

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Windsor, Connecticut

February 10, 2026

Attendance

Present: Father Don, Larry Young, Ken Roach, Margaret Shields, Debbie Hutchinson, Andrea Anderson, Susan Burgdorf, Katrina Woodhouse, Linda Rickard, Jan Belinger, Jo Anne Harrison Becker, Carol Hall, Chuck Drake, and Dave Stender.

Absent: John Carpenter, Debbie Boone, and JoAnne McLeod.

1. Call to Order

The February 10, 2026 Vestry meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by Father Don. Due to inclement weather, the meeting was held via Zoom.

2. Opening Prayer

Because of technical difficulties, Linda Rickard led the vestry in saying the Opening Prayer.

3. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

In response to a question by Susan Burgdorf, it was confirmed that the matter of the interior church railing was included on the agenda.

4. Approval of the Minutes

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to accept the minutes as written from the January 13, 2026 Vestry meeting.

5. Old Business

a. Update on St. John's Campus

Jan Bellinger reported that an engagement letter has been signed with the attorney who has been engaged to find any heirs to a portion of the property so that title to the property can be cleared. This will also require the opening of a probate estate. The lawyer will represent St. John's Church (Grace Episcopal) in probate court.

b. Update on Roof Repairs

Larry Young reported that the repairs over the chancel have been substantially completed. The roofer will return to do some repairs that were not addressed. The total cost is \$41,800, which has been paid. The work on the rear roof of the Tuttle House has been delayed due to inclement weather. It may be possible to begin again next week.

c. Update on the Ramp

Dave Stender received a third bid for the installation of the ramp. He thanked all of the attendees who submitted comments and questions regarding the three bids. He sent the three bids to our designer, Tom

Nolan, for his comments, noting that there is a \$40,000 spread between the high and low bids. Dave is preparing questions to send to the three contractors in response to the comments he has received, including the following: (1) start and finish dates, (2) not all bids included raising the north-south rail, (3) absence of warranties, (4) payment schedule, and (5) whether permit fees are included. It was noted that permit fees could be \$1520 for a \$100,000 project.

It was the consensus of the meeting that the vestry needed answers by the February 24th special vestry meeting. In the absence of a formal property committee, it was decided that Katrina Woodhouse, Chuck Drake, Larry Young, and Dave Stender would meet to review the contracts and obtain answers from the contractors. This ad hoc committee would synthesize the answers and make recommendations to the vestry as to which bidder to select. It was also decided that if the ad hoc committee reached a unanimous decision as to the contractor, the group would contact Father Don so that the vestry could approve the decision by an on-line vote. The vote could be ratified at a later vestry meeting.

d. Update on St. John's Hall Sign

Jan Bellinger reported that she, Debbie Hutchinson, and Father Don met with an iconographer, David Clark (a member of St. John's, Vernon), to discuss a sign for St. John's Hall and a logo for Church stationery. David will look at his existing icons and prepare some designs to show the vestry for feedback. Debbie is thinking of a fleur de lis or lily design, perhaps with scripture verses. The design would hopefully include a scroll at each end to capture the idea of two churches joined together. The cost is unknown at this point but will probably be minimal.

e. Update on the Strategic Planning Committee

Ken Roach reported that the committee held two productive meetings. He received feedback from committee members that he will incorporate into a new draft, hopefully within a week. The draft will be presented to the Vestry at its regular March meeting.

f. Special Vestry Meeting – February 24th

Father Don asked whether the entire parish should be invited to the special meeting with Gianfranco Grande. It was the consensus of the vestry that this was premature and that a meeting with the vestry only would be more appropriate.

g. Railing Inside the Church

Sue Burgdorf noted that the railing in the passageway connecting the office to the sanctuary is broken and very dangerous. Larry Young responded that he is working on the matter and hopefully can order an additional railing to replace the broken railing at the same time that he orders railings for other areas within the Church.

New Business

a. Financial Report

Larry Young reported that there were some initial accounting issues in January because the church has a new payroll reporting provider, ADP. He did not issue a financial report for January 2026. Vestry members will receive a revised 2025 financial report and a year-to-date 2026 financial report at the next vestry meeting.

