

VESTRY MEETING SEPTEMBER 9, 2025

Present: Rev. Cn Melinda Artman, Alice Bennett, Bruce Carpenter, Margaret Cole, Doreen Marshall, Linda Murrelle, Diane Siebecker

Absent: Mitzi Mohn, Glenn Murrelle

Treasurer: Bruce Carpenter

Chairperson: Rev. Cn Melinda Artman (present via ZOOM)

Opening Prayer

Agenda: Motion to accept the agenda made by Alice, seconded by Bruce. Additions – Community Supper December 30 and Quarterly Donation. Motion carries with these additions.

Minutes: Motion to accept the June 10 and August 17, 2025 minutes made by Alice, seconded by Margaret. Motion carries.

Treasurer's Report: Motion to accept Treasurer's Reports for June, July and August made by Alice, seconded by Doreen. Motion carries.

Highlights:

- The Bixby Trust has a change due to the death of a member. Bruce will clarify whether we will receive a lump sum or an additional annual amount.
- Correction in the August Treasurer's Report page 4 under Outreach Expense – misc. The % of Annual Budget is not 710000 %. Also, on page 1 under Receipts & Expenses Corrections – the ADP payment has a biweekly fee & not monthly.
- Requesting a Budget Meeting in October – date to be determined.

Senior Warden's Report:

- We had a disappointing turnout at the Potluck on September 7th. Would like to thank Bruce for the pictures taken for the display board of parishioners.
- Nine volunteers are lined up for Youth Group. Pastor Melinda will attend once a month. We have 4 youth at present and are meeting weekly.

Junior Warden's/Building & Grounds Chair Report:

- The carpet in the parlor is in bad shape. Looking into bids for replacement and considering laminate flooring.
- We are having a Community Supper on Tuesday, December 30th. This will be sponsored by David Dekay and be party-themed.
- The Building and Grounds Report was respectfully submitted by Jeff Watson: I have checked the radiators in the church and they are due for cleaning. The filters will also need to be replaced at a cost of \$245. The filters have been ordered and the cleaning will begin as soon as the filters are received. During this project I

will also replace the filter in our new furnace and do the yearly maintenance for the boilers, furnace and hot water heater.

Although the LED light project has not yet been approved, I have done some research and found that we can convert our current light fixtures to LED. The cost of the conversion kits will be between \$40.00 and \$50.00 per light depending on our requirements. The conversions are said to take about 15 minutes per fixture. By converting our current fixtures, we avoid the expense of replacing the ceiling tiles to accommodate a different size light fixture. *Vestry would like to know how many lights for conversion and whether to put it out for bid.*

I noted in the vestry agenda the consideration to replace the carpet in the parlor. I would suggest that we explore installing a laminate floor to improve wear and tear cleaning. We could place an area carpet under the temporary altar where our priest stands for comfort.

During a recent discussion with Pastor Melinda, I was given a “raise”. In the past I was able to spend up to \$100.00 for maintenance purposes without prior approval. With this raise I am able to spend up to \$250.00 for maintenance without prior approval.

- The tower bell is not working again – follow up.
- The edge of the Parking Lot where a tree was removed has a stump (which looks bad). *Alice made a motion to have it removed, Doreen seconded the motion. Motion carries.* Linda says the grounds in general are lacking – would a work bee help?

Rector’s Report:

- Follow up from our June meeting minutes:
An Inquirer’s Class was held over the summer. Four people participated and all were received by the Rt. Rev. Kevin Nichols during his visit on August 17.
Sentry Alarms installed a new security system in mid-June.
Sunday School Quilt – Margaret obtained hardware and John Paul Jones hung it in the Atrium. It looks good!
Parking Lot - completed in July just prior to worship services beginning at Redeemer. Bishop’s ran into one problem – a sink hole at the exit. They obtained permission from the Borough to NOT reinstall the sidewalk on the condition that a crosswalk be installed where the sidewalk was.
Joint Worship – began June 15 and lasted through August 31. Wednesday and Saturday services continued as usual and for the most part, all were well attended.
New Copier – installed and in use.
Book Sales during Friday Farmer’s Market – Doreen and Linda set up at least twice and it sounds like it was a lot of work for little return.
I had a candidate for a Pastoral Assistant who was well qualified to assist me. Unfortunately, she decided not to take the position. I am trying to figure out ways to work smarter and not harder. I will let you know how that works out.

We had a lovely potluck supper in the hopes of introducing newcomers to the “old timers”. Bruce & Margaret took portraits; Bruce got the pictures developed and we had a lovely display of “who’s who” created. About 20 of us participated on September 7. Unfortunately, not one was a “newcomer”. Let’s continue to look for ways to integrate those who are newer to our community into the life of the parish.

