



St. John's Episcopal Church

3 Cross Street, P.O. Box 422, Essex, Connecticut 06426

(860) 767 8095

Vestry Meeting Minutes

Date & Time: February 25, 2026
6:30 PM

Location: Via Zoom only

Members: The Reverend Dr. Elaine Ellis Thomas, Rector,
Wesley Henry, Warden, Jam Perruccio, Warden,
John Rogers, Treasurer, Peter Holland, Clerk, Lois
Blood Bennett, Tony Custodio, Leigh Dorrington,
Chip Goodrich, Donna Moeller. Jane Riggio, Kevin
Walsh

Regrets: Pam du Pont, Linda Board

Guests: Charles Walden, Chair, Investment Oversight
Committee, Patrick Gingris, Investment Oversight
Committee

Agenda Item

1.	Opening Prayer	
2.	Annual Report of the Investment Oversight Committee (IOC) Charles Walden provided informational background on the IOC including active management of the Hayden and Heritage Trusts and oversight of Donations and Bequests (D&B) funds held and managed by the Diocese of Connecticut. The Hayden Fund is intended to produce a reliable income stream to fund the Rector's housing allowance. The Heritage Fund and D&B funds are intended for the long-term financial health of the parish. Patrick Gingris reported that as of December 31, 2025, our three investment accounts aggregated to \$1,171,842. The consolidated assets increased by 11.8% in 2025.	

	The Vestry discussed a revised IOC policy including a pledge of personal accountability. The material edits included a change in performance benchmarks, a limitation of high-yield investments to no more than 10% in the Heritage Trust and a requirement for investment managers to read, accept and be bound by the IOC Pledge of Personal Accountability. Members of the IOC and the Vestry also agree to be bound by the provisions of the IOC Pledge of Personal Accountability. The year-end 2025 financial reports of consolidated assets, the IOC policies for the Heritage and Hayden Trusts and The IOC Pledge of Personal Accountability are attached.
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3.	Introduction and Welcome of New Members Rev. Elaine warmly welcomed and thanked newly elected members of the Vestry, Donna Moeller, Chip Goodrich and Pam du Pont.
4.	Consent Agenda Jan moved to accept the consent agenda, the motion was seconded by Lois. The motion was approved.
5.	Action Items Parochial Report Pursuant to Canons of the Episcopal Church, the 2025 Parochial Report for St. John's was reviewed by the Vestry. Lois moved that the Vestry approve the report, Tony seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. The report will be submitted to the Episcopal Church (Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society). A copy is attached. Investment Oversight Committee Governing Documents These documents had been discussed during the IOC presentation. Tony moved that the IOC documents as revised be approved. Jane seconded the motion. A discussion ensued about a need to add both co-wardens to the signature lines of documents. The motion passed unanimously. Copies are attached.
6.	Rector's Report Rev. Elaine announced the birth of Cecilia Lynn Pandolfe, daughter of Music Director Anthony Pandolfe. The congratulations and best wishes of the Vestry to the Pandolfe family were duly noted. Lent has begun. The Thursdays in Lent series will commence on February 26. Plans are in place for an active series or events and services. In addition, Rev. Elaine announced that on March 8, a new service will start on the second Sunday of every month at 4:30 with intergenerational activities, fellowship,

	food, fun and Holy Eucharist. Jane has convened a small group to prepare the nursery area. Bishop Suffragan Laura Ahrens will be leading a book discussion group on congregational development for five weeks. Rev. Elaine has asked Megan Wrinn to fill the administrator position vacated by Chelsea DiDonato. Meghan's official duties will commence on Monday, March 2. Certain of Meghan's former duties will be relinquished and will require that members of the parish "step up" their engagement including a new events committee and a liaison from the Vestry. On other committee matters, Chip will liaise with the IOC, Kevin will continue as chair of Mission and Justice and Tony volunteered to serve as vestry liaison to the Building and Grounds Committee. Rev Elaine would like to initiate a project to refresh parish branding, including an update of our mission and vision statements. The parish has entered into a contract with Comcast for an improved phone system. The Vestry will hold a retreat this spring which will commence with a social gathering followed by a full-day session to discuss, among other topics, Dr. Stephanie Speller's work on "Nones and Dones" and their insights on the future of faith. A date is to be determined. Rev. Elaine introduced her intent to acquire new service linens as may be required.
7.	Treasurer's Report Inasmuch as it is early in the fiscal year, John advised there was little to report. John's financial reports are attached. John discussed a need for the Vestry to review our gifting policy and an update of the planned giving program. Rev. Elaine will email these documents to the Vestry. John offered to organize a subcommittee to address a legacy giving program and the possible uses for such bequests. For example, Rev. Elaine informed us that the church organ no longer meets the needs of the parish and that she is in the very preliminary stage of considering the requirements for a new instrument. John also identified the need to recruit a stewardship chair and committee for 2026. St. John's has approached the Diocese of Connecticut with an appeal letter concerning their methodology of calculating our annual financial commitment to the diocese. A motion was made to send a letter (copy attached) to the diocese. Lois so moved and Jane seconded the motion.
8.	Co-Warden Report Jan expressed the appreciation of the wardens for the hiring of Meghan, the new key control and access program, the plans for the new Sunday afternoon service, and St.

	John's Socials. St. John's Socials is intended to be a program for parishioners to join together in individual homes as each group may elect to do. Jan raised the need for a review of the bylaws to ensure they conform to current practices and to the overarching governance requirements of the Episcopal Diocese.
10.	New Business Rev. Elaine reminded the Vestry of upcoming dates for speakers on March 15 and April 26, when Rachel Field will visit the parish. The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 pm following a closing prayer. Note: All documents attached hereto are made a part hereof.