

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the
Vestry of Trinity Episcopal Church
May 18, 2026**

The regular meeting of the Vestry of Trinity Episcopal Church was held on Monday, May 18, 2026, in the Foster Room. The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Senior Warden Paul Bugas.

The following members were present: Lindlee Baker, Paul Bugas (*Senior Warden*), Charles "Rick" Chittum, Kathy Frazier, Zebulen "Zeb" Riley, Donald Romanik, Jean-Paul Shibut, and Karen Tate. Also present were The Rev. AJ Heine (*Rector*), The Rev. Cara Modisett (*Associate Rector*), Chris Yoder (*Seminarian Intern*), and Phillippa Holley (*Vestry Clerk*).

James Dungan, Mary Faulkner (*Junior Warden*), Fred Odell, and Kristin Reichert were absent. Molly Brown (*Treasurer*) was also absent.

Fr AJ opened the meeting with a reading that dealt with an abundance mindset and closed with a prayer.

Chris Yoder, a Postulant for Holy Orders, was welcomed. Chris is required to complete three internships. He is completing his third assignment here at Trinity.

Approval of Minutes: There was one correction to the April 2026 minutes. Under New Business, the second bullet should read "Enhanced participation rather than communication." After the correction it was moved by Jean Paul Shibut and seconded by Karen Tate that the minutes be approved. The motion passed.

Finance and Administration: The April financial reports were submitted. Senior Warden Paul Bugas reviewed areas in the commentary and key performance indicators. There were no questions. On the recommendation of the finance committee, the financial statements were accepted as read and posted.

Property Committee/Junior Warden's Report: The report was submitted and is attached. Renditions for new signs were also posted as well as an estimate from Rite Lite Signs, Inc. to manufacture and install the signs. The property committee recommended that \$60,000 from the excess of the Generation-to-Generation funds be designated to pay for the signs. It was moved by Karen Tate and seconded by Fr. AJ that \$60,000 from the excess of the Generation-to-Generation funds be used for the signs. The motion passed.

Adult Formation Report: The report was submitted and is attached.

Youth and Children's Ministries: The report was submitted and is attached.

Mission and Outreach Committee: The Committee met last Thursday and had conversations with Ellie Moser of CarePortal and Jane Ford of SACRA. CarePortal is a care-sharing technology that drives action for local children and families in crisis by linking identified needs with direct responses by members of local churches. The Committee will meet in June to consider Trinity's participation in this network and also discuss a comprehensive approach to our ministries in Honduras.

Community Life: The report was submitted and is attached. Of note, the Funeral Guild Committee has been functioning after some of our recent funeral/memorial services. Greeters started at the May 17th 10:30 service. Guidelines are being developed for Greeters.

Worship: The Director of Music report was submitted and is attached. There will be an Organ Recital in Memory of George K. Taylor on September 6 at 5 p.m.

Senior Warden's Report: Senior Warden Bugas discussed his views on the pertinent areas in the above reports.

Associate Rector's Report: The report was submitted and is attached.

Rector's Report:

Some of the July 4th activities will be

- Bunting for fences
- The Carillon will play all day
- Flags around the graves
- Concert with Gen and Joel
- The church will be open for tours
- Ice cream social after church on July 5
- Bill Frazer and Tom Howell will give a lecture on Trinity's role since our founding on Sunday at 9:15

Fr. AJ is making preliminary plans to take his sabbatical in the spring/summer of 2027, with the goal of being gone in months when Rev. Cara will be here, i.e., not during General Convention which Rev. Cara is attending as a delegate.

The new Bishop will be ordained June 13. A fundraising letter will be coming from the diocese. Trinity does not have to give a gift (specifically from our congregation); however, our parishioners will be encouraged to donate directly to the cause.

Bishop Karin MacPhail will be attending the Augusta Convocation on June 20. Trinity will host the convocation.

A resolution honoring Elizabeth "Bizzy" Lane, has been written by Susan Palmer. It was moved by Zeb Riley and seconded by Rick Chittum that we accept the resolution. The

motion passed. The plan is to present it to her on her last Sunday at Trinity before she moves out of Staunton.

New Business: None.

There being no further business, it was moved by Jean-Paul Shibut and seconded by Donald Romanik that the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled Monday, August 17, 2026.

Compline followed adjournment.

