

CHRIST CHURCH CHRISTIANA HUNDRED

Vestry Minutes

February 13, 2025

7:00 PM

Present: Chuck Arensberg, Ran Barton, Cindi Cozza, Barb King, Ted Ledden, Alexander Maynard, Thorpe Moeckel, Scott Nickle, Eliza Phillips, Bart Reese, Jaq Whalen, Alexia Wolf

Also Present: David Beresford, Michael Kurth

Absent: Ruth Beresford, Audrey Bruce, Jamie Poston

The meeting was called to order by Ran Barton, senior warden, at 7:01 PM, and the Rev. Michael Kurth offered the opening prayer.

Leading the Congregation

News from St. Anne's School: Ran referred to Bishop Brown's communication, forwarded to the Vestry in advance, regarding the former Head of School at St. Anne's. Ran will reach out to Sheila Abio to affirm the Vestry's support, in that if there is something we are not already doing that she believes is necessary to keep our students safe, we would endorse that. Cindi asked if Vestry members are required to receive Safe Church training. Michael confirmed that clergy and anyone working in contact with children and youth are required to take the course, but he did not know if Vestry is as well, though it might be a good practice. He added that at a gathering of diocesan clergy the day prior, the bishop confirmed that all possible background checks and record searches were completed prior to the individual's hiring, and nothing concerning was found at the time.

Presence of Vestry at Parish Events: The group reviewed the list of fellowship, formation, and ministry events from February 16 through March 9. Also, Vestry is invited and encouraged to attend the CCEP Gala on May 2.

Vestry Nominations Update: Ran shared Audrey's update, emailed to him in advance. There is one confirmed nominee so far and one who is considering it. Alexia remarked that it would be helpful to get information from past classes on people's reasons for declining, in case there were misconceptions they could correct. Scott asked if it would be possible to get the list of eligible voters to scan for ideas; Ran indicated that Sherry or Jane should be able to provide that, and Barb offered to obtain and distribute it to the Vestry. Ran asked all Vestry members to think of two potential candidates and send them to Audrey, Eliza, Ted, and Bart.

Matsumoto Peace Pole Proposal: Ran reported that Kent and Connie Matsumoto have offered to purchase and donate a Peace Pole to be placed in an appropriate location on the church grounds. Jaq shared some details of the Matsumoto family's personal connection to the history behind the Peace Pole Project and what these installations represent. She offered to reach out to them to learn more about what they envision and will report back to the Vestry.

Driving the Strategic Plan

Goal 1: We will grow our Episcopal faith community with God's help

Social media – Bart reported that his daughter, who works as a social media specialist, has several ideas for us, which he will bring to Ran for consideration.

Invite-Welcome-Connect – Barb reported that there is a plan to update the newcomer pew card to have a QR code that forwards the person's information directly to the clergy.

Belong class – Michael briefly described the four-week class that is offered approximately quarterly to acquaint newcomers with the parish and help them discover where they might find a place among the ministries here. The latest series just concluded with 14 adults attending. It was a fun and lively class, and the participants plus their children will be officially welcomed at the Pentecost service on June 8.

Invitation workshop – Michael described the class that was offered in January to help parishioners develop confidence in how to invite someone to church. There were 11 participants, and the class is planned to be offered again in August or September.

Parish/CCEP connections – Barb mentioned the CCEP Family Movie Night that will be held on March 8; students will also receive a flyer about the parish's Bingo & Chili Cookoff event on February 22. She mentioned that the school's parents have expressed a desire for opportunities to socialize with one another but without their children; the IWC team is working with Sheila to brainstorm ways that this could be hosted at church, for example by offering childcare and serving mocktails. Chuck added that there is a group of parents doing a monthly walk around the church campus, again as a way to socialize as adults; he offered to send information about that to the Vestry.

Chuck also reported that some CCEP Trustees had expressed concern that they were not involved early enough in conversations about the roof project and the potential capital campaign. This issue was tempered somewhat by the inclusion of David Nichols, Chip Sawyer, and Michele Harra in the capital campaign discernment sessions. Ran concurred that we need to ensure that the CCEP update is included on the Vestry's monthly agenda, and Chuck stated that the Vestry members on the Board of Trustees will now have a standing agenda slot on that group's monthly meeting. Cindi added that this month's board meeting was supposed to take place on February 11 but was postponed to the 18th due to inclement weather.

