

CHRIST CHURCH CHRISTIANA HUNDRED

Vestry Minutes

March 12, 2026

7:00 PM

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

Absent: Chuck Arensberg, Jaq Whalen

The meeting was called to order by the rector at 7:02 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 March 15 through April 6.

Preschool Report: Cindi reported that the Strategic Plan has been launched, but she has not yet heard any feedback on it. Enrollment for the fall is currently 70; the ideal number is 75 and it looks likely to be achieved. Sheila Abio is reviewing staffing levels, which may change as numbers solidify. A tuition increase and salary increase were approved. Summer camp enrollment is coming in more slowly than expected. Tanya Haynes is returning as camp director, and camp will be staffed with current teachers. Chuck reviewed the Facilities Master Plan with the board. Kendall encouraged all Vestry members to attend the gala and to invite others, and/or donate to the gala to help the school meet its fundraising goal.

2026 Annual Meeting Plans

Vestry Nominations Progress Report: Alexia said the team has approached about thirty individuals since January. One more person has agreed to run, so they have four candidates now. They have found that the ratio is seven asks to yield one candidate. They received no self-nominations and none from the parish. She requested Vestry help to secure more candidates.

Meeting Agenda:

25th Anniversary of Ministry in the Dominican Republic – Ruth wants to recognize this milestone and is still working on how best to do that. She reported that she chatted with Heather Patton-Graham recently, former CCCH curate who went on one of the early mission exploration trips, and may invite her to preach here this summer.

20th Anniversary of Preschool – Sheila will give a presentation.

Recognition and Appreciation – Ruth asked for suggestions of parishioners and staff to acknowledge.

Facilities Master Plan Roll-out and Capital Campaign – Thorpe, Ran, and John Faulkner will collaborate on this presentation.

Rector's Report: Ruth discussed the Episcopal Parish Network conference she attended. At a pre-conference session for rectors and deans, the Presiding Bishop shared some data about the state of the church in the US, including numbers of parishes that have closed and that have been planted new since 2019, the supply of clergy being ordained and retiring, and ratios of full-time, part-time, and unpaid clergy and lay staff. He mentioned that not all parishes are experiencing decline, pointing to some parishes that he considers centers of excellence because they are growing.

Managing Parish Resources

2025 Parochial Report: Ruth distributed the Parochial Report for Vestry to sign. She noted that this year is the first time the form did not ask how many children and youth are in the parish, which seemed to surprise Sean Rowe when she pointed it out to him. The form includes questions about the racial breakdown of the membership, and Ruth has always refused to answer these because we do not collect this data and we will not make assumptions about how people identify racially. She pointed out that the average age of our parishioners is 49 (i.e., not elderly). She shared the summary of 2024 national parochial data as well as booklets from national and local studies and surveys of religious affiliation and belief for reference and comparison.

Ruth reiterated that the rector and Vestry are working on stewardship year-round. She distributed a comparison of stewardship campaign figures as of March 10 from 2025 to 2026. She asked Vestry members to send thank you notes to the 22 new pledgers, many of whom are new parishioners that came to Belong class and who are showing their belonging by pledging. Deb Piper will be reviewing the list of households that reduced their pledge to see if we know why and whether there is some pastoral attention needed. She added that the capital campaign team had a Zoom meeting with a potential candidate for leading the campaign, but they have not yet met to discuss that.

Finance Report: Barb addressed the February financial narrative from Terri Carpe that was distributed in advance. The Finance Committee is keeping pledge numbers and dollars front and center. We currently have 394 pledges, an increase of three from the prior month. The Green Show profit was \$99K. We have set up the option in the Shelby system enabling donors to opt to cover the 3% fee when they pay via credit card, and that data is now being tracked so that we can see changes over time. John remarked that it is difficult to extrapolate from just two months of data how we are doing for the year. Thorpe shared that the leak remediation project has officially ended, and depending on which fund pays for the parish center doors, there are savings of \$142K or \$121K that revert to us. Jon Payne will prepare a written report on the project.

Driving the Strategic Plan

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

Adult Spiritual Formation Program Development – Cindi commended Thom Peters's planning for the Lenten study on Benedict's Toolbox, his involvement of lay leaders in the sessions, and collection of feedback to inform future offerings.

Increase Participation in Ministry Match – The team met with Rob Dyer from Ministry Architects, who emphasized that the tool is meant to spark discernment and dialogue. Suzanne Smith is taking

on the role of facilitating conversations that will translate an individual's survey results into meaningful personal connections. Rob recommends that the survey be repeated annually as part of a worship service.

Increase Opportunity for Interaction between CCCH and CCEP – This is in progress through a number of channels, and it has been included in the preschool's strategic plan as well.

Pastoral Care – Jaq will begin the five-week Stephen Minister training at the end of April. She and Thom are seeking a second person to undertake this program.

Term Limits for Ministry Leadership Positions – The team is evaluating term limits for ministry leadership roles, with the goal of promoting leadership renewal and succession planning.

Ministry with Children and Youth – MJ reported on a recent conversation she had with Mason Cruz where he reported feeling on the outside of planning and conversations that affect his areas of responsibility, for example his not being included on the Vestry agenda on a quarterly basis as intended. Cindi and Ruth agreed that that ball has been dropped due to a combination of factors including the leak remediation project and overly full Vestry meeting agendas. Cindi confirmed that the team would ensure that both Thom and Mason are included in their meetings.

Strategic Plan Quarterly Update for Website: Cindi will prepare the summary for January through March and send it to Sherry Lawton-Fasic.

Meeting Tasks and Takeaways

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

Concerns and Thanksgivings: Shelley gave thanks for the excellent job done by the landscapers in tidying up the pollinator garden. Ruth mentioned that Mason has been actively promoting the open house for children's formation classes. She added that a number of young adults are now attending regularly at the 10:30 service, which should be noted by those who are concerned that the parish is excessively graying. Ran reported that the Facilities Master Plan survey results meeting had about 50 attendees, by which he was very pleased. Barb gave thanks for everyone who is making a point of welcoming new members who went through Belong class.

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

The closing prayer was offered by Jamie. The meeting adjourned at 8:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer O'Connor, Clerke