

Episcopal Church of the Epiphany

Vestry Minutes

March 15, 2026

In Attendance:

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

Meditation:

Kelli led a meditation on practicing mindfulness to change our lives and the world. Her meditation was inspired by Venerable Bhikkhu Pannakara's speech at the National Cathedral at the conclusion of the Buddhist monks' 'Walk for Peace.'

Rector's Report:

Amy reported that the Bishop will be at Epiphany on Nov 1 for the 10:00 service.

Jason Sullivan begins this week his dual roles as sexton and facilities manager.

The parish hall floor is installed. We're now looking into painting and sprucing up the upstairs.

We have six applications for Endowment grants. Karla Finnegan is chair of the Endowment Board. Her daughter is applying for a grant, so Karla has recused herself from participating in the grant approval process. Kerry Geiger will act as chair.

Amy's first half of her sabbatical will be May 31-July 13. She will take the second half the following summer.

Emily Elder is scheduled to be ordained on Sat June 20. The Vestry signed the Certificate of Endorsement for Ordination to the Priesthood reaffirming our support of her ordination.

New Business:

Vestry Updates

Carol Bartlett resigned from the Vestry for personal reasons. Her position will not be filled at this time, and her responsibilities will be spread amongst the remaining members for the rest of the year.

Authorizing Payment Source

Jacob motioned that vestry approve the monthly transfer of the mortgage payment from the Citizens Trust Bank account to the Diocesan loan. Tracey seconded, and all voted to approve

Parochial Report—Long Form Questions and Group Discussion

The Vestry broke up into groups to respond to the five long form questions on the parochial report.

Core values

Kay reported that we will focus this year on the parish priority of making connections between the church and parents of children and youth. She will approach parents to find out what they need, their interests, and how the church can help parents and youth.

Parish life

Nick discussed various aspects of Easter Week activities. He said that the price for the Agape supper price has increased.

The meeting ended with Midday Prayer.

On March 3, Jordan motioned via email that we elect Peggy Palmiter and Austin Stephenson to the Endowment Committee. Beth seconded. There were 10 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

Our Sunday morning adult formation series for Lent is underway and has been well-attended. Amy, Carmie, Suzanne Yoder and Paul Hinson are all collaborating on this, presenting rich material based on nonviolent peace activist and priest John Dear's book "Walking the Way: Following Jesus on the Lenten Journey of Nonviolence." That series concludes March 26. Beginning April 12 we're planning on presenting another class by Ryan Bonfiglio but rather than having Ryan here in person, this will utilize a video curriculum, paired with live group discussion led by Carmie McDonald and Paul Hinson. That Sunday morning series will take us through May 17 after which we'll take our summer break from Sunday morning adult formation programming.

This summer, we'll be planning another "Faith Film and Food" series in the parish hall where we'll enjoy a meal and view a movie projected on a 120" screen in the parish hall. These events will again take place on Sunday evenings, and participants will be invited to participate theological reflection and discussion following each film.

The Thursday morning book study group led by Suzanne Yoder and Paul Hinson just completed their six week study of Christine Valter's Paintner's book "A Midwinter God." That ministry will take a break for a few weeks and will resume with a new weekly book study beginning April 16 and continuing through May 21. The book selected is Layton William's "Holy Disunity" in which she provides a different framework within which to view "disunity" ("our religious, political, social, and cultural differences can create doubt and tension, but disunity also provides surprising gifts of perspective and grace").

Our new Wednesday morning bible study during Lent has been well received with good attendance and rich discussion led by the Rev. Carmie McDonald.

Carmie recently met with Donnell Williamson at the Candler Foundry where they discussed new programming the Foundry has in the works so that we can begin thinking about formation offerings in the 2026-2027 year.

