

## CHRIST CHURCH CHRISTIANA HUNDRED

### Vestry Minutes

February 12, 2026

7:00 PM

**Present:** 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:** Thom Peters

**Absent:** Chuck Arensberg, Scott Nickle

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

#### **Leading the Congregation**

**Presence of Vestry at Parish Events:** Ruth reviewed the list of fellowship, formation, and ministry events from February 14 through February 28.

**CCEP Update:** Cindi reported that trustee recruitment and succession planning are underway, and the board identified the skills needed to fill in for the trustees who are rolling off. The new advisory board, consisting of three members, has had its first meeting. The Running of the Rams raised as much money as last year, though the goal had been higher. They are hoping that the gala will be successful at meeting its increased goal. Expenses are running 5% over budget. The school did not receive one grant they had been hoping for, and they recognize the need to build relationships with new foundations. Regarding the coming year's enrollment, the ideal number is 75, and they are now at about 71 with a waiting list for the nursery class. Signed contracts were due on January 31. Two new in-service days have been added to next year's calendar for the accreditation self-study. Sheila and Cindi are leading a staff development day on February 13. Kendall added that the gala will take place on April 17, and the Vestry is encouraged to share the gala invitation with other members of the community. Sheila is working to identify current parents who are Madame Layton School alumni. They are seeking silent auction donations to the gala. Ran proposed a joint Vestry donation, to be discussed over email.

**Vestry Nominations Progress Report:** Jaq reported that they have three candidates confirmed so far. Several people they approached were potentially interested in running, but not right now. They are in dialogue with some others, and they have run a list from Ministry Match of people who scored highly on relevant skills. Ruth suggested looking at former CCEP trustees whose children have aged out of the school. Alexia added that they have made progress with the list of people who were asked in past years and responded, "not now," and that Chuck and Scott are also talking to possible candidates. Vestry suggestions are very welcome, and Jaq will forward the link to the Google doc where they are tracking their efforts.

## **Managing Parish Resources**

**2025 Year-end Finance Report:** Ruth directed all to the reports distributed in advance. At January's meeting, the Vestry authorized balancing the budget using contingency funds. A correction to payroll added about \$5K to the deficit, but otherwise the numbers are essentially unchanged from last month. Questions may be directed to Barb, John, Jaq, or Ran. The endowment fund used to pay for the roof project shows a net decrease from 2024 to 2025 of about \$846K, however, the total value of the endowment is down only about \$274K due to fund earnings.

**Review and Adopt 2026 Ministry Budget:** Ruth referenced the narrative of the 2026 budget that was distributed in advance. Jaq commented that it accurately reflected and summarized the Finance Committee's discussions. Barb added that there was robust but respectful debate within the committee. As of now we have received 386 pledges totaling \$1,317,064. We need to keep working on bringing in pledges and sharing the fact that 60% of our resources come from pledging and only 22.4% from the endowment, which is much less than many people may think. Ruth walked through the narrative and highlighted changes made to the previous draft; discussion followed. She noted that Ministry Architects' assertion in their initial report that the parish was overstaffed (subsequently walked back) has stuck in the memory of some parishioners, but since that time, we have eliminated two part-time positions; in addition, two people listed on the CCCH staff serve and are paid by CCEP. The third clergy position was removed from the 2026 budget after extensive discussion within the Finance Committee. The Personnel Committee will be looking at how to utilize lay support to fill the gap, and Ruth is excited about further developing her collaboration with Thom and promoting lay leadership and lay leaders' ownership of decisions. Barb noted that we should be prepared for questions of why we are cutting a clergy position (more accurately leaving a position unfilled) rather than reducing staff. The proposed budget has a deficit of almost \$40K. Numerous approaches to close the gap were identified by the Finance Committee, with a mix of options to both increase income and decrease expenses. Ruth explained that Vestry may also authorize a draw from the endowment fund established by Ed Woolard, in keeping with his intention but not heretofore utilized, which would reduce the estimated deficit to under \$28K. John moved to authorize the 5% draw from the Woolard Pledge (endowment) fund, Thorpe seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. The Vestry consensus was to work on increasing pledge income but cover any year-end deficit from contingency funds. Jaq moved to adopt the 2026 budget balanced via a 5% draw from the Woolard Pledge Fund and the remainder taken from contingency funds as needed at the end of the year, Barb seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

## **Adopt Resolutions to Authorize Endowment Draw:**

Ruth read the resolution prepared by Terri Carpe for the 2026 draw of 5% from the Master Fund A endowment in the form of quarterly withdrawals of \$154,484. Cindi moved the resolution, Kendall seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

## **Driving the Strategic Plan**

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

Barb summarized her team's written report that was distributed in advance. The most recent newcomers' class netted eight new members, and two of these have pledged. The Invite– Welcome–

Connect team, with Elizabeth Fiechter as their new leader, has worked through about 20 of the 50 ideas generated at last fall's Vestry Retreat and has chosen three so far to develop further. Events are being planned to bring the parish and preschool communities together.

**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 gave an update on the Facilities Master Plan progress. Surveys have been completed, and the first presentation of the data to the parish will take place on February 21. The next phase will include analysis of current conditions and discussions of what to plan for and budget for, with the aim of presenting the finished plan at the annual meeting in May. Ran noted that all involved are very pleased with the architects and their insights and diligence. Thorpe also reported that the final figure of savings on the roof project will be presented at the March vestry meeting.

### **Meeting Tasks and Takeaways**

**Approval of Minutes:** January's meeting minutes were approved as presented with one abstention.

**Concerns and Thanksgivings:** Alexia and Ruth shared a pastoral concern and requested prayers. Jaq shared about the parish's efforts in the recent freezing weather to support ministries to the unhoused. Ruth remarked that CCEP strategic plan is almost ready to be published.

**To-Do Assignments and Talk-Abouts:** Ruth and Jenno recapped the tasks identified throughout the meeting. Ruth mentioned that April's vestry meeting has been moved to the 16<sup>th</sup> so that it does not take place in the week following Easter.

The closing prayer was offered by Barb. The meeting adjourned at 8:46 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer O'Connor, Clerke