

# CHRIST CHURCH CHRISTIANA HUNDRED

## Vestry Minutes

September 11, 2025

7:00 PM

**Present:** Chuck Arensberg, Ran Barton, Ruth Beresford, Cindi Cozza, Barb King, Shelley Kinsella, Kendall Meldrum, Thorpe Moeckel, MJ O'Connor, John Olsen, Jamie Poston, Wil Stith, Jaq Whalen, Alexia Wolf

**Also Present:** David Beresford, Libbie Fiechter, Thom Peters, Erin Richardson Severin

**Absent:** Chuck Arensberg, Scott Nickle

The meeting was called to order by the rector at 7:03 PM, and she offered the opening prayer.

### State of the Parish

**Rector's Report:** Ruth referenced her written report that was sent to the Vestry in advance. She added that Erin's ordination to the priesthood is scheduled for January 3, 2026 in Honolulu.

**Finance Committee Monthly Report:** Barb reported that the committee's next meeting, and the first of the program year, is September 16. Terri Carpe's financial commentary and the updated financial statements through August were distributed to the Vestry in advance. We are running a slight deficit, which is not unusual for summertime. A check for \$20K was unexpectedly received today from a family foundation, which will help our financial position.

**CCEP Monthly Update:** Cindi reported that at the last Board of Trustees meeting, she mentioned that the parish is in the process of finalizing its gift acceptance policy, and we recommend the school adopt the same or a similar policy, which they were open to. Kendall reported that the budget was reviewed line by line, and it is balanced. Summer camp was very successful financially, and it drove additional enrollment for the school. Development of the strategic plan is still in process. The start of the school year has gone well, with many new families that are also parishioners joining the school community. The Running of the Rams is October 25, and registration information is forthcoming. As this is one of the school's two major fundraisers, both Vestry participation and additional corporate sponsorships are desired. The playground for 12- to 24-month-olds had been built to the extent possible with roof construction underway, but now that the scaffolding around the elevator shaft has been removed, it will be finished this week.

**Strategic Plan Goal 2 Report (We will grow deeper relationships with God and with each other, following Jesus Christ):** The team's written report was distributed in advance. Highlights:  
Year Three Benchmarks – Jaq, Cindi, and Alexia met to draft a list of potential benchmarks, and they plan to bring MJ, Shelley, and Thom up to speed on these prior to finalizing the list.

Adult formation – Thom met with Cindi and Alexia to discuss topics and formats. They are planning shorter series on spiritual disciplines with the goal of deepening and widening our spiritual practices. They hope these programs will appeal to a broad range of ages and backgrounds.

Interaction with CCEP – Jaq is meeting with Sheila Abio to talk about how we can be supportive of the preschool and enable the parish to be more knowledgeable about what fun things are going on there.

Sunday School – Jaq reported that Mason Cruz will attend the October Vestry meeting to give a report.

John referenced the written report's items regarding Ministry Match and inquired whether this tool could also be utilized to match people with volunteer opportunities at our outreach partners. Jaq responded that the tool was not originally designed to do that, and it would require ongoing updates to that information. Ruth remarked that updates are necessary for parish ministry roles too, and she noted that the tool does not currently collect data on people's skills and experience, such as being a lawyer/engineer/architect, serving on a board, etc. She proposed that it could potentially be used the way John was describing by adding a role such as "outreach volunteer." Ran reported that he has heard from parishioners who joined the Outreach Committee thinking it was about doing outreach and found that it is more about the mechanics of grant-making; delineating two tracks of outreach service could produce better match results.

Ruth reported that clergy responsibilities have been reallocated: Erin is assigned to the Goal 1 team, and she is taking on liturgy along with newcomers and evangelism; Ruth will now be the clergy contact for outreach.

### **Managing Parish Resources**

**Leak Remediation Update:** Jon Payne was unable to attend the Vestry meeting, so he submitted a written report, which Ran read aloud. It summarized the work completed in recent weeks and the items to be worked on next. A change order for about \$32K is needed to address some unforeseen conditions encountered near the elevator shaft, and another change order for about \$41K is necessary for the extension of the stamped concrete walkway. The total cost of \$73K is well within the \$188K contingency amount. We have received the second invoice from Whiting-Turner. Unspent contingency funds will be directed to repairs related to leaks in other parts of the building and to stamped concrete repairs near the preschool entrance. Barb asked if there would be testing to verify that the repairs are in fact preventing leaks, and Ruth and Libbie confirmed that that will be done. Ruth noted that Jon has been paying close attention at every step and ensuring that W-T does not charge us for costs that they should be absorbing.

