

St. Peter's Episcopal Church
Vestry Regular Meeting – July 28, 2025
AGENDA

1. Adoption of Agenda

Formation

2. Order for Evening Prayer

Discussion

3. Approval of Minutes
4. Rector Search Committee Update (Kim Page)
5. Treasurer/Finance Report
6. Interim Rector Report
7. Clergy Transition and Ongoing Support
8. CAT Next Steps
 - a. Mission Conversations
 - b. Renewal Weekend Proposal
9. Personnel Manual Update | Personnel Support and Office Hours

Action

10. Adopt What We Believe Language Update

Information

11. Liaison Reports
12. Junior Warden Report
13. Senior Warden Report
14. Key Upcoming Dates:
 - a. Davis Farewell – July 30 @ 5:30 pm in Burns Hall/Courtyard
 - b. Back to School Sunday – Sunday, August 10th
 - c. Deacon Annette Farewell – TBD
 - d. August Vestry Meeting – August 25 @5:30 pm in Room 201

St. Peter's Episcopal Church

Vestry Meeting Minutes

July 28, 2025

Members Present: Fr. Doug Hodsdon, Ken Saitow (Senior Warden), Jim Carpenter (Junior Warden), Leigh Coulter Beal, Annette Bell (Clerk), Kevin Green, Rob Hicks, Jayne Jeney, Diane LoCastro, Laura Lee Skillman, Tracy Smythe, Beth Thornton, Diane Woodside

Others Present: Kim Page (Rector Search Committee Chair)

Absent: Connie McDaniel (Treasurer)

Fr. Doug called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Quorum was met.

Adoption of Agenda: Diane W. requested to add a discussion about St. Peter's Choir School to the agenda, with Fr. Doug placing this discussion as topic #9a. Leigh moved and Jim seconded a motion to adopt the amended agenda. Motion carried.

FORMATION

Fr. Doug presented the Order for Evening Prayer.

DISCUSSION

Approval of Minutes: Ken moved and Beth seconded a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Rector Search Committee Update (Kim Page): Kim reported that the search committee has been working hard and well together and is now in the second phase of the process. The position was posted one week ago on the Office of Transition Ministry and Diocese of Florida websites. The position went live on the Episcopal News Service on July 28th. The posts have already garnered interest. The posting will remain open until August 31, 2025, with the possibility for extension. After identifying a suitable candidate, the diocese will conduct a background check. Once a choice is made, the new rector will be presented to the vestry who will handle the final negotiations. Kim emphasized the need for confidentiality as we move forward. The vestry appreciates the committee's hard work and asked Kim to convey their gratitude.

Treasurer/Finance Report: Connie distributed seven financial statements, along with an analysis document, which were reviewed prior to the meeting. In Connie's absence, Ken presented the information. Regarding expenses, we are in good shape, and no unexpected expenditures have been identified. We are slightly behind on revenue, which is typical for the slower summer months. As we enter stewardship season, we will keep a close eye on revenue trends.

Three items were presented for vestry approval:

1. Hope House/IDN – The city has mandated that Hope House purchase a \$2,350 grease trap for the kitchen. To assist with this expense, all program participants are being asked to contribute. Ken moved and Diane L. seconded a motion to contribute \$200 toward the purchase of the new grease trap for Hope House. Motion carried. Diane L. also mentioned that John L. is collecting donations to match this contribution and that St. Peter's hopes to ultimately donate \$400.
2. Rector Sabbatical Restricted Fund – The fund currently has a balance of \$7,840.63. Ken moved and Leigh seconded a motion to transfer these funds to the Schuyler account. Motion carried.
3. Parish Donation – Following the recent death of a St. Peter's parishioner, the family was instructed to donate \$50,000 from the estate to St. Peter's. The funds are to be used at the discretion of the vestry. Ken recommended depositing the money into the Thackara Fund, which serves as a rainy-day fund. A question arose regarding where these funds could accumulate the most interest. It was decided to deposit the funds into the Thackara Fund immediately, with future consideration for transferring them to a higher-interest account. Ken moved and Rob seconded a motion to deposit the \$50,000 donation from the parishioner into the Thackara account. Motion carried.

Connie's report indicated that there was an erroneous payment to the Director of Communication and Adult Formation and for organist services in 2024, which prompted a vestry member to question how such an error could occur. Ken deferred this question to Connie and will follow up with her.

Interim Rector Report: Fr. Doug outlined his plans for upcoming Sunday services. August 10th has been designated as Back to School Sunday, with Fall Kick-Off Sunday to be held at a later date and in conjunction with a ministry fair. Regarding stewardship, Fr. Doug's analysis showed that we have made incremental increases to our budget over the years; however, the number of pledges has not kept pace, and the timing of their receipt has been inconsistent. Instead of organizing a themed campaign this year, he plans to take a different approach by delivering two sermons on consecutive Sundays, accompanied by a coordinating Wednesday night program. The theme will be "pisteuo," a Greek word that translates to "trust." This program will focus on trusting in God and the liberation from bondage that comes through tithing and returning to God the gifts He has given us.

