

CHRIST CHURCH CHRISTIANA HUNDRED

Vestry Minutes

November 13, 2025

7:00 PM

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

Also Present: Jordan Kinsey, Thom Peters, Erin Richardson Severin

Absent: Scott Nickle, John Olsen, Jamie Poston

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

Leading the Congregation

Holy Orders for Jordan Kinsey: Ruth directed the Vestry to the documents distributed in advance. Cindi served on the congregational discernment group for Jordan, and she summarized the group's work with him over the last several months. She reported that they clearly discerned his call to the vocational diaconate and affirmed that they joyfully present him to the Vestry for approval to move forward in the discernment process. Ruth asked him to describe his present role as Chief of Casualty at Fort Dix, where he coordinates the repatriation of the remains of fallen soldiers. He mentioned his past career as a music teacher and his 23 years' service in the US Army, as well as the rigor of the education program he has been taking through the Stevenson School for Ministry. He perceives that he has a gift for working with grieving families and he does not believe that God is calling him away from his secular profession. Ruth excused Jordan and the Vestry continued the discussion. Cindi elaborated on the discernment group's process, and Ruth explained the Vestry's role to consider its recommendation and pledge the parish's support for Jordan's calling. Cindi moved to formally nominate Jordan Kinsey as an aspirant for Holy Orders, Jaq seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Leak Remediation Project: Thorpe read Jon Payne's written report. The final steps of the project will be completed within the current month with the reconstruction of the handicapped ramp and retaining wall along with minor repairs to landscaping. The new roof has been inspected and a warranty issued by the manufacturer. Safety barriers and scaffolding have been removed from the back of the building, exterior surfaces have been cleaned, and interior areas with water damage have been repaired. We have paid invoices totaling \$1,028,730.75 out of the original amount of \$1,524,583, with one more invoice expected. \$67,826.35 in approved change orders will be paid from the contingency amount. Replacement of stamped concrete around the chapel entrance has been deferred. Whiting Turner is obtaining prices for handicapped accessible door openers for the chapel and education wing. Chuck asked if any safety incidents had occurred, and Thorpe confirmed that there were none. Shelley inquired about the areas where field conditions necessitated redesign, and Ruth explained that two small parapet roofs near the elevator were not

in the original scope but had to be added once the project was underway. Ran reported on the status of planning for the preventive maintenance needed to keep the warranty in force. The unused contingency amount is above \$100K, including savings from in-scope work that was subsequently found not to be necessary. Thorpe and Ran both expressed deep appreciation for Jon Payne's specialized skills and knowledge and devoted service to the parish throughout this project.

Preschool Update: Chuck reported that in the prior week, all the faculty traveled together to the Mid-Atlantic Episcopal Schools Association conference to attend various continuing education sessions, and they were very energized by the experience. Enrollment is steady at 65 students. The Board of Trustees has been working productively in subcommittees under Sheila Abio's leadership. Chuck noted that the subcommittees are not structured to ensure continuity by including members representing each of the three-year classes of Trustees. He plans to propose at the upcoming meeting that that practice be implemented. The Running of the Rams was successful, and sponsorship levels have been strong. Combining that event and the gala into a single sponsorship opportunity has received a lot of support, but there is awareness that high donation numbers in the fall may be offset by less sponsorship money coming in the spring. Sheila asked Ran to contact Lutheran Community Services about getting a bin for a food drive, and that has been provided. Kendall commended how Sheila instructed families to help their children understand the food collection.

Ran reported on his conversation with Jim Whalen about the proposed zoning changes for the Inn at Montchanin to enable its conversion to a facility for individuals with brain injuries. A county land use meeting on the project was cancelled, so there has not been any movement on this project. Cindi noted that in her experience, such a facility is likely to be very tranquil, and Alexia added that noisy ambulance traffic is not likely to be significant since it would not be providing acute care. She suggested that we obtain input from families in the parish who have been affected by the need for this kind of care.

Presence of Vestry at Parish Events: Ruth reviewed the list of fellowship, formation, and ministry events from November 16 through December 7.

Driving the Strategic Plan

Worship Attendance Report: Ruth directed all to the report distributed in advance. Attendance has been increasing through the fall months in alignment with historical patterns.

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

Barb distributed the Year 3 (2025-6) benchmarks and DACI chart. The team plans to focus most on attracting new members through an external and internal awareness campaign, with other efforts aimed at engaging current and underactive members. Jaq noted that there are some apparent areas of duplication of effort between Goal 1 and 2; Barb, Jaq, Erin, and Thom will meet to discuss these. Barb has the list of approximately fifty ideas captured on post-it notes at the Vestry retreat, and the team will be reviewing and organizing these at their meeting. Cindi reached out to the

members of the Strategic Planning, Renovation, and Prayer teams and all are willing to assist further in this type of work.