**Preparing for the Capital Campaign / Facility Master Plan (FMP):** Ruth asked Libbie to introduce herself and outline her background in design and construction. Ran recalled the discussion at the last Vestry meeting on the draft RFP for an FMP, an updated version of which was forwarded to the Vestry in advance. He, Thorpe, Libbie, and Ruth met with Sam Olshin of AOS Architects, a firm which has worked with many churches around the nation, including several Episcopal churches in the Philadelphia area. They discussed what is involved in creating an FMP and what expertise a consultant is expected to contribute to the process, such as proposing ideas we may not have thought of on our own and providing perspective of what has been successful at other churches. Ran's research has revealed that an FMP is an investment that must be made in order to mount a successful capital campaign. It will help us tell our story to potential donors, and

it will be an educational process both for leaders and parishioners as to how wish lists can be marshalled into plans and phases and how those dovetail with the strategic plan. Credibility is derived from engaging an outside expert. Libbie added that while we might be able to carry out the survey component ourselves, design by committee is always bad design, so we need the perspective of an impartial observer. Creating an FMP will ultimately save us money, time, and heartache in the long run, because when we undertake capital projects, we will avoid doing work that needs to be undone or redone subsequently, and we will be able to combine projects so that we do not work on the same area twice. The duration of the plan could extend decades beyond the scope of the current strategic plan. Ruth stated that the Vestry's task is to approve embarking on an RFP process. The FMP would cost \$75-125K, and Barb remarked that we can determine how to fund that before we select a consultant. Kendall added that when we receive the proposals, we can still negotiate the deliverables. Thorpe moved to proceed with a request for proposals to create an FMP and finalize the funding before signing a contract for it, Barb seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

### **Unfinished Tasks**

**Appointing Delegates and Alternates to Diocesan Convention:** Cindi will serve as a delegate. MJ is not available to serve, but she has reached out to two others about serving as a youth delegate. Cindi recommended Jordan Kinsey, and she will ask him. Ruth will ask Mark Parsells to be an alternate. The slate will be finalized via email.

**Gift Acceptance Policy:** John reported that the team has been working on the draft, and it has been an iterative process. They considered whether we would accept gifts of cryptocurrency, and decided that we would not, but instead ask the donor to convert that to cash to donate. Barb noted that we can always revisit that decision in the future. The team clarified some legal language, aspects of which may affect information on our website as well as the parish's policies and procedures. There are two questions regarding securities that they wish to discuss with the Finance Committee. They will share the new draft with the Vestry when it is completed, highlighting which areas were revised.

### **Leading the Congregation**

**Approving Housing Allowance for Curate:** Jenno read the following resolution:

“It is hereby resolved that \$20,000 is designated as an allowance for the expenses of providing a home (parsonage allowance) for Erin Richardson Severin and her family, based upon the attached statement of housing expenses for the 2025 calendar year, submitted by Erin Richardson Severin. It should be understood that Christ Church Christiana Hundred does not represent that this parsonage allowance is excludable from gross income. A decision to exclude it must be made by the individual herself. Christ Church is not responsible for the consequences of this election.”

Jaq moved the resolution, Wil seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. Jenno signed the document to be added to the files.

**Wardens' Report:** Alexia related that she was approached by a parishioner who was helping someone in the community who was struggling to find stable, affordable housing, and it reminded her how we live out our faith far beyond the walls of the church. Ran commented on how well the parish picnic under the tent worked out and that it was well-attended with a fortunate break in the

weather. The Golf Classic was successful, and it was followed by an enjoyable reception that is always open to non-golfers. The Vestry retreat is coming up in a few weeks, and those who are new to it are welcome to reach out to Ran for information. He remarked that he was dreading his first retreat when he served on Vestry years ago, but he found it to be very beneficial in formation and fellowship, and productive in accomplishment. He, Alexia, and Ruth are in discussions about the agenda.

**Presence of Vestry at Parish Events:** Ruth reviewed the list of fellowship, formation, and ministry events from September 14 through October 25. The temporary location of the peace pole will be between the two entrances to the Parish Center, and it will be relocated to its permanent location after construction in that vicinity is completed. The Michaelmas liturgy on September 29 and the reception following it in the rectory will serve as the conclusion of and thanksgiving for David's interim associate ministry. He commended the Vestry for how cooperative and collegial they are and their constructive and positive approach to their work, which is not always the case in his experience. He thanked all for their prayers and support.

### **Meeting Tasks and Takeaways**

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

**Concerns and Thanksgivings:** John reported on a suggestion that the men's small group could take on the picking up of Green Show donations from donors and delivering them to church; Ruth will pass that offer along to Janet Amodei. Ruth reported that Deb Piper estimates that the golf tournament will net about \$11K; Deb also mentioned that Hal Erskine raved to Anita Marcial about how important it is to have CCCH visible in the community in this way. Personnel from several of our contractors and partners participated, including Whiting-Turner, as well as two local funeral homes that have been sponsors since the event's inception. August 31, 2026 is the date for next year's tournament. Barb spoke about some rewarding conversations she had with two older couples at the picnic, and Ruth said the Parish Fellowship team will be reviewing the feedback from the event. Many people expressed how much they liked that it was outdoors, but it was also noted how few children were present due to the long stretch of time between the endings of the 9:00 and 10:30 services. Ruth noted that next year, we will probably have services at only 8:00 and 10:00, with the 10:00 service modified to be more kid-friendly, enabling all families to stay for the picnic.

**To-Do Assignments and Talk-Abouts:** Ruth and Jenno recapped the tasks identified throughout the meeting. Thorpe will work with the FMP team to issue the RFP by September 30.

The closing prayer was offered by Jamie. The meeting adjourned at 8:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer O'Connor, Clerke