

Rector's Report for September 2026 Vestry Meeting

A recap of events/activities/goings-on since the report for our August vestry meeting.

Worship: We celebrated Pride Sunday on August 23, with Theo Patterson offering a thoughtful and heartfelt sermon. Our services capped off Pride weekend in Santa Barbara, with the Pacific Pride Festival having taken place the day before. Once again, Trinity collaborated in hosting a booth with folks from St. Mike's in IV and All Saints by the Sea. // After a couple of Sundays away (vacation), I returned in time for Welcome Back Sunday, with CGS starting up church school classes once again, and the choir being back in the chancel. Many thanks to Christine Purcell for her preaching on forgiveness. Sunday evening was also the first Compline service of the new program year, and I was delighted to be there to listen to Pico Iyer, the evening's guest storyteller - a fabulous start to the new "season." // Following the 10am service on 9/13, I met with a group of adults who are to be confirmed or received on Sunday, 9/20, during Bishop Brookhart's visitation to Trinity. Later in the week, I joined the Youth Group to talk about the baptismal covenant "will you" questions, in preparation for those youth who'll be getting confirmed on 9/20. There are a total of 19 people - adults + teens - to be confirmed/received. // Behind the scenes, there's been a good deal of back/forth going on between me and Bp Brookhart (retired from Montana) about the service, as he seems unaccustomed/uncomfortable with Trinity's progressive theology as expressed in the liturgy.

Financial Things: Work has continued on the initial draft budget for 2027 (with the aim of producing the target number for the upcoming annual giving pledge campaign. // The Strategic Filter working team has been meeting - both with the consultants from Vandersall and on our own - and doing work on articulating Trinity's core values.

Miscellany: Along with Sarah Thomas and John Draper, I attended a week-long workshop through the Gaede Institute at Westmont College on "incarnational preaching," a program to ground our preaching in the humanity of Jesus. // It was exciting to attend the author event at Chaucer's this past Tuesday, as Ellen O'Connell Whittet's newest book (Book of Hours) was released. Sarah Thomas asked thoughtful questions of Ellen, which gave Ellen a chance to talk about the book's themes, why she chose to tell this story through fiction, the meaning behind the book's title, and so many other topics.

Personal: I spent 2+ weeks on vacation in northern Michigan, near Traverse City, with family (brother, sister-in-law, their children and children's spouses, and my child). It was wonderful to see all the cousins reconnecting, and to have lots of time to walk along the beach, play games, eat good food, and look at the stars in a place far from city lights. I was also glad to have a little time in Ohio at the beginning and end of the trip, to see my dad, still doing well at 98 ½!

Respectfully submitted,
September 18, 2026
Elizabeth+

Associate Rector Report, September 2026 Vestry Mtg.

Parish Council

Parish Council met in the Youth Group room because it was so hot in the church building! We debriefed the Leadership Retreat, planned for our upcoming Annual Giving season, and reported what each council was up to. Isao Sugano (Hospitality co-chair) led us in some beautiful music for our opening and closing prayers, guitar and all!

Justice and Outreach Council

JOC met for their September meeting and voted to continue the \$2000 allotment each, for our 4 historic ministries: St. Michael's University Church, Sarah House, Transition House, and Harding School. The council is using this month to research other local organizations to begin the discernment process of where Trinity justice grants will go. Work is also being done to create more bridges between JOC and current Trinity justice and outreach ministries.

Supper Club

The group enjoyed a fun meal with the residents of Vera Cruz Village. Some new folks arrived to check us out and new relationships are forming. Trinity volunteers also met (on a separate occasion) with other church volunteers who do other Supper Clubs in town for mutual encouragement and learning. DJ Johnson of Kingdom Causes (who began Supper Club) led us in this effort. We met at Trinity.

Compline

Compline began its 5th season a couple weeks ago with the amazing Pico Iyer, who shared a story about the transformative nature of intentional silence. There was a huge turnout but still enough tea. Phew! The sacristans group (who set up and take down the set -- it's a big job) welcomed 4 new sacristans (all young adults in our congregation). We were able to give Pico an honorarium from the donations at the door.