Building and Grounds – Beth Floyd

- Kitchen, fellowship hall and utility closet floors have been replaced
- Felt pads have been placed on all wooden chair legs in fellowship hall to cut down on scratches
- Kitchen plumbing: Large sink issue fixed. Jason is working on the small sink at end of long counter
- Jason working on replacing bulbs in nave uprights. Had to source matching bulbs.
- Lift working and preventative maintenance performed
- Fire suppression system given the green light by Pye-Barker Fire & Safety
- Front door intercom system to Shea's office needs replacing. Estimated around \$3,000
- Parish work day coming up on March 28. Beth reaching out to Shea and various B&G groups for input

- Solar committee working on outdoor signage and indoor commemorative plaque re recent solar panel installation
- Working with Jason to get quotes to remove large limbs/brush from grounds
- Slope between parking lot and East Lake Drive getting update with installation of additional juniper plants and new burlap landscape fabric

Children + Youth – Kelli Gantt

2026 has been off to a strong start for our children and youth. We started the year with our annual Epiphany pageant and the Epiphany blessing of the youth room. We began the season of Lent with our annual Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner, which raised over \$200 for our youth program.

Our formation classes experienced a slow start to the year but have slowly seen an uptick in attendance back to our usual numbers.

We have focused the beginning of the year on collecting feedback from parents and volunteers. This feedback took place in two listening sessions hosted by the Rev. Carmie McDonald and in a volunteer training session offered by Taylor Irwin. The feedback from these sessions is that our programming is going strong and that parents and students both want to see a continued strengthening in our intergenerational relationships within the parish.

Family Eucharist continues to be a much loved event. We average about 20 people at this service. This week, we packed snack bags for the Decatur Emergency Assistance Ministries.

Our youth have been enjoying formation classes led by Epiphanyites including a class on Christian political action by Jacob Barber and a mock vestry meeting with our Sr. and Jr. wardens.

Last weekend, six of our youth attended the Diocesan New Beginnings retreat at Camp Mikell. As part of their experience, each youth had four members of the parish, including clergy and staff members, who were praying for them.

Vacation Bible School dates have been set for the summer. This year our model is a joint "One Day, Fun Day" with Holy Trinity Parish and Saint Luke's Episcopal Church. These events will include a morning of learning through play followed by an afternoon family oriented service project and Family Eucharist. The dates for VBS are Saturday June 27, July 11, and July 25. Registration for these events is live.

Our youth pilgrimage this year will be a pilgrimage to Camp Mikell. Students are encouraged to apply for intermediate camp (June 16-22) or work camp (July 11-18). Money raised at youth fundraisers throughout the semester will go to reducing the cost of registration for our students.

Community Engagement Partnerships – Kathy Corcoran and Tracey Laird

Art Ministry Show – Dignity Sewing Centre

The Art Ministry's March show highlights the work and mission of the Dignity Sewing Centre. This initiative is a partnership between the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta and the Anglican Diocese of Cape Coast in Ghana. The project provides meaningful employment and vocational training for young people in Cape Coast while fostering a rich exchange of culture, history, and shared mission between the two dioceses. Through this

partnership, communities on both sides of the Atlantic are building knowledge, deepening mutual respect, and collaborating in a powerful justice-centered venture.

Atlanta Community Food Bank Hunger Walk/Run

This Sunday, Epiphanites will participate in the annual Hunger Walk/Run organized by the Atlanta Community Food Bank. This longstanding Atlanta tradition brings together thousands of people committed to fighting hunger. Proceeds from the event provide critical funding for the Food Bank and its nonprofit partners who work daily to provide meals for neighbors experiencing food insecurity. Epiphanites have contributed \$540, surpassing our goal of \$500!

DEAM (Decatur-Area Emergency Assistance Ministry)

Members of the vestry had the opportunity to visit DEAM during the recent retreat at Holy Trinity Parish. Doug Runnion and DEAM Community Liaison Nancy Garrison led an informative tour of the facility and shared about the ministry's work serving neighbors in need.

In addition, children and families at this month's Family Eucharist assembled 100 snack bags for DEAM's unhoused clients—another meaningful way Epiphany continues to support this important community partner.

Gateway Meal Ministry

The new, earlier start time for the Gateway meal ministry is working very well. Volunteers now leave Epiphany shortly after 4:30 p.m., arrive by 5:00 p.m., and begin serving by 5:15 p.m. This adjustment appears to be allowing us to serve more people while also enabling volunteers to return to Epiphany and head home earlier in the evening.