Larry did present a rough draft of the 2026 budget, which shows that expenses will increase significantly while revenue has decreased. 2025 projections had assumed that the St. John's campus would be sold by 2026, which is not the case. \$66,000 a year is needed to support the campus as is. And \$96,000 is needed to

support Grace Church, for a total of \$162,000. This amount represents 4.6% of the endowment which is within Diocesan guidelines. The bottom line is that we can balance the budgets for both churches until the final destiny of the St. John's campus is determined.

In response to a question from Katrina Woodhouse, Larry explained that legal fees for St. John's are being paid out of cash on hand. Insurance and maintenance expenses are paid from the endowment.

Personnel expenses include \$27,000 for a supply organist.

Upon a motion by Jan Bellinger, and seconded by Ken Roach, the financial report was approved.

b. Stewardship

Father Don, Andrea, and Larry Young met to discuss the disappointing returns from the recent stewardship campaign. Andrea reported that some parishioners are reluctant to make a formal pledge, although they make an offering each week. Father Don and the Stewardship Committee will send another letter to the congregation reporting on the disappointing results and emphasizing that parishioners should pledge even if it turns out that they cannot fulfill their pledges due to unexpected reasons.

c. Alcoholic Beverages

Father Don noted that Diocesan policy allows alcoholic beverages at Church functions and recommended that Grace Church adopt an alcoholic beverages policy limited to beer and wine. Each function would have one sponsor who would be prohibited from drinking. Moreover, the Church should obtain an insurance policy for its protection. Father Don will circulate a draft policy which, hopefully, can be voted on at the on-line meeting concerning the ramp, and ratified at a subsequent meeting. Debbie Hutchinson asked whether Grace Church is charging enough for the rental of St. John's Hall. More research is needed regarding the practices of other churches.

d. Church Services in St. John's Hall During Inclement Weather

Father Don noted that the temperature inside the Church during the last Sunday service was barely 60 degrees and questioned whether it would make sense to hold church services in St. John's Hall if there are similar weather conditions. Although there was initial support, it was noted that there is no piano in St. John's Hall and no ability to have an on-line Sunday serve from that location. Hopefully, inclement weather will no longer be an issue this year and the subject can be revisited in the future.

e. 100th Anniversary of Black History Month

There was a lengthy discussion as to what Grace Church could do to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Black History month. Father Don noted that the Diocese has a reparations fund and a reparations board. Debbie Hutchinson reported that she had spoken with Carol Hall and Jan Bellinger regarding a panel discussion/chat centered around the topic of "finding comfort in the uncomfortable." Panelists/discussion leaders would include Reverend Charlotte's husband who is a teacher at Loomis Chaffee School, Windsor Mayor Nuchette Black-Burke, and Father Don. Father Don will contact Valerie Stanley, the former senior warden at St. Luke's New Haven, to possibly join the panel. Refreshments from the Caribbean and Ghana could possibly be provided. The proposed date is February 28th at 7:30 in St. John's Hall.

Katrina Woodhouse suggested that any program should focus on racial justice. Debbie noted that a dialogue on racial justice should take place throughout the year.

Father Don also suggested an 11-week course from Sacred Ground that focuses on various groups of immigrants as they were integrated in U.S. society. He will look into the possibility of offering it in the spring.

Chuck Drake asked how the panel discussion and other possible programs would be advertised in Windsor and the greater community. Debbie is preparing a flyer plus announcements at other churches, to reach out to other congregations. Chuck recommended that Grace Church contact the Windsor Journal to advertise the upcoming program and possibly run stories about other Grace Church activities. It was noted that St. Andrew's Church in Bloomfield has a regular column in the Windsor Journal. Debbie will contact Linda Rickard with more information about the February 28th program and Linda will reach out to John Karas, Editor of the Windsor Journal, about running an ad and/or a lead article.

Other Business

Dave Stendesr mentioned that he has spoken to one newcomer who has attended a few Sunday services, but who was unaware of the pew cards inviting newcomers to contact the Church for more information. Chuck Drake will place a stack of pew cards near the ushers and encourage them to hand the cards out to newcomers. Father Don suggested making the cards more attractive. Popcorn bags were also suggested.

Closing Prayer

With no further business before the vestry, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm. Father Hamer led the vestry in saying the closing prayer. Many thanks to Linda Rickard for taking the minutes for this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Rickard on behalf of

JoAnne McLeod, Clerk