Pastoral Care

I meet with many parishioners to offer pastoral care at home, in my office, in the hospital, and at coffee shops. Bouquet Blessings is looking for a few more volunteers, including one person to help organize the supplies once a month, with the assistance of ministry leader Elizabeth Patterson. There aren't many requests for Home Communion lately. It is probably a good idea to communicate to the parish that people can ask for this at any time.

Annual Giving

Many thanks to Betty Wenzel who has been keeping us organized while Elizabeth was on vacation and while Elizabeth and I have been at a local preaching conference. I am in the process of recruiting storytellers to share brief testimonials during Sundays in October. Reminder to Vestry members to sign up online or on the easel to help out in one additional way at the actual kickoff event on October 10th.

Sacraments

I had the wonderful opportunity of helping prepare our youth for Confirmation at the youth group meeting last week. Theo Patterson and I led a discussion around the sacraments and what it means to be confirmed. It's a wonderful group of kids!

On Sept 6th it was a great joy to invite Susie and Jarry Bartz to renew their wedding vows of 60 years during our Sunday service.

I am working with one couple in preparation for their wedding in October.

Larger Community:

I attended the Bishop Meet n Greet in Oak Park with 7 other Trinity folks. It was a great time to hear from our new bishop Antonio and to share how the Spirit is moving at Trinity!

County Supervisor Laura Capps reached out and invited me to attend the Board of Supervisors meeting in support of the effort to prevent more gun retail stores from occupying spaces right next to places where children congregate. I made a public comment and in the end, the effort passed.

I had the honor of joining parishioner Ellen O'Connell Whittet at her book launch event at Chaucer's where I was in conversation with her around her new book *Book of Hours*. It was wonderful to see so many Trinity folks in attendance.

I am currently offering spiritual direction to two Westmont students as part of their course requirements. Westmont pays me a modest sum which I contribute to the clergy discretionary account.

Continuing Education

Elizabeth, John Draper, and I attended an "Incarnational Preaching Project" conference at Westmont for 3.5 days, led by parishioner Aaron Sizer who heads up the Gaede Institute along with parishioner Christen Foell. It was a very diverse bunch of people and much food for thought. Each of us will be crafting little preaching experiments throughout the year, and have assembled "home feedback teams" made up of 2 parishioners each. I am glad we are going through this formative process together.

Personal

The last few weeks were focused on staying on top of things while Elizabeth, Mary Ann, and even Betty were on vacation (for part of the time). Since fewer people were in the building, it was a good time to get our carpets cleaned and they look terrific. My mom turns 80 this month and since she will be in LA for a few days, my brother and I are traveling down after church on 9/20 to spend some time with her.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Sarah Thomas, Associate Rector

Senior Warden Report September 2026

We're right in the thick of Welcome Back time here at Trinity. There are lots of great programs kicking off their season, and the place is bustling with activities! It's great to see the Atria back up and running after what I am sure was a welcome summer break. I can attest that the break from my choir commitment was very healthy, and that I'm also glad to be back in the chancel with my friends once again.

August saw a big time commitment from the Vestry and other Trinity ministry leaders as our second leadership retreat of the year focused on "money narratives." This was a facilitated experience where on Friday evening participants were guided through a reflection on their own history and stories with money. Saturday's work shed some light on how these personal perspectives affect our conversations about money here at Trinity. While there is more work to be done, I feel like this is a good start to refreshing and reflecting on how Trinity shapes its priorities as we move toward drafting our 2027 budget.

Another project the Vestry has undertaken with the consultants at Vandersall Collective is to develop a "strategic filter". This decision-making rubric incorporates Trinity's values as expressed by what we have written about ourselves in the past, as well as survey results and in-person conversations about what makes Trinity special to us today. There is a small working group, composed of myself, Elizabeth, Isao Sugano, Ellen O'Connell Whittet, and Michael Arnold, that is currently focused on refining the words used to describe Trinity's values in order to incorporate them into this decision making tool. The small group will then work with the Vestry to finalize and adopt the strategic filter, which will help to ensure that Trinity's values are always part of the decision making process when we're talking about program, budget, personnel, buildings and grounds, and other domains that are essential to our life together.