Fr. AJ Heine, Rector

Phillippa D. Holley, Vestry Clerk

Attachments:

- Property Committee Report
- Adult Formation Report
- Youth and Children's Ministries Report
- Community Life Report
- Music Report
- Associate Rector's Report

Trinity Episcopal Church
Property Committee

May 11, 2026

Members present: Zeb Riley, Mary Faulkner, Mike Mahler, Bizzy Lane, John Chisholm, Emily Cochran, Rick Chittum, Dick Coleman, AJ Heine and Jeff Selkirk

Bill Frazier represented the VA 250 Grant Committee

Opening Prayer: The Rev. AJ Heine

VA 250 Grant Update: Bill Frazier reported the new handicapped ramp was started this week. Archeology will be coming to check for grave locations for that and the new sign at the church yard entrance. He is working on a handicapped push-button access opener for the church door. The sign project will cost significantly more than we anticipated. We will ask the Vestry to approve \$60,000 from the Generation to Generation funds for signs. Bill has just gotten a bid for replacing downspouts on a section of the church. We are also moving forward on a proposal to build a safer entry at the altar guild/choir entrance.

New Business

Playground Extension: Emily Cochran. Williams Brothers suggested adding mulch to incorporate the oak tree area which would expand the playground and protect the oak tree roots with mulch.

Hobart service contract: Jeff Selkirk reported that our service contractor for kitchen equipment hadn't increased their fees for over 12 years, and were trying to recoup that in their latest bid. They have renegotiated, and also offered a 50% discount for payment in advance.

Additional new business: None

Old Business: None today

Next meeting: August 10, 2026, 5:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth (Bizzy) Lane

Adult Formation
Vestry May 2026
Rev. Cara Ellen Modisett

Adult Sunday School for the spring semester has officially ended, but following a one-week break (May 17), we will be starting summer sessions. The first, a six-week series, will be a discussion centered on the book *Was America Founded as a Christian Nation?* by John Fea, a recommendation AJ got from Pastor John Peterson at Covenant Presbyterian. Reading the book is optional – it will be possible to participate in the discussions without having read it. Sessions will be led by AJ, myself and Chris Yoder, our seminary intern.

After the Independence Day weekend, for the rest of the summer we'll be using the coffee group model we adopted for Lent this past year (a sort of soft-launch of foyer dinner groups). We won't divide into week-to-week groups, as many travel in the summer, but there will be card decks similar to our Baking Bread, Breaking Bread cards, with opening and closing prayers, getting-to-know-each-other questions, Lectio Divina prompts and reflection questions on the Gospel.

Rector's Book Group and Writing our Faith are on hiatus for the summer, though the writing group will do another one-day retreat hopefully at the Belfry, as we did last year, and we are working on compiling a collection of writings by participants over the last few years that will be available to Trinity parishioners and anyone else interested.

Men's Bible Study continues on Wednesday mornings. Women of Faith suspends its Wednesday discussions for the summer starting in June, but will continue monthly lunches.

The spring semester of adult Sunday School ended on a high note, with our final installation of Between the Collars until fall – these have continued to be lively – a two-part class on prayer bead making and prayer writing led by Joe Fiechtl, and musical performance and talk on spirituals, gospel and the blues from Austin Shifflett that drew almost 50 people, including some from outside Trinity.

Our last field trip, to the Edith J. Carrier Arboretum at JMU, was sparsely attended but still a beautiful experience – likely a combination of not doing a registration form and a late spring season that saw a drop in attendance across all age groups. The first three drew large crowds. We are planning to continue those in the fall, bimonthly to monthly, on third Sundays.

The adult formation committee will be meeting more often in the coming months, and have been an outstanding sounding board and brainstorming group as we look at our goals and hopes for adult and intergenerational formation, so stay tuned for some new initiatives for fall!

YCM

May 11, 2026, 6:00 p.m. on Zoom

Attendees: Cara Modisett+, Shannon Riley, Crystal Fiechtl, Katie Faulkner, Tammy Krause

Debrief:

*Youth Service in general- everyone involved; 3 kids were greeters (some were busy with prep choir); maybe do parent/kid ushers if we can plan ahead; only a few readers (some were nervous, Ember was awesome and this specific age group was perfect because they read slowly and loudly)

*Senior sermons- very well and beautiful! They preached at **both** services and that went really well.

*This year we had a senior come to the front who was unknown during the service- let's try to get ahead on this next year with more announcements to make sure we don't run into this again

*Easter Sunday suggestions: bring food for adults earlier in the morning; Krissy doing the Godly Play lesson was a great filler (since it was bad weather) and would be great to include in future years even if the weather is good; Alleluias were a hit too; if we want to have coloring pages for Alleluias, maybe have more crafting supplies or make them more known they are available – suggestion to color them in Sunday School the Sunday before Shrove Tuesday. Could add to them/color more on Tuesday evening.

