

Episcopal Church of the Epiphany

Vestry Minutes

June 28, 2026

In Attendance:

Vestry – Cristin Davis, Cody Chaffins, Jacob Geiger, Tracey Laird, Beth Floyd, Nick Theyerl, Paul Hinson, & Kelli Gantt, plus Jordan Moody via Zoom
Clergy - Carmie McDonald
Ex officio - Sally Walker & Randy Shearin, plus Sherry Wallace via Zoom
Absent - Amy Dills-Wright, Kay Lee, & Kathy Corcoran

Meditation:

Paul led a meditation on the song *God is in No Hurry* by Skye Peterson, exploring the notion that God is in no hurry to get everything right but instead loves you where you are.

Consent Agenda:

Approval of the May 17, 2026, Vestry minutes was included as part of the consent agenda. There were no gifts over \$100 to include. All voted to approve.

Associate Rector's Report:

Carmie opened by thanking everyone for their help during Amy's sabbatical.

On the kitchen front, the new refrigerator is now installed.

Julie Ryder asked that Carmie report some upcoming work on the organ. Repairs need to be made to the façade pipes, which are beginning to bow. The repair estimate is \$28,600, and it is planned for the work to be performed in January 2027. There is money in the music designated fund to cover this work.

Carmie has a letter from The Mountain, regarding a fall someone had on retreat in 2024. They wrote that they were forwarding the insurance claim to Epiphany for our insurance company to handle. Randy Shearin will work with our insurance company on this.

We have received insurance funds of \$5,263.10 for the repair to the sewer pipe. This amount will be put back into the capital reserve fund. With that reimbursement, we are out only the \$10,000 deductible. The related outstanding repair item is the replacement of the damaged carpet. Items in the affected offices will be packed and moved out on July 6-7. Shea McNutt is organizing volunteers to help in the packing. Once the carpet is replaced, the rugs in the non-carpeted areas will be brought back from the cleaners.

Carmie brought the vestry up to speed on the issues which led to the sewer pipe backup. She and Amy had discussed this before Amy went on sabbatical and felt that having Little Forest School pay half of the \$10,000 deductible was fair. Carmie had talked with Deb Long, Director of Little Forest, who agreed to do what the vestry advised. After a lengthy discussion, Jacob moved that we send a letter to Little Forest stating that they should pay \$5,000 toward repairs of the plumbing issues. Tracey seconded. One member abstained, and the remaining vestry members all voted in favor of the motion. It was also suggested that we put up signs in the restrooms reminding people that they should not flush hand and face wipes but instead put them in the trash cans.

Taylor Irwin's last Sunday is July 26. Kelli has agreed to spearhead a reception for her on that day.

Old Business:

As a clarifying motion, Jacob moved that the payment for the refrigerator come from the capital budget rather than the general operating budget. Beth seconded. All voted in favor.

Kelli said that Vacation Bible School went well on Saturday. Having VBS on Saturdays with other churches works well.

Jacob said we'll take the first Enduring Light Operating Endowment distribution in July. We'll continue to make annual distributions for now, due to the relatively small size of the distribution.

Kelli reported that following the service on Sunday, July 12, we will have a service project, "Lunch Bags for Neighbors," in which we will pack 200 lunch bags for DEAM to distribute to local people experiencing food insecurity. The entire parish is invited to participate.

The meeting ended with Midday Prayer.

On May 27, Jordan motioned via email that the Vestry accept the estimate from The Painting Standard for \$3,823 to complete the repairs and paint in the office and hallways. Jacob seconded. There were 11 votes in favor and none against, and the motion passed.

On June 9, Jordan motioned via email that the Vestry move forward with purchasing the refrigerator from A City Discount and utilize Restaurant Dynamics for the delivery and installation of the new refrigerator and the removal of the old unit for a total cost of \$8,691.90. Nick seconded. There were 10 votes in favor and none against, and the motion passed.

On June 18, Jordan motioned via email that we accept the proposals from Atlanta Floor Store to replace the carpet in the damaged areas (\$5,611.51) and additional areas (\$3,460.14). These will be paid out of 8200: Capital Reserve Designated Fund. Beth seconded. There were 9 votes in favor and none against, and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Sherry Wallace
Clerk of the Vestry

MISSION STATEMENT

The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany is an inclusive community called to seek and follow Jesus Christ. We welcome all people in the Eucharistic fellowship of Christ's Body. We receive strength and encouragement at the common table to carry out Christ's work of reconciliation in our broken world. Nourished by worship and witness, learning and teaching, fellowship and service, we strive to live out the Gospel's radical values with gladness of heart.

PARISH CORE VALUES

Faith in God. Our belief in a loving God is foundational to our faith. Faith brings us together for worship and sends us out in the world. We recognize everyone's faith journey as unique – wherever you are on your journey, there is a place for you here.