Our parish continues to be on a solid financial footing thanks to the generosity of our congregation. We've experienced an expected slowdown in pledge payments due to summer "distractions", and I'm sure that Keith Cobell's well-received announcement on Welcome Back Sunday will help to get our pledge payments back on track.

This report is being prepared the week before a record-breaking number of Confirmations. The last count I heard was 19 people, diverse in age and backgrounds, who were either being received or confirmed into The Episcopal Church. To me, this is a powerful statement about the community and way of life that we co-create together, and I'm grateful to witness what's happening. The Spirit is with us!

Blessings,
Brian Bargiel, Sr. Warden

JUNIOR WARDEN
REPORT TO VESTRY

September, 2026

Warm weather slows things down. We had a short Vestry meeting last month out on the labyrinth. Given the circumstances, it worked out quite well.

The Building and Grounds Committee has not met in the last month. Things have been getting done – most of which I reported at our last meeting. At that meeting I also reported that we have approximately \$120,000 of window work that needs to be done. Building and Grounds would like to begin scheduling it. The cost would likely be spread over two or three years. At our meeting this month, I will be asking Vestry for authorization to proceed with scheduling all of the work.

I have been meeting with a small group of our parishioners with Vandersall Consulting on the program to adopt better skills at decision making. The overriding theme, is making decisions in the context of how they impact the values and goals of Trinity. Vandersall has submitted a first draft of what they discern to be our values. Our group will be working with the materials over the upcoming weeks.

We completed our Vandersall leadership retreat. I think we had some interesting discussions about our own attitudes about money and how they informed our perspectives on Trinity finances. However, we did not actually discuss Trinity finances in any detail. I believe it is important to pick up where we left off. Soon.

On Tuesday, 15 September, we had a meeting of our Executive Committee via Zoom. In attendance were; Sarah McCarter, Clerk; Keith Cobell, Treasurer; Sarah Thomas, Associate Rector, and Elizabeth Molitors, Rector, and me. We discussed the agenda for the upcoming Vestry meeting. All in all, it was a productive meeting with good discussion. We completed our work in less than an hour. I like meeting by Zoom. It is easier, quicker, and more efficient.

Respectfully,
Michael Neal Arnold
Junior Warden

Treasurer's Report to the Vestry
September 23, 2026

Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Snapshot: August 2026

Income and Expenses	Actual	Budget
Income	61,243.33	78,000.00
Expenses	89,603.02	86,991.09
Net Income	(28,359.69)	(8,991.09)

Notes

- **Pledge giving slowed over the summer and is now behind plan.** August pledge payments totaled \$52,977 against a \$70,000 budget (76%), bringing year-to-date pledges to \$563,724 versus a \$618,837 budget - a shortfall of about \$55,100. With two-thirds of the year behind us, we have collected 63% of the annual pledge budget. Summer is typically our slowest giving season, but closing this gap in the fall will be important to finishing the year on plan.
- **August ran a deficit, and the year-to-date cushion is now nearly gone.** The month closed with a \$28,360 loss against a budgeted \$8,991 loss, driven by lower income rather than spending. Year-to-date, Trinity is \$5,970 in the black versus a budgeted surplus of \$30,874 - still positive, but roughly \$24,900 behind plan. This is a manageable position, and one worth watching as we head into the Fall.
- **Some August expenses are temporarily overstated and will correct themselves.** Several vendors and the diocese have changed how they accept payment, and as the Business Manager moves bills onto auto-pay, a few were paid twice in August. These duplicates inflate the month's expense figures and will be absorbed over the next few months. Underlying spending remains disciplined: year-to-date expenses are \$695,660 against a \$719,213 budget, about 3% under plan.
- **Trinity's long-term financial foundation continues to strengthen.** All investment funds increased in market value in August. The three endowments - Brackenbury, Looking Beyond Ourselves, and the Mark Asman Progressive Theology Fund - rose \$51,611 during the month to \$3,098,404, up nearly \$225,800 (7.9%) since the start of the year. Total investments stand at \$3.47 million and total assets at \$4.17 million.

Respectfully submitted by Keith Cobell, Treasurer.
September 16, 2026

For any questions or comments:
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