Today's Agenda:

*Classrooms check-in:

*Fewer kids in Godly Play the last month, notes were added in asynchronous April meeting document

*Ways to display art? Cork board for hanging – good to show the stories; posters

*Crafting: lower numbers (report from Sharlene)

*Who is returning? Katie, Erika and Sharlene all stepping down from teaching

*Crafting and Common Ground combined for most of the spring (not enough kids for both classes, but still a large age gap which is a challenge)

*Cara would like teachers to write up summaries so we can anticipate what age groups we will need to include next year (TBD on Sunday); also to have record of Common Ground development for future teachers.

*What can we do for wandering kids? Fiechtls, Reicherts, etc. We cannot designate a location for them because we would need 2 adults to be with them.

*Triniteens say it is nice to have a large pool of adults to be in this group, we just need to make sure that all the adults who are volunteering have done Safeguarding and are reliable (unsure that all who are interested in becoming involved are also reliable at this point); let's try to make the leaders consistent next year.

*Charlotte Ver Planck; Melina, Adrienne and Claire Fiechtl and Fiona Dierksheide are all going on diocesan Grace House mission trips this summer.

*Crystal, Wendy, CJ, etc. will be planning game night in July and August – emailing with Cara

Update: Friday, July 10 and Sunday, August 9 are both now scheduled for games – open to all ages (including adults).

*Still planning to do back-to-school gathering at the beginning of school year in fall with pizza at Montgomery Hall Park – Labor Day Sunday – open houses at 9:15 – parents can visit classes while teachers are teaching. Back to school picnic right after the 10:30 service.

Future:

*Teachers/YCM meeting scheduled for Sunday morning, May 17 at 9:15 a.m. to iron out details for next year

Tasks:

*Cara will reach out to group about summer game night (done: see above)

Community Life Coordinator

April/ May 2026

- Memory Café (Continues through Summer)
- Volunteer spots are being scheduled and quickly filling through Summer of 2026
- We are seeing new participants each month.
- Eucharist at Baldwin Park (Continues through Summer)
- AJ & Cara rotate
- Tuesdays at Trinity will resume September
 - Choir
 - DOK
 - Mostly Millennials
 - Honduras (Spaghetti)
- Mostly millennial groups
- Established communication thread and will provide 3rd Tuesday dinner and meet after the dinners.
- Organized Adopt a Street/ First Clean up Day is May 2nd
- Trinity Untapped (Continues through Summer)
 - Monthly schedule established through September.
- Inner Soul (Continues through Summer)
- Meet 2nd Thursday of each month at 11am in Gooch Room. Women above 70 meet to discuss and study life and spiritual needs of the group.
- Trinity Cares
 - New Team of Volunteers added (Teal Team)
- Community Life Committee
 - Funeral Guild Committee developing
 - Greeters Started May 17th
 - Scheduling for 10:30 Service
- Next Community Life Committee Meeting is May 20th at 5:30 pm in the Foster Room
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- **Parish Picnic May 31**

Chairs: Cilla Levitt and Zeb Riley

- Parish Retreat September 18-20

We are having a wonderful time expanding our Trinity community and involving as many people as possible in our growth and development I have been overwhelmed by all the support and willingness from our parishioners. We welcome all inspiration and participation from each of you. Contact me to share any brainstorm ideas you have. Thank you.

Music Report for Vestry – May 2026

End of Choir Season

As we come to the close of another season, I remain ever grateful for the faithful servants who devote an incredible amount of time, energy and hard work to the choir community. Yes, we have beautiful music and a “great choir” but there is so much that goes in to making that happen. Our choirs have continued to grow, not just in size and ability, but more importantly, as a ministry and family, who support one another through all of life’s joys, sorrows and challenges. Additionally, the choirs share a common goal of serving as a vehicle to enhance our worship services, whether we are singing for a Festive Easter Eucharist, a “low-Sunday” summer Eucharist, a funeral liturgy, or Choral Evensong.

The recent Senior Sermons delivered by our four graduating choristers were a strong testament to the important role the choral program serves in the lives of our young people. Adult choir rehearsals end each week with the sharing of prayer concerns and thanksgiving; this is lay-led ministry.

Trinity Sunday, May 31, marks the final Sunday for the adult choir to sing officially as a vested, processing choir. During the summer, many of our regular choristers take a well-deserved break. A smaller sub-set of choristers will come each Sunday morning at 9:30 to learn a piece to sing during the offertory. The summer is a low-pressure, low commitment time for interested new people to meet some of the choir members and experience singing in the choir themselves. Perhaps you may want to try it out for yourself?

