports for August
The Vestry discussed the report from the finance team. They disagreed with the finance team's request to halt committing any further funds on building projects this year, particularly regarding the rectory. Although a satisfactory bid has not yet come in, they acknowledged the urgency of this project. Conversation evolved into a larger question of whether the parish can afford to keep and maintain a Rectory. Judy offered to be in communication with the finance team to explore various possible scenarios for Trinity.

Sarah acknowledged the concern about parish giving at this time of year. She flagged that some individuals' pledges come in towards the end of the year; Also noted per Linda that the \$50K transfer from the Smith/Benson fund is not reflected as having come in yet, some of which will reimburse the Jubilee Fund for loaned funds. The remainder will go into holding fund to cover expenses until pledge income comes in to do so.

Also noted that we may be going over the expense allotment for fuel for 2025.

Noted:

- That the building use donations are above what was anticipated. Expanding opportunities to rent out the building could be explored. Volunteers would be needed since not all events would occur during the staff's regularly scheduled work hours.

Sarah requested a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. Motion by Judy, second by Dave. Discussion followed:

- When do we start planning the next year's budget? Sarah responded that this is in process. The conversation held in executive session regarding personnel will be resolved soon, hopefully.
- Sarah offered some information about folks available to work on the stewardship campaign.
- Judy Hall suggested we need to be looking at getting other tenants to use our building to achieve rent as an additional income source.
- Sarah shared information about the current tenant, the driving school. They still want to use space, even though their use has changed somewhat.
- Mention of what the miscellaneous pass thru items are.

Sarah requested a vote to approve the Treasurer's Report. Unanimously approved.

III. Ministry Oversight Team Updates

a. Stewardship (Diane and Sarah+)

- Matters as discussed in executive session.
- Team has not met yet, since they need at least one more person.

b. Worship (Dave T. and Lois)

- Team still needs to meet. Lois has been away.
- Wendy's nieces have joined the choir.
- Six newcomers attended Homecoming Sunday. Some are interested in getting more involved.

c. Evangelism (David R. and Melissa)

- David: Trinity Presents. David mentioned Ampersand is doing an Oct. 4th concert and has requested whether they can do dress rehearsal on 10/3? This would involve about 3 hours of time. Donations will be collected and split between Trinity and the group.
- David R. and Daisy (his wife) are working on/discussing plans for the Boesendorfer piano – the possibility of moving it into the sanctuary. Considering the possibility of putting it the place of the choir pews on the organ side of the chancel -- taking out choir stalls on the organ side and replacing them with the piano. There could be a potential \$600 estimated cost which could be covered by already committed donations. This would create potential for using the piano for services and allow us to do concerts in the sanctuary. It could also open other possibilities for use of the space on the stage in parish hall where piano is. The piano would be adequately covered to address climate issues/effects on the piano. Piano could be on a dolly so it could be moved to the front altar space for concert performances.

Initial discussion with Vestry elicited a positive respond. This needs to be discussed with John Riddle and then the choir. Sarah will talk to John.

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

- Sarah mentioned working with Stephanie Weathered regarding the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month formation Sunday School sessions. Guided by The Restoration Project, the program this year will explore the basics: Basic Christianity, Bible, Anglicanism, and Discipleship.

e. Pastoral (Shannon)

- Liz and Shannon are meeting in the next couple of weeks to discuss the knitting ministry.
- A meeting of pastoral care team will gather this Sunday.
- Sarah: Is there a link between pastoral care and the Sunday School education program? Suggested an expansion of the Prayer Tree in some way. Suggested discussion of how we care for the community always, not only in crisis.
- Shannon noted that her previous altar group discovered that just regular check-ins are very helpful and that this might be useful for us.

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

- Two Birds Design Build offered the first bid for the siding project \$35K-\$38K not including heat pumps, details;
- Suggested we look into pursuing these repairs as a church vis a vis the ability to receive the benefit of tax free and possible other discounts; find out if any grants are available;
- Lois: she forgot to tell Sarah to call NeighborWorks to set up an efficiency audit;
- Lois: there has to be some grant money out there. This is an education curve for us to explore as to what kind of grants or other funding we as a church could qualify for. We need more bids. Lois will be scheduling this in the next couple weeks to explore further, get more information.
- Judy also reached out to Neighborworks; it was brought up that a church is not a typical customer for NeighborWorks.
- Judy will continue to follow up; suggests we get an energy audit so we are in a better position when we reach out to BROCC/Neighborworks for help.
- Neighborworks is ready to work with us per Lois.
- We are waiting on a bid from Primo.

