VESTRY MEETING September 8, 2026

Present: Rev. Cn Melinda Artman, Alice Bennett, Bruce Carpenter, Margaret Cole, Doreen Marshall, Mitzi Mohn, Glenn Murrelle, Linda Murrelle, Diane Siebecker, Jeff Watson
Absent: none
Treasurer: Bruce Carpenter
Chairperson: Rev. Cn Melinda Artman

Devotions: *As you have loved us, may we love one another.*

Agenda: Motion to accept the agenda made by Alice, seconded by Jeff. Addition – review Financial Summary Parish Park Fair 2026. Motion carries with addition.

Minutes: Motion to accept the June 9, 2026 minutes made by Alice, seconded by Jeff. Motion carries.

Treasurer's Report: Motion to accept the June, July, and August Treasurer's Reports made by Alice, seconded by Glenn. Motion carries. Pledges may be short at the end of 2026. However, after a detailed look at anticipated year-end revenues and expenses it is predicted we will end the year with a surplus.

The final Revenue & Expense Summary for the 2026 Parish Park Fair was provided. Net proceeds were $3,752.52. This was transferred to the Capital Savings Account.

Senior Warden's Report: Margaret reported that the Parish Park Fair was a success with great support & teamwork. The Youth Group had a lock-in for a night at the church & the event was a positive experience for all involved.

Margaret noted that a concern was raised at the St. Mary's Guild meeting on September 1 that the Kresge Trust was not being used for its intended purpose. Nothing could be further from the truth. Paster Melinda presented a detailed history of the use of the Kresge Trust which is "to be expended for the care and maintenance of the Katherine Price Kresge carillon and for flowers at the altar at Christmas and Easter and one Sunday each year to be chosen at the discretion of the church". This bequest was later extended to cover other related items such as the salary for the choir director and organist and seminars for the choir, as long as the main bequest for the care of the carillon and the altar flowers was maintained. Anyone with questions or concerns may contact Pastor Melinda. Another concern is the tired and soiled appearance of the clock's faces. We may need to use capital funds in the future to take on this project.

Junior Warden/Building & Grounds Chair Report: Jeff reports the Parlor and Parish Hall doors have been replaced. The door mechanism to the Parish Hall door will be adjusted. Repairs have been made to the stove pilot lights. The light inside the church needs a bulb change and Glenn will assist with this.

Margaret reports the lock to the main aisle door cannot be fixed. The "lock doc" is coming to key the locks and look at the door to the nave.

Rector's Report: Pastor Melinda reported on **Pastoral Care** for the summer.

Summer Worship: We began our annual combined worship service with St. John on June 14th. We had our concluding summer worship here at Redeemer on September 6th. We were seven weeks at St. John and six weeks at Redeemer. For the last few years, we have begun our combined services either immediately after Memorial Day or Pentecost, whichever came first. Next year, Pentecost is rather early (May 16). If we begin combined worship on May 23, we will have 16 weeks together. If we begin combined worship after Memorial Day, we would begin June 6 for 14 weeks, which coincides with Bishop Audrey Scanlan's visitation. Regardless of when we begin, I propose that the first half of our summer worship be held at Redeemer and the second half at St. John – simply because of the Bishop's visitation, and to minimize confusion as to where worship is being held. It could be that we have to sweat less if next spring/early summer is as cold and damp as this summer. Given that supply clergy is so difficult to find, I will be trying to schedule my diocesan visitation during the summer months.

Other worship related: The Altar Guild is working with me to find a red wine that I do not have an allergic reaction to (I have a mild allergic reaction to tannins in the red wine). We have yet to identify a wine that all agree on. A few I have no reaction.

I have ordered blue hangings (paraments) for the main and chapel altars, as well as a matching chasable and stole. I believe the Altar Guild has already found blue candles for the Advent Wreath. The new hangings will arrive well before they are needed for Advent. This is an Altar Guild expense.

Christian Formation:

VBS
For the second year in a row, we shared VBS with Sayre Christian Church, Valley United Presbyterian Church, and St. John beginning Sunday July 12 through Thursday July 16. Physically, it was located at Valley Pres. The concept this year was to have VBS be multigenerational. Sayre Christian Church donated the only well regarded intergenerational VBS program on the market "Camp Another Way". As has been true in prior years, more adults participated in one way or another than children, and we had more than 50 participants. Valley Pres donated the space, prepared the snacks, staffed building & grounds, and assisted with publicizing the program. We paid for some advertising and for the bulk of the snacks, St. John paid for supplemental materials. Both St. John and Redeemer re-used a number of items as well.