Upcoming Concerts

On **Tuesday, May 26, at 7 pm**, we will host organist Ted Babbitt, a recent college graduate, who is playing at Trinity as part his “Next Chapter” performance project. As he travels from college to his home in New England, he is playing an organ recital in each state. We are thrilled to be Ted’s choice for his Virginia performance.

July 4th at 3 pm – Gen and Joel will play a fun and festive Organ Concert, complete with a little John Sousa!

September 6th at 5pm – Organ Recital in Memory of George K. Taylor

Sacred Music Week – June 7 - 12

Trinity's inaugural Sacred Music Week begins with an **organ duo concert on Sunday, June 7 at 5 pm**, played by Gen and Jon Bolena. Adult singers will have an opportunity to attend a choral workshop on the music of William Byrd.

Enrollment is very strong for our upcoming Choir Camp next month. In past years, we have welcomed an average of 25 singers to camp. I'm expecting about 35 this year, which includes the nine boys for our Boychoir Experience! I'd love to add a few more boys...if you know a boy in rising 2nd grade and up who loves to sing, please send him my way! Not to be missed highlights for the week include Evensong Thursday, June 11 at 5 pm and the Sharing Session Friday at 11:30.

Faithfully submitted,

Gen Bolena

Associate Rector's Report May 2026 Vestry

I'm writing this report on a Friday between the sacraments and life moments that we are blessed to share as clergy and as people in faith communities – this morning, a wedding by a mountain stream along a hiking trail in the national forest, and this afternoon, the funeral for one of our well-loved and much-missed parishioners. Last night we celebrated Eucharist for the Feast of the Ascension, in a sense a bridge between the two.

The past month has been full as we wound down the Easter season and the program year, starting to plan for fall formation and attempting to find a few days to get to the Bellfry for a writing retreat for the first time in a while. I traveled to **Virginia Theological Seminary** on April 30 for the retirement of Dr. Lisa Kimball, one of my professors and mentors, dean of lifelong learning and a vice president at VTS. VTS is going through a number of transitions in the coming two years, including the retirement of our dean, Ian Markham. Earlier this week, I sat in on one of the Zoom listening sessions convened by

the search committee, in my role as an alum and as a 2022 class steward. It was interesting to hear the perspectives on the church from several decades of graduates, and I was glad to hear that the trend is moving toward optimism – a recognition that the church is changing, but not disappearing, and growing, though it looks and works and ministers differently than in the past.

On May 3-4 I was in Martinsburg, West Virginia for the annual meeting of the **Province III Synod**, the first time I've attended this. I led Morning Prayer on Monday and was asked by the synod president Bishop Kevin Brown (Delaware) if I would chaplain next year's Synod and Province III's monthly board meetings. Former DIOSWVA Bishop Mark Bourlakas was there, as well as Bishop Marianne Budde, and clergy and lay representatives from 12 dioceses. Our keynote speaker was the Rev. Dr. Michael DeLashmutt, senior VP/dean/professor at General Theological Seminary, who spoke and led workshop discussions on the impact of AI on the Church, from theological and practical viewpoints. Province III Synod is an opportunity for dioceses to work together on shared ministries that include and have included youth, campus and young adult ministries, racial healing, creation care and United Thank Offering grants. In advance of the Synod, I spoke with Bishop-Elect Karin MacPhail, and John Levin, lay delegate from St. John's, Roanoke, talked with Rev. Jonathan Harris to gain a sense of how our diocese has been involved in Province III work and how it might be involved, and shape the work of, Province III in the future.

Several parish projects in the works – Trinity will host an in-person **Safe Church** training on Wednesday, May 27, and I invite all our vestry to register and encourage others to do so – Safe Church is good training for anyone in the congregation, and helps us create a safer space for all ages, children to elderly, especially our vulnerable populations.

We will also be hosting a **conversation on Christian Nationalism** on Friday, June 5, with speaker Dr. Jacob Cook, a professor at Eastern Mennonite Seminary. I've been working on this with Pastor Daniel Hess at Christ Lutheran and Pastor Brett Isernhagen at Christ United Methodist. Dr. Cook will be giving a talk in the church, with a moderated Q&A, followed by refreshments and continued conversation, likely around newsprint questions, in McCracken.

Various **family** gatherings – my nephew Peter will graduate from high school on May 30 (he'll be attending Virginia Tech in the fall), and I'll be on family vacation the second week of June and coming back Thursday for Friday and Saturday of bishop's consecration in Roanoke.