Clergy Transition and Ongoing Support: Ken presented on the two following items.

1. Deacon Annette's Transition
 - a. Seminarian support – Since Deacon Annette's seminary program is a hybrid, we will remain her sending parish even after she transitions to St. George's. The Seminarian Fund, which was approved to accept donations to support Deacon Annette, has been generously funded to date. Ken moved and Leigh seconded a motion affirming that the vestry fully supports Deacon Annette in her seminary experience and will ensure that all

required expenses are covered. Motion carried. Ken mentioned that while Deacon Annette will likely submit expenses for reimbursement, Connie and Lee are exploring other distribution options for the designated fund.

- b. Letter to the Vestry – Deacon Annette submitted a letter to the vestry, which was read by Leigh and is attached to these minutes.
 - c. Farewell – Her farewell will take place on Wednesday, August 27th at 5:30 PM. Planning for this event will begin soon, with more details to follow.
2. Mother Rachel's Hours – With Annette's departure, we are losing clergy support, which led to a suggestion to increase Mother Rachel's hours. The financial implications of this change were discussed. Fr. Doug recommended increasing her weekly hours to 30 for the remainder of the year, with a reevaluation to take place at that time. Ken moved and Kevin seconded a motion to increase Mother Rachel's weekly hours to 30, effective August 1st. Motion carried.

CAT Next Steps:

- a. Renewal Weekend Proposal – Following our CAT survey, which highlighted conflict and a need for healing within our church, Susan Czolgosz, the organizational psychologist working with our search committee and vestry, proposed a renewal weekend titled "Renewing the Body, Reclaiming Our Call." This weekend would be followed by five teleconference sessions titled "Speaking Truth in Love," aimed at fostering relational and spiritual growth. The program would feature fellowship, worship, and workshops focused on conflict resolution, and cost \$10,000, which a parishioner has generously offered to cover. The vestry discussed the suitability of this approach for St. Peter's, considering timing and possible modifications to Susan's proposal as well as alternative options. We agreed to discuss this feedback with Susan and check her availability for October 25th. It was also suggested that we create opportunities for parish gatherings before this event.
- b. Mission Conversations – Discussion deferred.

Personnel Manual Update | Personnel Support and Office Hours: At Fr. Doug's request, Annette and Leigh reviewed the Personnel Manual and presented their findings. They suggested updates to outdated language and improved grammar and wording for better clarity. They identified inconsistencies in how employee categories and benefits are presented. Since additional work on the document is necessary, Fr. Doug recommended forming a larger committee. Diane W. and Beth volunteered to join Annette and Leigh in this endeavor, and Connie will also be invited to participate.

St. Peter's/First Presbyterian Choir School – Diane W. informed that First Presbyterian Church is interested in collaborating with St. Peter's on our choir school and that Tim is supportive of the idea and willing to create a proposal for a one-year trial, pending the vestry's approval. The vestry expressed no objections. Fr. Doug will reach out to the pastor at First Presbyterian to discuss this collaboration further and ensure that all aspects are addressed.

ACTION

Adopt *What We Believe* Language Update: Ken presented the two alternatives to replace the second paragraph of our existing *What We Believe* statement on our website, which have been under consideration for the past few months. The vestry subcommittee created the first alternative, while the second is a modification of the first, based on feedback from parishioners. After some discussion, it was determined that a unanimous decision could not be reached, and a decision on this matter was postponed.

INFORMATION

Liaison Reports: Written reports from our Creation Care, Music & Children's Ministry, and Adult Formation & Parish Engagement liaisons were distributed and reviewed prior to the meeting. An opportunity for questions and discussion was offered with none held.

Junior Warden Report: A detailed written report was distributed and reviewed prior to the meeting. Jim noted that, effective immediately, the Organ Door will automatically lock Sunday at 9:05 AM and 11:05 AM, and will unlock at the end of each service as an enhanced security measure. There was an opportunity for questions and discussion with none held.

Senior Warden Report: Ken shared additional information about the efforts he and Jim are making to improve security on our campus in response to a concern raised by a parishioner, as well as the increasing issues seen nationwide. They will conduct a campus security review with Captain David Bishop, a former parishioner and member of the Fernandina Beach Police Department, to identify best practices and assess our needs. He also reported that the search committee for the youth director has been formed, and started the search process.

Key Upcoming Dates:

- i. Davis Farewell – July 30 @ 5:30 pm in Burns Hall
- ii. Back to School Sunday – August 10
- iii. Deacon Annette Farewell – August 27
- iv. August Vestry Meeting – August 25 @ 5:30 pm in Room 201
- v. Fall Kick-off Sunday and Ministry Fair – TBD

Jim moved and Tracy seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Annette Bell, Clerk of the Vestry