In looking at other offerings in the valley, our VBS was the only one that had a preschool program. The preschoolers had their own programming that aligned with the Camp Another Way theme. The Youth Group functioned as guides. The adults seemed to enjoy the week as much as the youngsters did.

The pastors agreed that it is asking a lot of them to do something additional on Sundays and would prefer that VBS begin Monday and conclude on Thursday. We agreed that we could use an existing VBS program and make it intergenerational more easily than using the very limited offerings for multigeneration. We have also noticed that some churches are hosting VBS in area nursing homes and this is something we would like to explore. Those who routinely offer to lead VBS had a healthy skepticism about how well intergenerational VBS would go over. With years and years of experience working with kids they had some difficulty wrapping their minds around including adults. This is natural and to be expected. I hope that next year will be easier for them. The valley's population is older, with nearly a quarter of us over 65 and 15% under age 15. Our adaptive challenge is to meet the needs of those around us, rather than those we wish were around us.

Next year, the venue for VBS will be Sayre Christian Church. As we did this year, the pastors plan a pulpit swap.

Looking ahead:

Sunday School resumes September 20 with a welcome breakfast and classes start September 27.

Youth Group starts with a lock-in over Labor Day weekend. Margaret Cole has put extensive effort into planning a meaningful event for our youth.

Confirmation: Our youth are Confirmation age and I will be spending 1 to 2 Sundays a month guiding the youth through our Articles of Faith (as contained in the BCP) and Martin Luther's Small Catechism. There is an opportunity for a regional confirmation/reception in March, presumably at St. Stephen's Procathedral as well as during the Bishop's visitation. I know that Trinity Athens has a couple who are interested in being received and I plan to offer them an opportunity for reception at our June 6th visitation.

Marriage Prep: We will host a marriage ceremony next October. I will be working with the couple through the fall and early winter on preparation for a Christian Marriage. Ben Lentz+ has agreed to be part of the ceremony itself.

Bible Study: I am not sure that I have the bandwidth to offer a fall Bible Study – however, the Bishops want to showcase our Bible Study (we have unusually high participation for our size) at Convention so perhaps I will have to come up with something? Stay tuned. *Planning to do a video on our Bible Study so please be open to participating!*

Bishop Kevin Nichols visit to the Northeast region of the Diocese: Bishop Kevin thoroughly enjoyed his visit to the valley in early August. He fulfilled his promise to Linda to dine at Yanuzzi's. Lay leaders and a couple of clergy were present from the four

churches in Bradford County. Bishop Kevin, along with Missioner of Finance Paula Lapinski, also toured Seneca Lake wineries with a few of us in search of the perfect communion wine. We failed in that mission; however, Bishop Kevin would now like to make this an annual event.

Property: It has been the summer of the doors! The refinishing work on the doors ("newer" doors into the office wing, the doors at the end of the nave, the door to nowhere and the sacristy door) have been completed. We are aware that daylight can be seen under the doors. We are assured that the sweep will keep cold air from infiltrating. I cannot explain why we can see daylight if this is true. Unrelated, the lock on the doors at the end of the nave is barely functional, if at all. To secure the doors, I have placed a 1" x 4" x 12" piece of wood and a length a metal through the door handles. This way, a strong pull from the outside will not defeat the lock. Jeff is thinking through other options, such as a dead bolt.

The door to the Parlor and the Parish Hall door have been replaced. Lock Doc is coming to replace the locks and key them to our existing keys. A new crash bar is coming for the Parish Hall door as it has a slight blemish. A doorstop is desired and I will leave it to Jeff to explain whether it will be installed. Most comments are of gratitude for the doors and how nice they look. There is a concern that when the door is unlocked (by using the hex key on the crash bar) the door will not close fully. Perhaps this is an issue of the overhead closer. One complaint has been received that the doors are not red.

Concerts: If we would like to bring the Tribute Quartet back, and hope for a partner in the expense, Pastor Sharan Knoell of Valley United Presbyterian Church suggests that we approach her now as they are starting to prepare their 2027 budget.

