

CHRIST CHURCH CHRISTIANA HUNDRED

Vestry Minutes

April 3, 2025

7:00 PM

Present: Chuck Arensberg, Ran Barton, Ruth Beresford, Audrey Bruce, Cindi Cozza, Barb King, Ted Ledden, Alexander Maynard, Thorpe Moeckel, Scott Nickle, Jamie Poston, Jaq Whalen, Alexia Wolf

Also Present: Geri Krolin-Taylor, Carol Morley, Jon Payne

Absent: Eliza Phillips, Bart Reese

The meeting was called to order by the rector at 7:05 PM, and she offered the opening prayer.

Managing Parish Resources

Outreach Committee Report on 2025 Allocations to Agency Partners: Ruth welcomed Carol Morley, current Outreach Committee Convener, and Geri Krolin-Taylor, who will take over that role next year. Carol thanked the Vestry for budgeting funds for the committee to allocate. She reported that in the years 2022 to 2024, agencies requested between \$271-275K in funding, and the committee allocated \$193-195K in response. This year, requests totaled \$292K, toward which the committee was only able to provide \$159K. The last time that requests were this high was in 2021, when \$295K was requested and \$207K was allocated. Carol directed the Vestry to the documents that had been distributed to them in advance, which described the committee's process for evaluating requests and the criteria used for their funding decisions. Twenty-nine agencies applied, but one was found ineligible due to failure to file their IRS Form 990. Of the remaining 28 agencies, 21 were funded. Most previous recipients received less than they had in the past, though a few received as much as they did last year or their full request for this year. The agencies that were not funded do not have a strong partnership with the parish or significant volunteerism by parishioners. As of 2024, the committee will no longer reserve a portion of the funds designated for outreach in the ministry budget for a capital project, as was done for the 175th anniversary and ultimately awarded to Lutheran Community Services. Ruth indicated that future large-scale outreach projects, such as a potential 200th anniversary initiative, will likely be funded via a campaign in the years leading up to it. Ruth asked if there were any new recipients this year; Carol replied that the Ministry of Caring was allocated funding for the first time for their new community food pantry. Cindi asked if there is a need to drive more parishioner volunteering at agencies who applied but were not funded; Carol explained that at most of the agencies in question, the commitment needed is greater than most in terms of time, training, or skill. She noted that in response to the strategic plan's emphasis on parish participation in outreach, this year's application form included a question about volunteer opportunities for parishioners, from which Carol has compiled seven pages of prospects. Ted moved that the Outreach Committee's funding allocations be affirmed, Barb seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Property – Leak Remediation Project Tour and Report: Ruth welcomed Jon Payne, who is acting as the owner’s representative in this endeavor. Ruth, Jon, and Thorpe then led the Vestry on a 35-minute walking tour of both interior and exterior areas of the parish center to point out evidence of water damage, to recount past significant water incursion events, theories, investigations, and attempted fixes, and describe some of the work they anticipate will be recommended in the final design. Jon expressed that he and Thorpe are confident in the construction manager and architect we have been working with, who have collaborated on many successful projects of this nature. He indicated that the design drawings should be completed within a week. Ran asked if Jon is comfortable with the timeline for completing all the required work; Jon stated that while we would not be able to start June 2 as originally hoped, we could begin later in June and still finish before the start of the preschool year in the fall. He has spoken with Sheila Abio about how to manage summer camp around the contractors’ activities; safety will be a primary concern, as access to active construction zones will be restricted. Ruth addressed the question of money, sharing that in a conversation with Eliza about the discernment team’s work, she noted how the roof project is both urgent and important, while our dreams of new and re-imagined spaces are important, but not urgent, and are best not to be rushed. To cover the immediate cost of repairing the roof, we have options: we can request a loan or grant from the Trustees of the Diocese, we can apply for other grants, borrow from our own funds and pay ourselves back from the proceeds of a future capital campaign, or fundraise specifically for this project. The Finance Committee is waiting for a figure to come from the bidding process before deciding how to proceed. Ran emphasized the imperative to be transparent with the parish about the problems we are facing and how we are addressing them, how we propose to pay for the project now, and potentially repay any loan we take to do so. Jamie asked if we have factored in the potential for change orders to arise from new problems exposed as work goes on. Jon responded that he believes the team we have in place has the experience to anticipate the conditions they are likely to encounter, and he is confident they have built in an appropriate cushion. Ran noted our awareness of certain water issues that are unrelated to the flat roof, such as the lack of gutters and overhangs that lead to water gushing down around doors during heavy rains. He remarked that if we tell the parish that we are fixing the parish hall, then we must fix all of its water problems, or otherwise communicate how the remedies will be done in phases. Jamie emphasized the need to establish and follow a maintenance plan to proactively avoid what we have experienced since 2000, and Jon replied that will be essential to enforce the warranty on the work. Ruth thanked Jon and Thorpe for their leadership and lending their expertise to the parish to support this project.

Finance Committee Report: Ted reported that he has not yet received the March financial commentary from Terri Carpe, so a written report will be emailed to Vestry later this month.

CCEP Update: Chuck reported that the Board of Trustees has not met again since the last Vestry meeting, at which Sheila Abio gave a detailed report. He mentioned that long-time teacher Annie Williams has announced her retirement; her tenure will be formally celebrated later in the spring. Enrollment for the fall is 63, which is on track for this point in the year. The Archbells are hosting a reception on April 10 for donors to the preschool’s annual fund.