Facility Master Plan Proposal: Thorpe summarized the evolution of the original strategic goal to create a site usage plan and the work done since the last Vestry meeting to obtain proposals for the creation of a facilities master plan (FMP). The team coordinating this effort recommends the selection of ABHA Architects to lead the project, and Thorpe gave highlights of their reasons for this choice. Ran expressed gratitude to Thorpe for his extensive work over the last month to steer this initiative, and he noted that the ABHA team impressed him with their enthusiasm. Ruth echoed that estimation and she described the multi-disciplinary team they will bring to the project. Regarding funding, Ruth proposed to the Finance Committee to tap the unused funds from the leak remediation project, along with the Woolard discretionary fund if needed, to pay for the project. These sources would then be reimbursed from the capital campaign proceeds. Carl Krienen, ABHA principal, recommended that we start working on the campaign now so that it runs in parallel with the development of the FMP, since the two groups will be asking many of the same questions. Ruth described the makeup of the parish FMP team who will begin meeting with ABHA in December; they will wait to engage with the wider congregation until after Christmas. The finished product is due May 1 so that it can be presented at the annual meeting. Ran noted that the contract was reviewed by Mike Flynn and Libbie Fiecter and minor adjustments were made. Ruth invited the ABHA team members to come to the Green Show to see the facilities in use. The Finance Committee did vote to endorse Ruth's funding proposal, though she shared that there was some anxiety about spending money at this time. Discussion followed. Chuck reiterated that this initiative has been part of the strategic plan all along. Ruth noted that we structured our loan from the endowment to incentivize ourselves to commence the capital campaign promptly, and the FMP is crucial to its success. Thorpe moved that we approve the undertaking of a facilities master plan, contracting with ABHA Architects according to their proposal, paid for with unused funds already approved for leak remediation, supplemented by the Woolard discretionary fund as necessary, to be repaid through capital fundraising. Chuck seconded. Barb asked if any money would be spent toward this work in 2025, and Thorpe replied that we might receive the first invoice in December, but it could be paid in January 2026. Kendall verified that the contract has a fixed fee with a defined invoice schedule. The motion carried 10-0 with one abstention. Ruth remarked that she is excited about the collaboration between the parish and preschool that this initiative will foster.

Managing Parish Resources

Stewardship: Ran reported that we are off to a good start; 189 pledges have been received totaling \$715,125. Ran encouraged the Vestry to submit their pledges promptly. Vestry may be called upon to assist the Stewardship Committee with follow-up calls. Shelley noted that we need to make sure people understand that automatic monthly giving is not the same as making a pledge. Ran remarked that we are looking at ways to reduce the amount of contributions lost to credit card fees, potentially by encouraging donors to switch to paying via debit card or ACH transfer as well as adding the option for credit card users to cover the convenience fee.

Personnel Committee Recommendations for 2026 Salaries: Deferred to December.

Finance:

Funding Priorities – Barb reported that she, Cindi, and Jaq finalized the draft document prepared by Ruth that was reviewed at the October meeting. She moved that the Vestry approve the final version that was distributed in advance, Shelley seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Finance Committee Monthly Update – Ruth reported that Terri Carpe's commentary is not ready, so the October results will be shared later.

Diocesan Contribution – Ruth directed all to the background information distributed in advance regarding our 2026 contribution to the diocese of Delaware. The diocesan formula refers to Line A of the parochial report as the parish operational revenue to which contribution percentages are applied. The 2024 parochial report form (on which our 2026 diocesan contribution will be based) changed the definition of Line A to total revenue, which includes monies received by the parish but not available for operations, such as preschool tuition and donations to the endowment. Ruth suggested that we could continue to make the 10.8% minimum contribution based on the past calculation of operating revenue, which for 2026 would be \$248,511 (still \$10K more than we gave in 2025, but down \$28K from the \$276,844 that was based on total revenue). Barb moved to approve a 2026 contribution of \$248,511, consistent with past years' calculation formula. Shelley seconded, and discussion followed, with Wil pointing out that the \$10K increase over 2025 may not be feasible for us at this time. Ruth offered that we could commit to the same contribution as in 2025 and wait to see how the diocese decides to revise their formula in light of the changes to the parochial report form. Barb moved to withdraw her motion, Shelley concurred, and there were no objections. Jaq then moved to make the same \$238,374 contribution for 2026 as we did in 2025, Wil seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Unfinished Tasks

Gift Acceptance Policy: Barb reported that the updated version of the policy will be presented at the December meeting.

Meeting Tasks and Takeaways

Approval of Minutes: September's and October's meeting minutes were approved as presented.

Concerns and Thanksgivings: Ruth asked everyone to pledge and encourage those they work with in ministry to pledge as well.

The closing prayer was offered by Jaq. The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer O'Connor, Clerke