Tim Zimmerman and The Kings Brass approached me again about a concert here. They offer Thursday June 10, 2027 or Tuesday, June 29, 2027 as potential dates. I told Mr. Zimmerman that I thought that they were out of our price range and the best we might be able to offer is $1500. He provided this suggestion:

Accommodations & meals for 9 musicians (one evening – hotel or host homes)
Travel expenses - $750 per concert
Honorarium - $500 deposit requested when scheduling concert, Additional $750
Freewill offering

If we were to receive a surprise bequest, his typical fee is:

Accommodations & meals for 9 musicians (one evening – hotel or host homes).
Travel Expenses - $750.00
Honorarium $2,500.00 (20% deposit requested when scheduling concert)

I would love to have the valley churches coordinate a concert schedule & cross advertise. I do think our concerts have been a gift to the community in addition to our fair. Should we start budgeting for at least one concert a year & then find a reputable group that meets said budget? *Would it be feasible to charge a fee? We should partner with other churches. Diane suggested looking for other groups (Tribute Quartet has been here twice).*

Community Supper:

- During COVID we started to allow "take-out" suppers. This practice continues & our community supper is now serving the number of people we used to see prior to the pandemic. About half dine in (this month, roughly 65 people) & slightly less than half (this month, about 55 people) took advantage of take-out meals.
- Alice has recruited the Sayre Business Association as a sponsor of the dinner for August. Our Youth helped serve as well.
- We need to confirm with the Scouts that they will continue to set up tables & chairs for the last Thursday of the month.
- The dates for November & December fall on Thanksgiving & New Year's Eve. It is my understanding that we will revert to our advertised schedule and NOT have a Community Supper for these 2 months. It is my plan to ask St. John Council if they would like to host an event like Family Fun Night on New Year's Eve. I do not envision this event to go to midnight.

Preparing of Gun Violence at a church:

Bruce & Rose Carpenter, Margaret Cole, Nina Seebeck, Jerry Evans and I attended a "Protect His House" Part 1 Gun Violence Course at the Church of the Nazarene in Owego Saturday August 22. The likelihood of a shooter coming into our space during worship is less than 1%, however; the workshop was well worth attending. There is a Part 2 course that runs through actual scenarios that may be worth attending as well. Here are some takeaways from the session:

- If a member were to take it upon his/herself to carry and respond to a shooting, that person can count on potential adverse interaction with law enforcement.
- We may wish to consider locking our doors 10 minutes or so after worship begins.
- We may wish to consider having a panic button installed in various parts of the building.
- We may wish to have training for our volunteer ushers with regard to medical emergencies, visitors, and visitors who exhibit atypical behavior or apparel.

Post Labor Day:

- Our program year gets started. St. Mary's has their initial meeting September 1. Strong Women Strong Bones resumes the following week. Scouts are meeting September 2. TOPS never stopped meeting. Youth Group begins over Labor Day weekend.
- St. John will be having a rummage sale Saturday September 26. They will need any help we can offer.
- In September, I will be presiding at Sunday worship 9/6 and 9/20. On 9/13 I will be returning from a wedding and on 9/27 I am tentatively scheduled to be in Wilkes-Barre. Pastor Anne Canfield will cover 9/27 and it will be a joint service at Redeemer at 11:00 AM. If I am away in October, the service will be at St. John October 25 at 9:00 AM. This is my last visitation on behalf of the diocese this calendar year.

- There are several preconvention (diocesan) meetings planned via ZOOM.
- October 3 – Diocesan Convention Business meeting via ZOOM; in person near Allentown October 16-17.
- I plan to take Thanksgiving week and most of the time between Christmas and New Year's as vacation.
- Coming in 2027:
    - Bishop in Residence dates: **Northeast Region: March 2-4** with Bishop Scanlin, **August 3-5** with Bishop Nichols.
    - Lay Leader Gatherings: **Northeast Region: April 29** with Bishop Scanlin, **June 24** with Bishop Nichols.
    - General Convention of the Episcopal Church late June through early July. I am a delegate so I will be away for approximately 10 days. I hope Fr. Tom can fill in for me the two Sundays that I will be away.

Sharing information from the Wisconsin Report: Majority of people come to church after "word of mouth" communication. One third of Vestry's time is centered on "Strategic Thinking". Childcare is offered. Just some thoughts.

Community Garden: *Produce has done well. Our local food pantries have benefited from our garden. A $100 Grant was received from the Diocese for "Mushroom Dirt".*

Old Business:
The Baby Grand Piano in the Parlor was a donation from Kathryn Allen. The Piano in the church is better quality. Do we keep both?

Diane reports that since changing to the new envelopes there has been a sharp drop in income for the Discretionary Fund. The Building/Maintenance Fund has also been affected. A lot of people give their pledge monthly versus weekly. If we stay with the current envelopes, is there a means of adding an envelope for these funds (quarterly)? Are envelopes for 2027 already ordered?

New Business: none

Adjourn with saying of The Lord's Prayer -
Motion to adjourn made by Alice, seconded by Margaret – 7:52 PM

Our next meeting is Tuesday, October 13, 2026 at 6:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Diane Siebecker
Clerk of Vestry