

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
Vestry Meeting Minutes
July 21, 2026, 6:00 PM
Christian Education Building, Room 1

Attendance

Vestry present: Jeff Anderson, Bill Byrd, Randy Centanni, Rebecca Franz, Margaret Ott, Joel Simõneau, Natalie Lapacek-Trout, Dennis Utt, and Beau Womack.

Clergy present: Rev. Emily Rowell Brown, Rev. Taylor Johnson

Guest: David Mack

Staff present: Cynde Tannehill

Call to Order/Opening prayer

Rev. Emily convened the meeting at 6:02 p.m. and opened with prayer.

Approval of Minutes

The June vestry meeting minutes reflected that Rebecca Franz was not listed as attending, however she was present. The June vestry minutes will be updated accordingly. Jeff Anderson moved to accept the updated June vestry minutes; Randy Centanni seconded the motion. **Following a vote, the motion carried.**

Treasurer Report – David Mack

The treasurer's report was presented. The month was described as "slow and boring" financially. Key points included income being 18% over budget, while personnel and office expenses also went over budget due to retaining Taylor and a quarterly property insurance payment. The general fund balance is stable at around \$70K. A new restricted fund for NCAC t-shirt sales has been created.

The annual audit, conducted on July 9, 2026, found no significant issues. Minor discrepancies included missing documentation for a few checks from the previous rector's discretionary account. The audit committee commended the ECW records, managed by Margaret Ott, and the Scouts' records managed by Andy Williams, for being exceptionally well-kept. Bill Byrd moved to accept the audit report as presented; Beau Womack second the motion. **Following a vote, the motion carried.**

The Endowment Committee is currently inactive, with Aaron Franz serving as its sole member. The vestry will review the committee charter, consider whether temporary vestry appointments are appropriate, and invite at-large interest during an upcoming Sunday re-engagement meeting. Melanie Pezzula may serve as an advisor for up to three months and is expected to attend the August 2026 vestry meeting. Outstanding matters include banking obligations, voting requirements for pending deposits, and the resumption of quarterly reports to the vestry.

Bill Byrd moved to amend the budget by adding a new line item titled "Pastoral Care/Hospitality Fund" in the amount of \$250 for the remainder of the year. The fund

shall be administered at the discretion of the Rector and Associate Rector for relationship-building and pastoral-care expenses, including meals with prospective new members or counseling-related meetings with current members outside the church office. Expenses incurred by Rev. Emily from this point forward shall be covered retroactively. Margaret Ott seconded the motion. **Following a vote, the motion carried.**

Sr. Warden's Report – Beau Womack

Senior Warden Beau Womack reported that, with the rector now in place, there were no additional updates beyond those previously shared with the vestry. The Endowment Committee matters may be brought forward for discussion at the next meeting. The Senior Warden also welcomed Emily and expressed appreciation for her presence.

Junior Warden's Report – Joel Simõneau

Junior Warden Joel Simõneau reported that several maintenance items have been completed, including replacement of the Amy West building window, mold mitigation in the storage closet, and ceiling water-damage repairs above the sacristy. Remaining follow-up items include securing an electrician to repair the blinking security light in the parking lot, addressing the water fountain reset light after filter replacement, and replacing AC filters during an upcoming workday following expiration of the maintenance contract.

Old Business

Rev. Emily reported that the office has sufficient furniture for the year; a fireproof safe and laser printer for Cynde's office will be considered in next year's budget.

New Business

- **Credit cards for Taylor and Emily:** Senior Warden Beau Womack moved to approve the issuance of church credit cards through Trustmark Bank to Rev. Emily Rowell, Rector, and Rev. Taylor Johnson, Associate Rector, each with the standard credit limit of \$5,000. Randy Centanni seconded the motion. **Following a vote, the motion carried.**

- **Discretionary funds for Rector and Associate Rector**

Resolution for new Rector's Discretionary Fund: Bill Byrd moved that the vestry adopt the resolution presented establishing the St. Matthew's Episcopal Church Rector's Discretionary Fund for the Rev. Emily Rowell, with the full text of the resolution appended to and incorporated into these minutes as Exhibit A. The fund shall be used solely for charitable purposes, shall not be used for the personal benefit of clergy, and shall be administered in accordance with IRS and diocesan regulations. Beau Womack, Senior Warden, seconded the motion.