Discussion: The vestry knows there have been bats in the house for over two years now. The pest situation has only gotten worse. Flooding around the chimney (due to loose flashing) is flowing onto the bat nests and then into the living area through the attic door. Reports that it is unnerving and disruptive to live in a building that is in constant need of repairs. There is a hole in the kitchen wall where mice are accessing living space; some floors still need to be redone; a section cut out of the living room wall where the plumber accessed a burst pipe is duct-taped to the wall. The work that was begun last summer is not yet finished.

The finance committee has made a motion to ask the vestry not to commit to any further money to be spent on renovations in this calendar year.

Sarah advised that housing is part of her letter of agreement with the parish. If church cannot provide suitable housing, then it will have provide full salary to her so she can seek housing elsewhere. If the work needed at the rectory is delayed due to financial constraints, or if fear of money is preventing this work being continued and completed, then she and her family will need to explore other living options.

Something the vestry needs to consider is whether the church owning a rectory in these times is prudent or not. Investigate how significant is the availability of a rectory to a candidate in accepting a position as rector? What are the consequences of having or not having a rectory? How does clergy compensation play into this? How would it affect compensation if there were not a rectory?

Diane commented that parishioners may be more broadly concerned about money because they do not have a clear idea of what the full reality for Sarah and family living under the circumstances there at this time.

Lois questioned, is the chimney issue the most urgent? Sarah said bats are coming in, in other places than around the chimney. Lois asked: Does it make sense to keep a rectory, especially one in bad repair, or would it be better to do a housing stipend? The problem is complicated by the circumstances that housing in general is an issue in this area. This is a big questions that needs further discussion. The vestry can't keep tabling this. Our priest and family must have a safe, decent place to live.

The comment was made that if the vestry says these repairs need to happen, then that overrides the finance committee's motion, and we need to address how to meet that cost.

Sarah noted that 30% of her compensation is the housing allowance.

Judy noted that it is a common occurrence for rectories to be sold off when continuing to put money into the house is not the right thing to do – we need to figure out what makes sense. If we can't take care of it well, it becomes a liability.

Dave T commented, if we want to divest ourselves of the rectory, we're going to have to fix it first to do so. Shannon suggested people who flip houses might be interested in purchasing it as is as it's in a nice neighborhood.

David R suggested the finance team come up with hypothetical numbers of an owned rectory vs. costs plus or minus without it. He raises the question of our capacity to maintain this asset successfully. Right now, the rectory is not a positive asset in its present condition.

Judy mentioned that if we bought a condo (such as a Country Grove unit) it has limitations for occupancy – not every rector comes with the same needs. We

might not be able to acquire a different property that has long-term capabilities. Also, there are costs associated with condo ownership beyond the purchase price.

The question was posed, are there some communications the vestry wants to send back to the finance committee? How will all this affect Trinity 50 years from now? Judy suggested it would be productive for a few folks to meet and look at these alternatives in more focus and detail. Sarah would not be part of that conversation since this matter is a broader parish issue for discernment. We need to communicate with the finance team. Potential team might include Shannon. Lois can't commit right now. We need to tell the finance committee a subgroup is forming to address this. This subgroup needs a finance team person to be a part of the group.

Judy offered to draft a response to the finance team, inviting them to a conversation about the rectory.

Finally, it was commented that we need to address the bat situation now, before we discuss further "repairs" on the to do list.

- g. Service and Outreach (Cassi, Judy, Brandy)
 - Noted: \$1200 raised by bowling event. It was a really cool and exciting event. It's exciting that we met our goal.
 - Judy commented it was well organized and suggested that the event be done again.
 - Do we want to do another sock drive in November for BROCC. Sarah will circle back on this by email.

IV. Critical Projects for 2025 Check-in

- a. Organ Project
 - David noted he needs to hand off his oversight on the organ project. Sarah noted there may be people not previously involved in this project who might be interested/available.
- b. Rectory (Siding/Soffits & Eaves/Heat Pumps, Paving, Loose ends from Phase 1)
See discussion above – finance committee concerns and motion need to be addressed.

- c. Paving: Not happening in 2025. Lines are still being painted in SE lot. Bendig hasn't gotten to doing the lines yet. Sarah reached out to another contractor because this needs to get done.
 - d. Parish Kitchen Hood / nothing new
 - e. Sunday Snow plan (See Appendix A) There is a subgroup working on this and they will get back to vestry on this.
- V. "Homework" – Complete Online Safe Church Training – FINAL CALL
- VI. Adjournment 7:04 p.m.

The Next Vestry Meeting will be October 16th, 2025