In February volunteers prepared additional meals for those waiting outside the shelter on the sidewalk. Bags of Valentine's Day candy were also distributed and warmly received.

The team welcomed two new cooks, Allene and Mike, who completed their first cooking shift in February.

Holy Comforter Meal Ministry

Our most recent meal at Holy Comforter Episcopal Church drew more than double the number of people we expected. Additional food was quickly prepared to ensure there was enough for everyone. We estimate that between 50 and 60 people were served. Many meals were also prepared as to-go plates.

Refugee Ministry - Prisons Performance at Epiphany

On February 15, more than 100 people from Epiphany and the wider community gathered for a performance of *Prisons*, presented as part of Out of Hand Theater's 25th anniversary season. Written by and starring Lee Osorio, the play tells the story of a writer who travels to Lumpkin, Georgia—home to one of the nation's largest immigration detention centers—and encounters the human realities of the immigration system and the economic pressures facing a small town shaped by the prison industry.

Following the performance, guests gathered for a reception and discussion facilitated by El Refugio. The conversation offered space for reflection as well as practical suggestions for taking action.

Core Values and Parish Priorities – Kay Lee

No updates at this time.

Endowment – Jacob Geiger

We received six applications this year, up from two last year. Requests vary in amount from \$200 to \$10,000, and the combined requested amount is nearly double what we have available to distribute this year. The Committee will meet at some point later this month to review the applications.

Those requesting grants are:

1. A parishioner who seeks financial support for a feeding ministry she is part of in her neighborhood.
2. The adult education ministry for blackout shades that would better enable film showings and other items in the Parish Hall.
3. The handbell choir for refurbishment of some of their bells.
4. Camp Mikell to support their ongoing capital campaign.
5. A parishioner seeking support for veterinary school.
6. A parishioner seeking support for their undergraduate education.

Finance – Cody Chaffins

February operating results were almost break-even; a deficit of \$1,944, bringing YTD surplus to \$43,301. 2025 YTD surplus was \$68,967.

MTD total revenues were \$64,164, short of budget \$6,726, mostly due to shortfall in Pledge giving. YTD total revenues = \$170K, over budget \$29K. 2025 YTD total revenues = \$218K. The difference in YTD 2026 / 2025 total revenues is mostly due to YTD difference in Pledge giving.

MTD total expenses were \$66,108 vs budget of \$70,853. YTD expenses = \$127,169 vs budget = \$141,706. 2025 YTD expenses = \$149,022.

February clergy and staff compensation includes "catch-up" payments for 2026 raises not paid in January, 2025. We also paid in February the quarterly property insurance premium of \$4,607. Although 6820 Outside Sexton Services is budgeted at \$1,800 per month, we currently don't have an outside sexton. Per auditor instruction, I record only interest expense in the operating statement: \$126.93 in February vs budget of \$1,258.33 for Diocese loan service.

Membership + Newcomers – Cristin Davis

No updates at this time.

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 February meeting, members reviewed pastoral encounters and discussed Joan Chittister's chapter on Humility from her book, *Illuminated Life: Monastic Wisdom for Seekers of Light*. The group plans to attend a retreat at St. Benedict's Episcopal Church on July 11 for all Community of Hope chapters in the Southeast region. Epiphany's Community of Hope members include Barbara Belcore, Jessica Burns, Lucy Davidson, David Draper, Laura Gary, Paul Hinson, Chris Miller, Carol Moser, Nan Ross, Annie Strahan, Nick Theyerl, Nancy Thompson, Larry Wilcox, and Suzanne Yoder. Ann Fowler and Lalor Cadley serve as co-facilitators. The eight members of the pastoral care committee have continued to send cards to parishioners asking to be on the prayer list and to set up Meal Trains when needed to assist parishioners during a time of need.

Stewardship – Jacob Geiger

This ministry is in its quiet/fallow phase at the moment after a very successful campaign last fall. The only news of note is that it looks like Pam Tipton is planning to return as chair for the upcoming year.