Following a vote, the motion carried.

- **Resolution for new Associate Rector's Discretionary Fund:** Bill Byrd moved that the vestry adopt the resolution presented establishing the St. Matthew's Episcopal Church Associate Rector's Discretionary Fund for the Rev. Taylor Johnson, with the full text of the resolution appended to and incorporated into these minutes as Exhibit B. The fund shall be used solely for charitable purposes, shall not be used for the personal benefit of clergy, and shall be administered in accordance with IRS and diocesan regulations. Beau Womack, Senior Warden, seconded the motion. **Following a vote, the motion carried.**
- **Approval of opening new discretionary accounts:** Margaret Ott moved that St. Matthew's Episcopal Church open new checking accounts at Trustmark Bank for the Rector's Discretionary Fund (Rev. Emily Rowell) and the Associate Rector's Discretionary Fund (Rev. Taylor Johnson), as the prior accounts had been closed. The vestry approved funding the accounts for the remainder of 2026 in the budgeted amounts of \$300 for the Rector's Discretionary Fund and \$225 for the Associate Rector's Discretionary Fund, with the vestry to review later in the year whether additional funding is needed. Randy Centanni seconded the motion. **Following a vote, the motion carried.**
- **Clergy housing allowance resolutions:** Bill Byrd moved to approve designating portions of clergy compensation as non-taxable housing allowances for IRS purposes, with annual allowances of \$36,000 for Rev. Emily Rowell and \$20,000 for Rev. Taylor Johnson, with no impact on the church budget. Beau Womack, Senior Warden, seconded the motion. **Following a vote, the motion carried.**
- **Celebration of New Ministry/Rector dates:** Two dates were identified for Bishop Richard's availability: Thursday, November 12, pending resolution of a scheduling conflict with the Madison Quilt Guild, and Tuesday, October 27, which has no known conflicts. Rev. Emily will confirm Bishop Richard's availability.

Clergy Report

- Rev. Taylor will offer an adult Sunday school class in Gruman Hall this fall, allowing attendees to participate as available without needing to follow a continuous series.
- Rev. Emily reported that after Labor Day, services will return to 8:30 AM and 11:00 AM. Beginning July 26, 2026, one comprehensive bulletin will be used for both services. Bishop Richard agreed to preside at both services during his visit. Early-service music remains under review, with Rev. Emily to gather choir feedback before making final decision.
- Rev. Emily will meet with Diane Loehr to discuss recruiting additional members to support stewardship efforts; vestry suggestions welcomed.

- Rev. Emily is reviewing office-hour procedures to reduce interruptions, support staff workload, and limit after-hours work. Options under consideration include protected administrative time and a possible lunch closure.
- Rev. Emily introduced a vestry covenant intended to establish shared norms for meetings, promote efficiency, and encourage open discussion. The vestry members unanimously signed the covenant and returned it to Rev. Emily.

Ministry/Committee Reports

- Bishop Richard will attend Sunday, September 20 beginning with the 8:30 a.m. service and is available to lead a brief question-and-answer session or presentation between services. Although pig roast preparations will be underway, approximately 10–12 volunteers are expected to be involved in setup, and attendance at the bishop's session is expected to remain reasonable because volunteers may step away from their tasks as needed.
- Jeff Anderson is scheduled for surgery on Monday, July 27, with an anticipated 10-day hospital stay and approximately three weeks of limited availability. During his recovery, he will step back from serving as a Lector, Usher, and VOD responsibilities, and the vestry agreed to provide coverage. Jeff will ensure that Cynde has all pig roast documentation and that backups are assigned for his responsibilities in the event of an emergency.

Closing Comments/Prayer

The meeting concluded with prayers for Jeff Anderson's upcoming surgery at UAB, and the Lord's Prayer.

Adjourn

With no further business to address, the meeting was adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynde Tannehill

Cynde Tannehill, Vestry Clerk

Date: July 26, 2026