Life transitions/Reconnecting with inactive members – Barb noted that work on these benchmarks was paused but will resume.

Managing Parish Resources

2025 Ministry Budget: Ran asked if there were further comments on the draft budget that was shared at the January meeting; he reported that Mark Parsells confirmed to him there had been no changes since then. Barb moved to pass the proposed ministry budget for 2025, Ted seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. Thorpe asked if Vestry members could be provided with a brief list of talking points about the budget in case they receive questions from parishioners. Ted agreed to take the request to the Finance Committee.

Ran read the explanation provided by Terri Carpe regarding the proposed motion to approve the quarterly withdrawal in the amount of \$133,865 from the endowment held in Master Fund A. Ted moved, Scott seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Finance Report: Ted addressed Terri Carpe's commentary on the January results, which had been sent to the Vestry in advance. As happened in 2024, we are well ahead of budget on income due to the number of pledges that have already been fully paid for 2025.

Capital Campaign Discernment: Eliza reported that the third meeting of the Capital Campaign Discernment Committee was recently held. She reminded the Vestry that the purpose of this process is both to ask questions and make recommendations. The team members were drawn from many constituencies of the parish and bring deep knowledge of and experience with the church's ministries and operations. In addition, there are members who are newer and from younger families that represent the future we are envisioning and planning for. Prior meetings have included reviews of the strategic plan, the roof project, and discussions of how capital projects could be designed to address both strategic goals and potential aspirations for parish and community use of our facilities. There is a lot of energy to study these ideas more deeply, especially as relates to our benchmark of developing a master facilities usage plan, and obtaining a better understanding of how our outreach partners' needs and wishes may tie in with our plans. Eliza met with Sheila Abio and Marianne Archbell to initiate the identification of areas in need of updating and possible programmatic upgrades that could help CCEP be competitive. Future discernment meetings will cover music and ministry, then the preschool. Recommendations and aspirations will be presented at the Vestry's meeting on March 13. Thorpe and Ran thanked Eliza for her excellent leadership of this effort. Eliza shared that Cal Wick has often reminded her that when it seems scary and we are feeling unsure, God is in front of us, behind us, and beside us at all times.

Property: Thorpe summarized the roof project report from Jon Payne that was distributed to the Vestry in advance. We are 80% through the design phase that defines the nature of the work to be done. The investigation of the elevator and chimney will commence on February 17, and the design for that area will follow. We must decide who will act as the construction manager if we are to obtain bids this spring; the Property Committee recommends we retain Whiting Turner in this role. Barb asked for clarification about the pavers and walking mats mentioned in Jon's report; Thorpe stated that pavers will still be used on the patio between the chapel and education wing classrooms, but the other flat roofs that are not as visible or accessible will not have pavers on them in the future.

Meeting Tasks and Takeaways

Approval of Minutes: January's meeting minutes were approved as presented.

Report from the Clergy: David reported that the Word into Life course just concluded; it was a wonderful mixture of fellowship with Belong class participants, followed by learning about the sermon from the week. He received good feedback on the class, and it may be repeated in the future. In Lent he will offer a five-session course called Knowing God, to be held on Wednesday evenings following a simple supper of soup and bread.

Michael reported that we received around 30 applications for outreach funding. Ran, Alexia, and Barb attended the Outreach Committee's January meeting to talk about the 2025 budget and the amount of outreach funding it would contain. Michael observed that there is visioning work to be done on the present and future of outreach, and he noted that the committee's past, current, and future conveners (John Olsen, Carol Morley, and Geri Krolin-Taylor) have been participating in the capital campaign discernment sessions. In March, the committee will have two meetings to decide the funding awards, and in April the committee will present their allocation recommendations to the Vestry. He asked for prayers for the committee's work.

Concerns and Thanksgivings: Eliza shared a concern about upcoming cold weather, and she commended all the opportunity to volunteer for Code Purple. Jaq asked if another soup workshop is needed to support that program, and Michael offered to check.

To-Do Assignments and Talk-Abouts: Ran and Jenno recapped the tasks identified throughout the meeting. Cindi mentioned that, related to Goal 2, the parish survey is ready and will be going out soon. Cindi also offered to provide the closing prayer at the March Vestry meeting.

The closing prayer was offered by Ran. The meeting adjourned at 8:27 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer O'Connor, Clerke