Love in Action. We are called to engage with the wider community through the life and teachings of Jesus. Together, we work toward environmental, racial, gender, LGBTQ+ and economic justice and equity.

Transformative Relationships. Through God's grace, we seek to embody God's love in our care for each other.

Intentional Welcome. We are an inclusive community that strives to seek and serve Christ in all people. We believe God loves you – no exceptions.

PARISH PRIORITIES

- 1) Make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth to our church
- 2) Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church.
- 3) Work toward environmental, racial, gender, LGBTQ+ and economic justice and equity.
- 4) Develop ministries that work toward healing those broken by life circumstances and those living on the margins of society.
- 5) Create more opportunities for people to form meaningful relationships (for example, small groups, nurtured friendships, shared meals, etc.).

Vestry Reports

Adult Formation – Paul Hinson

Epiphany hosted a Pride Month screening of *Love, Simon* in June as part of our Faith and Film Summer Movie Series. The event was well attended, with 16 participants representing a range of ages. Following the film, attendees engaged in thoughtful and meaningful intergenerational conversation about themes of identity, belonging, acceptance, and the dignity of every person. The discussion reflected our parish's commitment to welcome and inclusion and provided an opportunity for fellowship and relationship-building across generations.

All vestry members are invited to our screening of *Hamnet* on July 12. Please register at <https://www.epiphany.org/adult-formation>.

Building and Grounds – Beth Floyd

- New Refrigerator was ordered, delivered and installed under Jason's watchful eye.
- Jason working with Bill on replacing rotten parts of lychgates – primarily posts that go into the ground.
- Jason worked to procure cedar shingles for roof structure. He will make repairs when everything is in hand.
- Jason getting date for painters to paint second floor hallways. He plans to work on floors and music suite when complete.
- Jason contacting foreman/crew that removed some granite curbs (to left as you exit parking lot) when they installed ground lines. The granite is still sitting off to the side near the woods. He'll follow-up to get them reinstalled.
- Jason working with tree companies for estimates. Not a rush, but in the works.
- Jason continues to put things back together after flood. He'll pick up cleaned rugs and new padding when ready, possibly week of 6/21.
- Solar committee hasn't forgotten about indoor commemorative plaque. Full proposal forthcoming.

Children + Youth – Kelli Gantt

Summer is in full swing here at Epiphany. This year, we decided to keep Children's Chapel running throughout the summer. Our children are exploring the series "The 10 Big Questions," based on questions they have asked throughout the year. These questions include "is God real?" "Are Jesus and God the same?" and "How do you pray?" We have had small but consistent numbers in children's chapel this summer.

Our youth group is on a modified summer schedule meeting every other week until September. Our first event of the summer was dinner with Holy Trinity. We then participated in the Summer Faith and Film series, *Love, Simon*. This week, we are headed to Dunwoody for a Game Show Battle Night.

Through the hard work of our youth and the generosity of the Epiphany community, we raised over \$2,100 and sent two students to Camp Mikell with full scholarships to attend.

Our first Saturday VBS is Saturday, June 27, at Epiphany. We have 20 kids registered, 7 Epiphany volunteers, and 5 staff members from Epiphany, Holy Trinity, and St. Luke's. We look forward to next month's adventures at St. Luke's (7/11) and Holy Trinity (7/25).

Community Engagement Partnerships – Kathy Corcoran and Tracey Laird

No updates at this time.

Core Values and Parish Priorities – Kay Lee

Please see separate "Core Values and Parish Priorities Liaison Report – June 2026" attachment.

Endowment – Jacob Geiger

During the June Finance meeting we discussed the mechanics of taking our first Enduring Light Operating Endowment distribution (hooray!). As a reminder, the value of the distribution is the average balance over each quarter of the preceding three years. So this year's 2026 distribution is based on 2023, 2024, and 2025, with zeros in the average for the 2023 and 2024 quarters, as we didn't set up the endowment until 2026. The distribution this year will be \$2800; next year's is currently estimated to be about \$6,000. The Committee agreed that given the relatively small size of the distribution, it makes sense to take this annually each summer for now. Taking the distribution requires Amy's signature, so we will execute it in July when she returns.

Finance – Cody Chaffins

May's operating results = deficit \$20,605, bringing the YTD surplus to \$35,390.

Most of the MTD shortfall was in Pledge giving: \$42,954 vs budget \$63,448; a negative variance of \$20,494. YTD, Pledge giving = \$340,257 vs budget \$317,240, an overage of \$23K. YTD actual Pledge giving last year = \$361,142.

Total MTD expenses were in line with budget: \$72,142 vs budget \$70,852, a variance of \$1,290. YTD total expenses = \$348,323 vs budget \$354,264, a positive variance of \$5,941. YTD total expenses last year = \$334,389.

