

# CHRIST CHURCH CHRISTIANA HUNDRED

## Vestry Minutes

December 11, 2025

7:00 PM

**Present:** Chuck Arensberg, Ran Barton, Ruth Beresford, Shelley Kinsella, Thorpe Moeckel, Scott Nickle, MJ O'Connor, John Olsen, Jamie Poston, Jaq Whalen, Alexia Wolf

**Also Present:** Bruce Barber, Jon Payne

**Absent:** Cindi Cozza, Barb King, Kendall Meldrum, Wil Stith

The meeting was called to order by the rector at 7:02 PM, and she offered the opening prayer.

### Leading the Congregation

**Leak Remediation Update:** Thorpe thanked Jon for his daily presence and dedication throughout the initiative. Jon reported that the project is essentially complete, except for turnover documentation that will be submitted with the final invoice, delivery of the warranties (25 years on materials and one year on workmanship), and a few punch list items that Whiting Turner is aware of. Separate from the roof remediation contract, we are awaiting a maintenance plan from the roofer for all the roofs on campus, and they are expected to return to address problems with the gutters by the conference room and around some dormers at the preschool end of the building. In the course of the roof project, it was discovered that the two doors at either end of the covered walkway between the chapel and the new education wing were designed for interior use; they have begun to degrade and must be replaced with exterior-use doors, preferably with ADA-compliant push-button opening mechanisms. Mike Sayer has received a proposal from a different contractor for this work, which Jon will be evaluating this week. WT's final invoice will be over \$200K, yet we anticipate that more than \$100K in unspent contingency funds will remain, some of which may be used for the door replacements. We have kept the job under budget, and there may be yet more savings from cost categories for which the budgeted allowance was not fully used. Jon is very happy with the roof, and Andy Marine has reported no new leakage from recent rains. There may be one more change order related to the retaining wall because it required more hours than WT anticipated. WT principals were present at the kickoff meeting for the master facilities plan, so they continue in partnership with the church, and Ruth reported that WT made a \$1500 contribution to the Green Show. Ran presented Jon with a token of the Vestry's thanks for his excellent shepherding of the roof remediation project.

**Sabbatical Report from the Director of Music:** Bruce thanked the Vestry and Ruth for the gift of a sabbatical. He reported that his first month was spent visiting colleagues at other parishes, including Calvary Episcopal Church in Pittsburgh, PA, St. Paul's in Cleveland Heights, OH, Christ Church in Cranbrook, MI, and Christ Church in Grosse Pointe, MI. He explained how rare it is for those in his role to have the chance to hear one another's musical offerings at a normal Sunday

service. During the second half of his time away, he played two organ recitals in Scotland, then went to hear choirs and concerts in York, Oxford, Cambridge, and London. He then elaborated on his experiences visiting the aforementioned parishes that are similar to ours in many ways, where he wanted to see how they do things, inquire how they have changed post-COVID, and observe how they are tending to themselves and their common life. His takeaway was that while we will always have our challenges, what is happening here is far and above what is happening in the parishes he visited, where his colleagues report that in some ways they are still coming out of the pandemic. He credits the difference to our leadership, our vision, and the care that we take in all things. He is excited about all the new music he heard that he would like to bring to our choir's repertoire.

**CCEP Update:** Chuck reported that the school's strategic plan is very nearly done. Vestry giving to the school's annual fund is close to 100%, and he highly encouraged those who have not yet given to do so. He added that Ruth provided an overview of the facilities master plan initiative to the Board of Trustees, emphasizing that a single plan would be developed for both the church and the preschool. Ran reminded all of the CCEP Board of Directors meeting immediately preceding the January Vestry meeting at 6 PM on January 8. Ruth will provide refreshments between the two meetings.

**Presence of Vestry at Parish Events:** Ruth reviewed the list of fellowship, formation, and ministry events from December 14 through January 6.

### **Driving the Strategic Plan**

#### **Goal 2: We will grow deeper relationships with God and with each other, following Jesus Christ.**

Jaq referred to the handout she distributed, with a list of the benchmarks for the current year, a DACI chart, and the tentative calendar of actions. Most benchmarks have tasks planned for January. The Renovation Team members have all been contacted and are helping to ensure that nothing is falling through the cracks compared to the original plan. Suzanne Smith, Jane Rubini, and Cindi will meet with Rob Dyer from Ministry Architects in January to discuss how to revitalize the Ministry Match tool and use it to better effect.