- Our August meeting was brief and was to make sure we had officially elected a delegate to Diocesan Convention, along with an alternate. Linda Murrelle is our delegate and Margaret Cole is our alternate. We will be meeting in Scranton October 17-18. Preconvention meetings are being held via Zoom on September 16 and 18. The Bishop will be in our area (Towanda) on September 21st at 3 pm to anyone interested in what reunification is shaping up to be. Our clergy and delegates are expected to attend this meeting at Christ Church.
- Vacation Bible School expanded our partners to include Valley United Presbyterian Church along with Sayre Christian Church and St. John. It was held July 13-17. The number of children participating was disappointing; the number of adults participating was encouraging. There is a thought of doing intergenerational VBS next year or have a version of VBS just for adults. Our area has a significant older demographic, and this population looks for something to do. Perhaps we can fill this void. Given that VBS is now multi-parish, I think we need to have volunteer position descriptions. This would help clarify expectations and roles that need to be filled.
- Nina & I had a great vacation in Ireland at the end of July into the first week of August. Almost immediately I went to Dubuque, Iowa for a conference on Rural and Small Town Churches. It was an excellent conference and I’m glad I attended. I wrote about it for three editions of the eBlast.
- I have not had the opportunity to plan for much this fall. I have put out a suggestion for a Bible Study in late October. Margaret has done a wonderful job rounding up adult volunteers to assist with Youth Group. This frees me up for other things, yet I will still be a monthly presence with our youth.
- I have had someone express an interest in taking part in Sunday School. For Bonnie and Betsy’s sake, it is time to think of a succession plan for them and whether and how we want Sunday School to continue.
- St. John’s Council invites us to a potluck on October 12 after joint worship at 10:00 am. The purpose is to begin a conversation on how we could make joint worship work year-round. At the joint worship service they would like to form a joint choir to sing a simple anthem. I think it is fair to say that there is some trepidation at taking a look at the possibility of joint worship along with the courage and willingness to test out the idea, find out the flaws and address them.
- My birthday (September 16) puts me within four years of mandatory retirement. My goal for my two congregations is that when I leave, I leave you in the best possible position to continue to thrive. My hope is that while you might be sad to see me go, you’ll also be excited for the possibilities that the next chapter brings. I am in conversation with Pastor Jira Alpers in Towanda about the Lutheran concept of six congregations, two pastors, one deacon, and six lay worship leaders. The first step is to identify those persons within our respective

congregations who might enjoy this role. He & I are willing to do the training necessary for this position; it would take approximately one year. We have three possibilities for an expanded partnership: along the Twin Tiers, within Bradford County only, or with other main line denominations here in the Valley.

- Phoebe Marshall is retiring from Altar Guild. Margaret Cole will join and possibly Heather Romano. Training will be provided.

Other Reports:

Sunday School kick off is September 21st, first class will be September 28th
Youth Group reconvenes September 14th. A Corn Maze is part of the kick off.

St. Mary's Guild picnic is September 16th at Betsy's (potluck)

Book Sales during Friday Farmer's Market occurred for 3 Fridays and was a great outreach effort.

Tribute Quartet has an opening next April at a cost of \$4,000. If five churches shared the cost it would be \$800.00 each. Linda will look into it.

Old Business:

- Pastoral Assistant – offer was declined
- Coffee Time – resume September 21
- Dishwasher/Garbage Disposal pending removal

New Business:

- Apply for Grant to install new A/V equipment in the church. We need to try for three bids. One would be On-Cor Technologies, Cortland, NY. The Grant would be from the Diocese Mission Resource Committee. Application by the third week of October for their November meeting.
- Offer to have an organ/harp holiday concert the afternoon of December 7 – do we want to host and what are we willing to pay as an honorarium? Suggested amount would be in the \$200-\$300 range. Should we form a committee to research?
- For our “Capital Improvement” List – new flooring in the parlor.
- Regarding joint worship with St. John – a suggestion is to rotate 6 weeks at each church, with holidays celebrated in our individual churches. An important “Table Topic” discussion will be held Sunday, October 12 after the 10:00 AM service in conjunction with a Harvest Home/Potluck.
- Quarterly Donation – for the 3rd Quarter Vestry has decided to donate to Kids at Risk/The Bridge of the Penn-York Valley Churches.

Adjourn with saying of the Lord's Prayer – 8:00 PM

Motion to adjourn made by Diane, seconded by Bruce. Motion carries.

Our next meeting is Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 6:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Diane Siebecker
Clerk of Vestry