Expenses of note:

Account 6605 Computer and Office Equipment. Actual \$3,284 vs budget \$833. Copier lease annual renewal = \$3,028.

Account 6606: Technology Platform Fees. Actual \$1,088 vs budget \$775. Fees are charged on church credit card; expense reporting was delayed.

Account 6800: Building Maintenance & Supplies. Actual \$6,690 vs budget \$2,667. \$1,107 to Pye-Barker for annual fire extinguisher inspection. \$3,396 to Untied Maintenance to fix condensation leaks in Julie's office, the music room. \$625 to Bray Electrical to repair fluorescent lights. \$225 to The Civilized Plumber for urinal repair.

During the weekend of 5/17, Epiphany had a sewage blockage / overflow. Jason Sullivan, Epiphany's Facilities Manager, intervened, limiting the damage. Epiphany is filing an insurance claim to cover the cost of repairs. Costs in May = \$1,650, recorded to account 8200 Capital Reserve Fund. Susie set up a project:

"Sewer Blockage" to track costs regardless of account coding. Most of the cost will be paid / recorded in June.

Membership + Newcomers – Cristin Davis

The spring newcomers gathering was a success. Everyone who was invited was able to attend. Shea continues to send copies of all new pew cards to Liefy and Page Love who in turn reach out with a welcome email. Greeters on Sunday mornings continue to be a warm welcome to Epiphany on Sunday mornings and are able to identify visitors and offer name tags and welcome bags.

Parish Life – Nick Theyerl

No updates at this time.

Pastoral Care – Paul Hinson

The Community of Hope continues to meet monthly, deliver communion to homebound parishioners, and call or visit individuals who have requested pastoral contact. At its May meeting, David Draper opened the gathering with “A Prayer for the Caregiver’s Soul” and a prayer in remembrance of Memorial Day. Members reviewed pastoral encounters and discussed Joan Chittister’s chapter on Kindness from her book *Illuminated Life: Monastic Wisdom for Seekers of Light*. The group plans to attend the COHI Regional Retreat Day at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in July. The Pastoral Care Committee has no further report at this time.

Stewardship – Jacob Geiger

No updates at this time.

Core Values Vestry Report
June 28, 2026

I continue to examine Epiphany's Parish Priority of making "**necessary changes to attract families with children and youth to our church.**"

I anticipate providing an updated report for potential discussion at our Mid-year Vestry Retreat in August. As a precursor, below I briefly summarize some of the concepts I have gathered to date. The summary is based upon looking at (1) the youth programming, (2) the children's programming, and (3) the impact on the families. I focused on understanding:

- What are we doing well? What is working? With respect to both the youth and children, Epiphany has offered enriching programming, but more can always be offered. In our ever-changing society, the work is never finished. We should continuously challenge ourselves to build upon our successes, and adjust from the "status quo" when we determine it is best.
- Where can we build upon our success? What successes can we identify and how can we build upon them? Also, where are the further opportunities for connection?
- How can we strengthen the intergenerational connection with our youth, children and their parents? **"Research and lived experiences point to a clear reality: one of the strongest indicators of lasting faith is meaningful relationships across generations within a faith community..."** When children, youth, and adults' worship, serve, and share daily life together, those connections cultivate belonging that carries faith forward...[I]ntergenerational ministry cannot simply be added to a calendar. It is a culture that grows over time through relationships, through worshipping together and sharing life across ages" (*See Belonging Across Generations: Reflections from the Pathways Cohort*" by the Communications Team of The Episcopal Diocese of Virginia. May 11, 2026)
- What strengths, qualities and qualifications will we desire in our next CYF (Children, Youth and Families) Director?
- How Will We Describe our Expectations of the CYF Director's Responsibilities To Potential Candidates?

SUMMARIZATION (SO FAR)

Youth Ministry

Parents: Parents emphasized they valued their youth feeling a sense of belonging/connectedness/family, an environment of welcome and safety where youth are unconditionally accepted and loved, as well as a place to practice faith intertwined

with the development of social/interpersonal skills (especially after the Covid years in that we are still in recovery). Understanding the neurodiversity among our youth is an important consideration. Taylor's newsletter is meaningful and engaging. Parents felt it important that there be more intentionality about the importance of youth, children and families in our parish community and to find ways to state often that we value this priority. Parents felt that it would be helpful for there to be an announcement every week in the bulletin, newsletter and during service announcements about what is happening with the youth (and children). (Not sure whether this is already being done.) Have the formation more directly tied to the liturgy. Parents would prefer a CYF Director who remained in the position for a longer period of time. Important strengths include listening, grace and gratitude. They felt it important that their youth can rely on consistency in one person as Director as a way of building trust and connection. They wish for a Director who has the time to be more personally connected with youth off campus, for example by attending school and sporting events.

