

Grace Memorial Episcopal Church
Vestry Meeting Minutes
October 5, 2025

Members of the Vestry Present

Roosevelt Carter (2026)
Marissa Cheplick (2028) (remote access)
Martha Humphrey (2027)
Yetunde Laniran, (2026) Jr. Warden
Charles McGee (2026) Co-Sr. Warden, Meeting Chair
Nora McLaughlin (2027)
Kevin Walsh (2026) Co-Sr. Warden, Rector's Advisor
Stephen Weeks (2027)
Jennifer Yeast (2026) (remote access)

Clergy Present

The Rev. Martin Elfert (Rector)
The Rev. Liz Klein (Deacon)
The Rev. Lara Halsey (Curate)

Others Present

Sue Jensen, Organist and Choir Director
Brother Andrew
Robin Gault, Substitute Clerk

Members of the Vestry Absent

Xander Almeida (2028)
Jennifer Traeger (2028)

Check In

Br. Andrew suggested that Grace Memorial donate a gift basket to be raffled off at the diocesan convention, Oct.17-18. Several people offered items to donate, and Sue Jensen will help Br. Andrew with local business contacts who might want to donate.

Martin reminded everyone of the importance of compliance with the Safe Church program. Please complete this training if you have not already done so.

Martin asked for suggestions for new readings or meditation to open Vestry meetings. Yetunde suggested moving the Moment of Grace from the end of the meeting to the beginning, and everyone liked that idea. Meetings will open with Moment of Grace beginning in November.

Roses and Thorns

Several members complimented the Gala last night. Yetunde offered special thanks to Martha Humphrey and Sue Jensen for their work. Yetunde asked that members bring their Gala donations as soon as possible.

Liz thanked Sue for her work on the Safety Committee and the Garden Committee.

Items

Consent Agenda

The minutes of the September Vestry meeting and the Consent Agenda were accepted as published.

Use of Grace Campus Space

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Use of Grace Campus Space

Martin brought up the question of how best to utilize the Grace campus space, including the two houses. Should Grace hire a consultant? After some general discussion, Vestry concluded that more information is needed about what professionals could offer.

Art Camp Problems with Grace Parking Lot

Yetunde reported that there were problems with Art Camp's use of the parking lot this summer. She asked whether Nick and Sue, who spent a lot of time on this problem, should be paid for their work by Art Camp. Liz noted that the Safety Committee has already talked with Ashley about parking lot issues. Kevin noted that this year's young security staff needed more training. Yetunde suggested that Art Camp parents park at Lloyd Center or Westminster Presbyterian Church.

Kevin already plans to meet with Nick and Grace Institute staff.

Need for Lay Leadership of Grace Ministries

Several members brought up the need for more lay leadership of Grace ministries.

For example, the Safety Committee and the Community Dinner both need lay leadership. Martha suggested that we move the Ministries Fair to midwinter, rather early in September, to allow more time for ministry leaders to plan.

Report from Rev. Lara Halsey

Rev. Lara further elaborated on the contents of the Curate Report to Vestry that was earlier circulated. Lara and Andre are planning an Advent study program.

Finance Committee Report

Roosevelt Carter has resigned as Chair of the Finance Committee, and Marissa Cheplick has been proposed as the new Chair. (The title of the Finance Committee Chair is "Treasurer." Martin will discuss this with Marissa before a formal election.) Marissa prepared some charts showing GMEC's financial position, and members suggested a few changes to clarify the information. Yetunde assured the members that they will have more information in time to plan next year's budget.

Martin is especially concerned that Grace has drawn \$60,000 from Reserves this year.

Grace Ramp Project

Yetunde proposed Robin Gault as the chair of the "Ramp Committee," and the Vestry confirmed this. Robin reported that Brian Carleton drafted a plan for a ramp that would connect the breezeway door and the church door and run toward NE 17th Ave. When he approached the city about the project, he learned that the PBOT has a "right-of-way" along NE 17th Avenue that extends almost to the walls of Grace's buildings, and PBOT is unwilling to allow us to build a ramp that extends onto the right-of-way. Robin will contact Brian to see whether it would help to locate the ramp closer to the buildings. (On October 10, Brian emailed Martin and Robin that the right-of-way is so close to the buildings that even a ramp against the walls would touch the right-of-way. Brian's advice is to appeal the PBOT ruling.)

Conflict of Interest Policies and Communication Covenant

Martin distributed copies of these documents. The Conflict-of-Interest Policies need to be signed and returned.

Delegates to Diocesan Convention

Martin reported that Jo Bronson, Andre Pruitt, and Ann Crocket have agreed to be Grace's delegates to the convention October 15-17 in Salem. We will select delegates to the 2026 convention at the Grace Annual Meeting in January 2026.

Grace Institute / Art Camps

Kevin reported that Grace Institute will have fall, winter, and spring camps. The

Summer 2026 camp theme will be Cuba

Grace Institute / All Camps

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Grace Institute needs more board members who are Episcopalians. Martin suggested that we combine an “ask” with the blessing of the new mural.

Vestry Retreat

The Fall Vestry Retreat will be 10 a.m.-2 p.m. on an early weekend in November.

Martin said that the location is not yet decided, but it will be either at Grace or somewhere nearby. Kevin will contact Vestry members.

Bylaws Review

Kevin reported that the bylaws need review and possibly revision. They should be reviewed every year.

Policies and Procedures Manual

Charles reported that Kevin is updating this.

Safety and Security Guidelines

Liz reported that the Safety and Security Committee has drafted guidelines for how to deal with various problems. Charles suggested that these should be included in the Annual Report to distribute them as widely as possible.

Social Media Committee

Martha reported that the Committee was able to get information about the Gala on social media. She is still working on access to Instagram.

Updating Grace Memorial’s Image

Sue wants a new letterhead for Grace envelopes, perhaps something reflecting our 2026 centennial. We also need a more contemporary-looking website. Sue will get a subcommittee together.

Moment of Grace

Martha read Mary Oliver’s poem, “Wild Geese.”

Closing Prayer / Go in Peace

Liz gave the closing prayer, “Invocation for Portland.”

Charles adjourned the meeting at 1:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Robin Gault, Substitute Clerk