

CHRIST CHURCH CHRISTIANA HUNDRED

Vestry Minutes

January 8, 2026

7:00 PM

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

Also Present: John Faulkner, Thom Peters, Deb Piper

Absent: MJ O'Connor

The meeting was called to order by the rector at 7:21 PM, and she offered the opening prayer.

Managing the Parish Resources

Property Committee 2026 Capital Projects Plan: John referred to the current Buildings and Grounds Master Plan, which was developed in 2010, extending through 2030. He explained that each year, the committee plans to complete approximately \$150K worth of projects, with these funds coming both from the parish budget and the endowment. He outlined the projects scheduled for 2026 in the parish center, rectory, parking lot, and various exterior areas of the campus. The project costs are estimated at \$133,654, and with a 10% contingency, the budgeted total for this year is \$147,019. Ruth asked about replacing the church boiler, currently scheduled for 2030, because it and the parish center and rectory boilers were all installed at the same time. John pointed out that replacement of the rectory boiler was not even on the plan, though it must be replaced now in 2026. The committee recognizes that even though they have added more items to this plan since 2010, it still does not include everything on the campus, and the Facilities Master Plan should address that gap. Ruth noted that we are not required to add \$100K to the capital endowment this year, and that the FMP will inform what funding will be needed to accomplish the plans and dreams that come from the project. Jaq moved to accept the 2026 capital plan, Jamie seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. Ran thanked John for his leadership and constant presence.

Stewardship Plan of Action to Increase 2026 Pledges: Deb reported that the total dollars pledged so far is ahead of where we were this time last year, but the number of pledges is behind. The Stewardship Committee has followed up already with those who pledged last year but are yet to pledge for 2026. She is asking for Vestry help for the next round of follow-ups with those who pledged two years ago but not since. They will also be reaching out to active members who have not pledged or who have no giving history. She emphasized that Ruth, Jane, and Mike will be consulted to identify those with extenuating circumstances that would explain their missing pledges (e.g., moves, job changes, deaths in the family, etc.). She hopes to have this effort underway by the end of the third week of January, with Vestry members reaching out via email or phone call. Ruth would like Vestry members to make announcements at services on the last Sunday of January

and the first Sunday of February. She noted that many in the category of active-but-not-pledging are younger members, so announcements will be needed at the 9:00 AM Ark service. Deb commended the inclusion in parish communications of people's quotes about why they pledge, and she remarked that announcements by parish members (as opposed to only the clergy) are very effective. Ruth added that she will be reaching out to the families of the 20 children baptized last year as well as the couples who were married here who are not pledging yet. Deb will provide Vestry members with a draft of the wording to use with their assigned contacts. Ran reiterated that we need to more effectively shake the tree or we will have difficult decisions to make with the budget. Cindi noted that we need to remind people that if they increase their pledge, they must separately update their automatic deduction and click the credit card fee coverage box.

Adopt Gift Acceptance Policy: John explained that since last month's review, he, Barb, and Shelley corrected several formatting errors and typos but did not make substantive changes to the policy. They sent the revised policy to the Vestry along with a one-page summary, which he walked through. The team had a question on which endowment fund any gifts over \$50K are deposited to; Ruth responded that if the donor does not specify a particular fund, the gift goes to the general endowment fund. John noted that additional details are needed regarding how non-monetary donations to the Green Show are valued and how the donors are acknowledged, and how anonymous or unvalued donations are handled. Shelley remarked that she and Janet Amodei are crafting a handbook for future Green Show leaders that will document the correct process. John noted that work remains to be done on the website and publications even after the policy is passed. Thorpe moved to adopt the gift acceptance policy, Jaq seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Preliminary 2025 Year End Finance Report: Ruth addressed the document distributed in advance of the meeting. Expenses exceeded income by \$34,907, and the 2025 budget will close January 9. Pledge payments for last year not received by then and dated to 2025 will not count toward reducing the deficit but will be counted as 2026 income. Historically, shortfalls and surpluses are balanced via the contingency fund; only the Vestry can designate the use of this fund. John moved to authorize the Finance Manager to use contingency funds to balance the 2025 budget, Barb seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Leading the Congregation

Nominations Committee for 2026 Vestry Elections

Ruth appointed the members of the outgoing Vestry class (Scott, Chuck, Jaq, and Alexia) to the Vestry Nominations Committee. Deb has lists of people who have been asked to run in recent years and deferred, and Cindi added that Audrey has information from last year. Ruth asked the Vestry to send names of potential candidates to the nominating committee, who will verify if they are pledging members. Ran encouraged the Vestry not to wait until the last minute to brainstorm potential candidates.

Presence of Vestry at Parish Events: Ruth reviewed the list of fellowship, formation, and ministry events from January 14 through February 1.

Driving the Strategic Plan

Goal 3: As stewards of the gifts that God entrusts to us, we will faithfully manage our property, financial resources, and the time and talents of our members to support our ministries in and beyond Christ Church and will increase the use of our buildings and grounds to connect with our community.

Thorpe referred all to his team's report that was distributed in advance. Ruth thanked Thorpe and Wil for the extra time they have given to the FMP project. Other goal team reports will be forwarded to Sherry, and she will summarize for the parish.

Meeting Tasks and Takeaways

Approval of Minutes: December's meeting minutes were approved as amended to correct two typos.

Concerns and Thanksgivings: Thom shared about Erin's ordination service. Shelley expressed gratitude for Janet Clark-Amodei's cleaning out of the Green Show room; Ruth echoed this and noted that her gifts of time and talent have been extensive and fabulous. Ran reported that everyone he spoke to said that the Christmas services were lovely and that Sam Greenberg and the Adornment Team did an amazing job with their design, always a little different from year to year. Thorpe added that the musical offerings throughout the season were outstanding. Ruth reported that around 1,000 people attended our choir's performances of *Messiah* here and in Philadelphia.

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

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

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer O'Connor, Clerke