Youth: Based upon Taylor's discussion with our youth, they enjoy the sense of community with each other. "The students reflected that conversations go more smoothly when they start from shared experiences or beliefs." In addition, they expressed a desire for more direct engagement with Scripture, including Bible studies and to learn more about prayer, particularly how to pray extemporaneously and to develop confidence in personal prayer practices. The youth do not enjoy "packet-based activities or sessions that feel overly dependent on prewritten curriculum materials." They enjoy games and interactive activities, and music. **Youth have said they don't understand why they will see other youth in church and but not at youth formation.**

Taylor: Teaching youth at middle school and high school ages requires a very active learning environment. The youth "respond more positively to discussion, participation, and experiential learning". The covenant the youth designed at the beginning of the year was extremely helpful in ensuring a return to a sense of community when disagreements arose. She suggests that we consider re-arranging the Donut Den to open up the space for more interactive learning, and to consider "formation outside sometimes." She emphasized the importance of an energetic atmosphere from the moment they arrive in the room. She sees our youth trying to find the balance between craving vulnerability and experiencing social anxiety. She reinforced that "parents have said that our ministry is not only helping nurture faith in our youth, but also helping them develop social confidence and interpersonal skills." Taylor wondered whether adding Compline to the youth routine would help them learn more about prayer. **An area for further discernment is the inconsistent attendance at youth formation.** "I don't know how we "fix" this, or if we do, but youth consistently tell me the thing that would make them want to come back to formation is seeing more youth there."

Children's Ministry

Parents: The values parents of children enjoy with children's formation mirrored those of the parents of youth; connectedness, a sense of belonging, a welcoming and safe environment, etc. They are also looking for the same qualities in a Director of

consistency and a person who will build a more personal connection with their children. Some parents expressed the difficulty in bringing their children to both services and children's formation. It is a long period of time for children of a certain age. Parents were enthusiastic about the Godly Play curriculum, happy that it allows the ability to wonder as a way to learn and to build upon the biblical stories. They enjoy the once-a-month Family Eucharist in conjunction with children's choir, a service project and a meal together as a way of building connection. However, parents desire more opportunities to spend time and build connections with other parents of children. I heard many ideas to enhance the children's programming and the connection among families. I mention only a few for this report. Please be advised that this is not an exhaustive list:

- Announce Children's Chapel at the service. (I am not sure if this isn't already happening.)
- Have a Family/Children's/Youth greeter of the day (similar to VPOD) to greet families.
- Revamp children's bag.
- Designate a separate space for parents upstairs after services to enjoy fellowship with each other.
- Have children's formation happen immediately after services, or during, or before services.

Other suggestions included not having Godly Play every week and allowing time on the playground where the children can play, parents bringing a picnic lunch so as to spend time together. Parents also asked for assistance with how to guide children at home with ritual, prayer and to answer hard questions. **One area of challenge is again the inconsistency with children attending formation after services as well as attending Children's Chapel. Sometimes there are 1 or 0 children in a class or at Children's Chapel.**

Volunteer Comments/Ideas: The way to build community is to show up, all the time. It takes commitment. Have children and youth staff a table at the ministry fair. Perhaps once a month during formation have a family lesson in addition to adult formation, as a way to engage the entire family. Another volunteer suggested having the children go to the second floor directly after services as a way of providing a sense of belonging, "they know where to go; making the second floor 'their space'". Look for more ways to engage children in ministry. Celebrate more milestones, more transitional times. See each child as an individual. Find ways to have a connection with senior adults within the parish community.

The above summary is a work in progress. There are more parents and volunteers I would like to speak with about their thoughts and ideas. I am listening for (i) existing connections upon which we can build, (ii) new ideas, (iii) how we can recognize and utilize the intergenerational gifts already present in our community, as well as (iv) possible skills, talents and qualifications we might wish for in a new CYF Director.

Possible Questions for Vestry to Consider at the Mid-year Retreat:

- Have we clearly identified the most immediate spiritual needs of our children and youth?

- Are there other places/spaces/opportunities to engage children and youth in our ministries?
- Is there more we can do so that all ages feel an even deeper sense of belonging to our church community?
- Do we need to revise the language of this Parish Priority to not only attract families but to integrate, connect and engage them in our community of faith?
- Are there ways where the Vestry, as the leadership of the church, can be more engaged with the youth and children?
- How can we best position ourselves to secure a qualified candidate for the CYF Director position?
 - Do we wish to continue being a breeding ground for seminarians to develop skills for future employment?
 - Do we wish to create an employment package to secure a Director with the hope of more permanency in the position? And if so, what will that take?

I am sorry I will be unable to attend this June Vestry meeting. I hope this report sparks your imagination with ideas, thoughts, and questions. I welcome them all. My email address is kaylee17@comcast.net.

Thank you.
Kay Lee