

Grace Memorial Episcopal Church

Vestry Meeting Minutes

March 29, 2026

Members of the Vestry Present

Shannon Jones (2-year, 2028)

Yetunde Laniran (2029)

Nora McLaughlin (2027) Co-Sr. Warden, Rector's Advisor

Kathleen Park-Lindsay (2029)

André Pruitt (2029)

Jennifer Traeger (2028)

Stephen Weeks (2027) Co-Sr. Warden, Meeting Chair

Clergy Present

The Rev. Martin Elfert

The Rev. Lara Halsey

Others Present

Louise Tippens

Annie Gilligan

Alicia Perkins Lehrle, Clerk

Members of the Vestry and Clergy Absent

Marissa Cheplick (2028), Treasurer

Kirstin Greene (2029)

Martha Humphrey (2027)

1. Formation

1.1 Opening

- The meeting was called to order at 12:18pm by Stephen who gave all present the opportunity to offer three declarative sentences: how are you, what's new, and any blessings.

2. Items

2.1 Moment of Grace

- Shannon shared two wonderful readings by Joanna Massey and ee cummings, both with the theme of joy of life and living.

2.2 Roses

- Stephen thanked Shannon for her due diligence in researching the experience of other parishes with Family Promise. Nora thanked Yetunde and Folake for making sure there was a coffee hour this morning in the absence of the assigned group.

2.3 Consent Agenda

- The March 1 Minutes and Rector's Report are the Consent Agenda items. André moved the Consent Agenda be approved as presented, and Jennifer seconded the motion. There was no discussion, and the motion was approved.

2.4 Financial Report

- Louise reported that Marissa is working with Nick Fox to formulate a financial report that's easier to understand. The process of accessing the reserves is being developed and is a high priority for the Finance Committee. Nick will provide reports to the Finance Committee, and the Committee will be studying the numbers carefully. The Finance Committee will report regularly to the Vestry and were requested to report monthly. Time tracking is also a priority to assess how much time is spent on building management, administrative duties, and so forth. There was a discussion regarding the importance of not taking away from the staff but to address time management positively and help create a positive money stream. Maximizing fund raising and the importance of working together was also discussed. Louise added that an important goal of the Finance Committee is to have all financial systems in place by year's end, and she also said the capital project list is being finalized. She concluded by saying financial systems and controls are being established.

2.5 Family Promise Experience Report

- Shannon has talked to representatives from two churches who are participating with Family Promise. She has one more to contact but is waiting until after Easter as the contact is the pastor of the church. Seth Truby of Family Promise was very responsive to Shannon's request for references.
- The first reference has a day center program through Family Promise with rotational short stay (1 week) locations. Families go through this type of program before moving to

the “static” program that is planned for Grace. Shannon’s contact offered high praise for the program with no issues and added Family Promise has high standards for behavior.

- The second reference is from a church in the Spanaway, Washington area. This program has car camping in the parking lot and a host house. Both the house and parking lot have low barriers for participation with some rules but not as many as the plan in Portland. Most of the participating families in Spanaway have now moved to non-subsidized housing. A few problems were reported but the overall experience has been good.
- Shannon added that Family Promise will ask families to leave the programs if it is not working for them, although they help the families as much as possible.
- Suggestions from the references for working with Family Promise include:
 - Have specific guidelines in the Memorandum Of Understanding.
 - Hold regularly scheduled meetings with the parish.
 - Establish a pet policy.
 - Have Seth attend a coffee hour to present information about the program and the process for families.
- Many thanks were offered to Shannon for her research. The report from the third reference will be sent electronically after Easter. Stephen said the Vestry should meet with Seth before he attends a coffee hour. Providing the congregation with printed information in advance of the coffee hour meeting with Seth was suggested.

2.6 Gala Report

- Annie Gilligan and Jennifer confessed to temporarily losing their minds when they agreed to chair the 2026 Gala, but they are forging ahead nonetheless. September 19 has been chosen as the Gala date, and they suggested future Galas be scheduled at a different time of year so as not to conflict with the Stewardship Campaign. Although there has been a specific fund-raising goal in the past for the Gala, Annie and Jennifer think funds raised this year should go to the general fund because of the budget deficit. There were no concerns from the Vestry with this approach. Discussion is needed regarding educating the congregation on the actual cost of running the parish so that the Gala fund raising goal can be better understood. Jennifer said a future wish list for the parish might be presented in conjunction with the Gala. Annie and Jennifer asked if there was a fund-raising goal for the Gala and were told the usual amount is \$35,000 less expenses.
- Jennifer and Annie agreed their goal is to have a celebration and strengthen the link to the community. Contacting the neighborhood association was suggested, and, if there is a neighborhood newsletter, submit an article from Grace. Jennifer and Annie, who are both relatively new to Grace, asked for suggestions of people in the congregation who could help, especially with running the Gala computer program. They have talked to past organizers of the Gala but feel there are still gaps in their knowledge. A possible tie-

in to the upcoming 100th anniversary of the nave was mentioned, and they were told Charles McGee is the best resource for information about the anniversary celebration, although it will be a separate event. Talking to Grace's media organizer, Martha Humphrey, was suggested as well. They concluded by saying they are working on a theme to include the neighborhood and Grace's partners.

2.7 Ministries

- Nora and Stephen would like Vestry members to do fact finding for particular ministries at Grace to assess how they are doing, what they need, and what ongoing support would look like for the ministry. Nora and Stephen will provide a template of questions to help with the fact finding. Future reports from a ministry might be in person to the Vestry, and these initial reports are due in 1 or 2 months. After discussion, the following ministries and Vestry liaisons are as follows:
 - Altar Guild – Shannon
 - Building and Grounds/Jr. Warden – Stephen
 - Ushers and Greeters – Kathleen
 - Safety and Security – Stephen and Nora
 - Acolytes – Jennifer
 - Racial Justice/Environment – André
 - Youth Ministry – André
 - Community Meal – Yetunde
 - Coffee Hour - TBD

2.8 Departure of Deacon Liz

- Deacon Liz is being reassigned to St. Bartholomew's in Beaverton, beginning Palm Sunday, and there will be a farewell party for her at Grace on May 3. Martin said a stole is being made for her. A gluten-free bake-off, with recipes provided, was suggested as part of the party.

2.9 New Business

- The May Vestry meeting should probably be moved as the current date conflicts with Memorial Day.
- An update is needed on the photo book.
- The current Vestry meeting date of the 4th Sunday of the month conflicts with the State of Grace meeting dates.

2.10 Adjournment

- Martin offered a blessing, and Stephen adjourned the meeting at 1:47pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia Perkins Lehrle, Clerk