Driving the Strategic Plan

Report on Children and Youth Ministry: Jamie reported on Mason's behalf by reading his written report. Having been in his position for over a year now, Mason has become familiar with the full scope of both regular programs and special events related to his ministry. Attendance at children's formation classes is holding steady, with 4th & 5th grade and senior high classes having the lowest numbers. He has plans for the Confirmation class that will hopefully increase these youths' involvement with the parish during their high school years. The Shrove Tuesday pancake supper raised a record \$1,300+ for the Jalonga mission trip. At the annual meeting in May, he will be piloting a new offering for the summer called "Stay and Play," which will provide unstructured outdoor time for children ages 3-12 to mix and play their own way. He will be meeting with each of the formation teachers to find out who will be returning in the fall; he anticipates a need for between one and eight new teachers. He is developing documentation of all the formation programs, all-ages fellowship events, and other special offerings for children and youth, as well as a formal curriculum for the high school group. The foundation for this work is the Mission and Values for Children and Youth, which were forwarded to the Vestry in advance. These were developed by the Children and Youth Ministry Team, and they are aligned with the parish-wide mission and values.

Jamie mentioned the meeting between Bruce Barber, Cameron Kuzepski, Jo Harney, and many of the Chorister parents regarding the future of that program following Jo's retirement at the end of this program year. Currently, the Choristers practice on Thursday afternoons and from 10:30-11:30 AM on Sundays, which works well for the families who attend one of the 9 AM worship services, followed by children's formation, leading right into rehearsal. If the Sunday rehearsal were delayed until after the 10:30 service, which would be necessary if Bruce or Cameron were to lead it, that would likely result in attrition from the program. Jamie remarked that most of the 4th and 5th graders are Choristers, and on the Sundays when they sing at the 10:30 service, they are all absent from class because they are warming up in the church. Jamie and Ruth both noted that our children's programs link two of our parish values, music and care of children, and they are truly a draw for young families. Jamie added that attendance at 2nd & 3rd grade formation is robust, so the pipeline for rebuilding both music and education programs is in place. Ruth stated that Bishop Brown will be here for Confirmation on June 1, when 16 eighth graders will be confirmed. Some were invited to the class by friends, or they attended CCEP and have not been back since, but they want to be confirmed.

Unfinished Tasks

The Peace Pole Gift: Ruth explained that Connie Matsumoto first offered the gift of a peace pole in November 2024, and Ruth responded that she wanted to bring the proposal to the Vestry. She researched the topic and spoke to someone at May Peace Prevail On Earth International, the organization in upstate New York that leads the movement. She has no issue with the concept, and she is confident that we can find an appropriate site on the campus that honors the gift and the intention behind it. However, she is concerned that the square white PVC version of the pole in particular might not fit in well, and she has seen photos of poles in other colors and materials that might be better suited to our site. The organization is willing to work with us to design a peace pole

with a more natural look, though Thorpe noted that another material is likely to cost more than the one originally proposed to be donated. Ruth verified that the Vestry supports the gift, so she will speak to the Matsumotos about it further, then report back. Scott noted the importance of having long-term plans for how we would utilize this resource and care for the landscaping of the chosen site.

Leading the Congregation

Presence of Vestry at Parish Events: Ruth reviewed the list of fellowship, formation, and ministry events from April 4 through April 28. She added that more greeters are needed for Easter services, and asked for Vestry to volunteer or recommend others who might serve. Bishop Brown will join us at the Good Friday noon service, which will be livestreamed. There are three candidates for Baptism at the 6 AM Easter service. We have seven nominees for Vestry, and in-person voting will take place at services on May 3-4 and 10-11; Vestry members are needed to hand out ballots to those who do not vote online. The annual meeting is May 18. The Vestry will need to provide a substantive report on Strategic Plan progress for the meeting booklet, which will also include reports from the Finance Committee, Property Committee, the Children and Youth Ministry Team, and key staff. Ruth encouraged all to take the parish engagement survey and invite others to do so as well. Cindi asked when we will receive the results from that; Ruth noted that the deadline to reply is April 22, so the first look at the data will be at the May Vestry meeting. A new advertisement will begin running on social media to invite people to Easter services.

Meeting Tasks and Takeaways

Report from the Clergy: Ruth reported that she heard that the Ministry Match training session on Zoom was a success. Jaq confirmed that attendees were impressed by the capabilities of the tool and many ideas were generated for how we can utilize it more fully, but our present challenge is making it more accessible to the ministry leaders who could benefit from it. Ran agreed that while there may be valid concerns related to confidentiality and consistency of record-keeping that support having Jane Rubini as the single point of contact for the tool, we must balance those with increased accessibility and utilization in such a way that it does not become a burden on her. Ruth also reported on the Associate Rector search: three candidates have been interviewed by Ruth and the discernment team. They will meet April 7 to decide how many finalists to bring to campus for additional interviews. She asked all to pray for whomever God is calling to us. Barb asked if the finalists will lead a worship service; Ruth responded that she will arrange that this time. She added that discussions are ongoing about how to fill Jo Harney's role.

Report from the Wardens: Ran remarked that as we prepare for the annual meeting, we must be thoughtful about how we communicate about the roof project so that we have the full support and confidence of the parish. He affirmed the need to coordinate with Sherry on marketing efforts in response to the concerns raised by Mark Parsells last month; Jaq added that she is scheduled to meet with Sherry, and Barb noted that the gap we have is with marketing, not the quality of what we have to offer. Alexia mentioned the Pew Charitable Trust report about their most recent survey of the landscape of religion in the US, which contains data that is interesting and relevant to our

work on marketing. She offered to share the executive summary with the Vestry; the full report is several hundred pages long and is available online.

Approval of Minutes: March's meeting minutes were approved as amended.

To-Do Assignments and Talk-Abouts: Ruth and Jenno recapped the tasks identified throughout the meeting.

The closing prayer was offered by Scott Nickle. The meeting adjourned at 9:13 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer O'Connor, Clerke