Jamie shared an update from Mason Cruz that formation for children and youth got off to a late but strong start this fall. Children's classes average five to ten students each week, and youth group averages six or seven on Sunday nights. Mason hopes to start a social media page specific to youth ministry to make announcements about it more visible to youth, their parents, and newcomers. The middle school service team is new this year, and their goal is to plan and execute a service project by the end of the program year; attendance averages ten to twelve per month. Registration is open for the Dominican Republic trip, and the high schoolers will lead a service project with Urban Promise in May that will be open to the whole parish. There are fourteen potential confirmands this year. Multiple new families have enrolled their children in formation. The intention is to begin recruiting teachers earlier in the year, with an open-door policy to allow both parents and parishioners without children attending formation to see what the classes are like in the hopes that they will consider signing up as teachers.

**Website Quarterly Updates to Parish:** Ruth asked for a volunteer to assemble an update to the parish, based on Vestry meeting minutes and team reports. Cindi was volunteered to be the point person, and Jaq offered to help her.

### **Managing Parish Resources**

**Personnel Report:** Ruth and Ran reported on recent changes to the staff and next steps. The Personnel Committee has recommended a 3% cost of living adjustment and a 1% merit pool for 2026 salaries. Ran confirmed that this is in line with recent years' figures, though we are behind the curve given rising inflation during that period. Jamie moved to approve the committee's recommendation, John seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

**Finance – First Look at the 2026 Ministry Budget:** Ruth shared the preliminary draft of the 2026 budget. She reported that the full Finance Committee developed the proposed figures and that potential opportunities and risks were added by a subset of the committee. They will fine-tune the draft before the January Vestry meeting, and the Vestry will vote on the final version at the February meeting. Ruth walked through key figures and explained how the 2026 numbers compare to prior years. Ran stated that the Vestry will likely have a role to play in January in following up with yet-to-pledge households. Education is taking place on the topic of automated giving not being the same as making a pledge. An option to cover bank fees on credit card payments has been added to the website and already some donors have opted to do so. The anticipated income from special offerings is now based on Tom Scott's calculation for the Outreach Committee, rather than the Finance Committee's past approach.

**Property Report:** Thorpe stated that the Property Committee is not meeting in December. The facilities master plan project has kicked off and its timeline runs through May.

**Gift Acceptance Policy:** Ruth distributed copies of the marked-up and final versions of the draft policy. John explained how the team went through the 2023 draft paragraph by paragraph and revised it to clarify aspects that were not adequately explained, bring the policy in line with best practices in this area, and add language that provides appropriate legal protection. The Vestry was asked to read the updated draft and direct any questions or comments to John, Shelley, and Barb. The final version will be voted on at the January Vestry meeting. Ran thanked the team for their diligence and extensive time spent on revisions.

### **Meeting Tasks and Takeaways**

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

**Resolutions to Approve Clergy Housing Allowances:** Jenno read the following motions.

“Be it resolved that the Rev. Ruth Beresford's compensation for the year 2026 includes the amount of \$3,000 as a designated allowance for the expenses of providing a home, based upon the attached

statement of the Rev. Beresford's estimated housing expenses for the year 2026.” Jaq moved, Thorpe seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

“Be it resolved that the Rev. Thom Peters's compensation for the year 2026 includes the amount of \$30,884 as a designated allowance for the expenses of providing a home, based upon the attached statement of the Rev. Peters's estimated housing expenses for the year 2026.” Jaq moved, Jamie seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

**Report from the Clergy:** Ruth reported that she loves her job.

**Concerns and Thanksgivings:** Chuck expressed appreciation to Kendall and her husband for the reception they hosted for CCEP donors to kick off the honoring of twenty years of support of the school. Ruth commended the fabulous Green Show and reported that Janet Amodei and Shelley will chair the event again next year.

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

The closing prayer was offered by Chuck. The meeting adjourned at 9:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer O'Connor, Clerke