



## St. John's Episcopal Church

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

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### DRAFT - Vestry Meeting Minutes

**Date & Time:** August 19, 2026  
6:30 P.M.

**Agenda Item:**

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| <b>Location:</b> | St. John's and via Zoom                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Members:</b>  | The Reverend Dr. Elaine Ellis Thomas,<br>Rector, Wesley Henry, Warden, John<br>Rogers, Treasurer, Peter Holland, Clerk,<br>Linda Board, Pam duPont, Chip Goodrich,<br>Donna Moeller, Jane Riggio, Kevin Walsh.<br>Lois Blood Bennet, Grace Horner-Breault                                                                                           |
| <b>Regrets:</b>  | Jan Perruccio                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|                  | <b>Opening Prayer</b><br><br>Rev. Elaine offered an opening prayer of thanksgiving for teachers including a collect for Artemesia Bowden who was appointed principal of an Episcopal school for Black children in 1902 . The school ultimately became, and still operates as, a junior college in San Antonio, Texas. The meeting convened at 6:30. |

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| 2. | <p><b>Special Vestry Vote</b></p> <p>Pursuant to the St. John's Bylaws, a motion was made, seconded and unanimously passed for Grace Horner-Breault to join the vestry. Grace fills a vacant position and her term expires upon election of a new vestry at the next annual meeting of the parish. She was warmly welcomed as a member of the vestry.</p> |
| 3. | <p><b>Consent Agenda</b></p> <p>Wesley made a motion to accept the consent agenda (with the addition of the building and grounds report) to approve the June 17, 2026 vestry minutes and the meeting agenda. The motion was seconded and passed with a unanimous vote.</p>                                                                                |

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| 4. | <p><b>Rector's Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A new deacon, Lee Febos, will be joining the staff at St. John's on September 13. A recent Yale Divinity School graduate, her confirmation as an Episcopal Priest is anticipated in January 2027. St. John's will fund approximately \$5,000 of her compensation package and the Diocese will bear the balance of the associated costs.</li> <li>● Megan Wrinn's hours will be formally increased to 40 hours/week and her salary will be adjusted accordingly.</li> <li>● The expenses for Lee and the increase in hours and salary for Megan can be managed within the budget.</li> <li>● Sandy Loether has agreed to lead the effort to secure candidates for the election of vestry members in 2027. It is hoped that Nat Eddy and Patti Pickering will agree to assist in that effort. The vestry was asked to put forward recommendations.</li> <li>● The Rector announced an initiative to provide a welcoming message to new residents in Essex. On an associated topic, we discussed creating welcome bags for visitors to church services.</li> <li>● Website updates including an improved search feature are underway by our outsourced IT support. In the future, we expect that staff will be able to perform certain updates internally.</li> <li>● The acoustic ceiling panels for the parish hall have been ordered, and it is hoped that installation will be by October.</li> <li>● Steven Snyder has agreed to lead our building and grounds committee. We warmly welcome him to this important role.</li> <li>● A seasonal "kick-off" cookout is being planned for Sunday, September 13 and planning for the October 3 rummage sale continues.</li> <li>● An additional witness stone to commemorate Thomas Sobuck, an indentured Native American, will be placed at the church in October. The Nehantic Tribal Community will participate in the ceremony. The aesthetics of the witness stones will be improved.</li> </ul> |
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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The annual giving program is being planned and Darlene Ferris anticipates delivering a plan during the first week of September. The campaign will run for three weeks in October and end on All Saints Day.</li> <li>● We discussed the general need for an improved name badge process to facilitate their use. The Rector will be making suggestions.</li> </ul> |
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| 5. | <p>Treasurer's Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We had a brief discussion of the most recent annual audit. A few minor financial controls were recommended, specifically a better process for pending check deposits and the need for the treasurer to acknowledge, and initial, certain financial documents.</li> <li>● Clio Coles and John are analyzing budget variances, none of which are material.</li> <li>● The IOC has passed a resolution for implementation in 2027 that asks the vestry to establish a process and specifications to hold our cash demand deposits at our investment manager MAI rather than at Wells Fargo Bank. The purpose is to capture a higher rate of return.</li> <li>● John informed the vestry that 3 years of outside financial audits will be posted on the website.</li> <li>● We discussed the funding of the outreach program and the plan to fully fund commitments to our outreach partners. John confirmed that rummage sale proceeds are dedicated to outreach.</li> </ul> |
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## 6. Mission and Justice Committee

Kevin presented his requests for funding to the vestry  
as follows:

VFW - \$2500  
Shoreline Soup Kitchens - \$2500  
A Sacred Place - \$2500  
Habitat for Humanity - \$2500  
Episcopal Relief and Development - \$2000  
Bill's Blessings - \$1500

A motion was made, seconded and passed with a unanimous vote to approve \$13,500 of total funding. John was asked to transmit the funds from our outreach account.

We continued with a discussion on performance-based philanthropy and the request for outcome-based metrics associated with our outreach program.

Jane raised that there is increasingly a trend to serve more guests at the weekly soup kitchen. The most recent dinner hosted 41 people. Several suggestions were made to maintain meals in reserve that could supplement what had been planned and the possibility of establishing a fund to which volunteers could apply for reimbursement of food expenses.

## 7. Strategic Planning

We discussed vestry assignments for each of our three areas of focus in the strategic plan. The assignments follow:

Mission and Vision: Elaine, John, Jan, Wesley and Peter  
Welcome and Invitation: Donna, Pam and Chip  
Engagement: Lois, Pam and Linda

Grace and Kevin remain available for assignment.

The individual groups should convene as may be necessary, to refine their thinking and to complete the strategic plan template prior to the next vestry meeting.

## **8. Closing and Adjournment**

Elaine read a verse from the hymn, *God of Grace and Glory*. The meeting adjourned at 7:54 PM.