

CHRIST CHURCH CHRISTIANA HUNDRED

Vestry Minutes

April 16, 2026

7:00 PM

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

Also Present: Mason Cruz, Geri Krolin-Taylor, Thom Peters

Absent: Ruth Beresford, MJ O'Connor, Jamie Poston, Alexia Wolf

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM by Ran Barton, senior warden, and he offered the opening prayer.

Managing Parish Resources

Outreach Committee Report on 2026 Allocations to Agency Partners: Ran welcomed Geri Krolin-Taylor, convener of the Outreach Committee. This year they had about \$214K to allocate, which enabled the committee to fully fund more requests. Geri thanked the Vestry for the \$69K contribution from the operating budget (up from \$42K last year), and she noted that the profits from the Green Show were about \$99K, up from \$85K the prior year. They received applications from 27 agencies, of which they funded 24. Seventeen agencies received the full amount of their request, two received slightly more than requested, and five received less than requested. Of the three agencies that did not receive funding, one had not responded to repeated requests for more information, one had such a large budget that the amount we could provide would not have had a meaningful impact, and the third was a pass-through, which we do not fund as a matter of practice. There were three new agencies that received funding this year. Barb moved to accept the Outreach Committee's recommendation for grant funding for 2026, Scott seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. Ran expressed his thanks to Geri and the rest of the committee for the work they do.

Finance Report: Barb referred to the March financial narrative from Terri Carpe that was distributed in advance. The annual audit is currently underway, and results will be reported at the May or June Vestry meeting. CCEP is included in the audit. Pledge income is trending upward to just 1% below budget as of April month-to-date. The number of pledges is down, but the average pledge is up. Ran cautioned that this may not necessarily be a good thing; we would prefer to have more pledges that are smaller to show that the congregation is growing. John noted that from 2024 to 2026 so far, we are down 28 pledges. Barb reported that the Shelby system was not offering the option to donors to cover the 2.5% bank fees on credit card payments in all scenarios, but that has now been corrected. Ran spoke about a memo prepared by Ruth on the categorization of expenses related to the roof remediation project. Some preparatory work had been lumped in with the roof project execution that made it appear we were over budget, when the understanding had long been that substantial savings would be realized over the initial estimate. These expenses were identified and reclassified. We are considering switching banks from M&T to get better customer service. Ran

presented a resolution prepared by Mike Sayer to liquidate four shares of Kyndryl Holdings, worth approximately \$100 each, that were donated to the parish. John moved, Barb seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

CCEP Update: Chuck noted that the gala is April 17 and he commended Kendall and her team for their organization of it. He also thanked the Vestry for their contributions. He reported that the school has been involved at every stage of the Facility Master Plan, and the Trustees are very appreciative of the depth of communication around it. Cindi reported on the progress toward accreditation: Sheila Abio participated as a member of the visiting committee at another school, giving her the opportunity to see the process up close. A steering committee has been formed that includes Cindi, Sheila, and Jen Fordham. Cindi will be working with Sheila over the summer on a review of the curriculum in comparison to Delaware standards and early learning outcomes. Enrollment for the fall stands at 73, with 75 being ideal. A new hire started on April 7, and they are looking for one more full-time person. Summer camp enrollment is targeted at 30 per week, with registrations currently varying from 14 to 20, depending on the week. Tanya Haines is doing an excellent job with camp planning. Kendall added that a \$5K gala sponsorship was received that day from a new parishioner.

Driving the Strategic Plan

Report on Children and Youth Ministries: Ran welcomed Mason Cruz, Minister for Children and Youth. He reported that youth attendance at the Easter Vigil was lower than in past years. Most youth group regular attendees are high school seniors, and he hopes the group will be replenished by the current cohort of 8th graders. He plans to take the opportunity with this transition to revamp the program and hopefully attract more participants. The encouragement to bring friends to youth group has met resistance for various reasons. He acknowledged that today's youth are extremely busy and it is difficult to schedule events. He is considering changes to the meeting time and/or day, possibly right after church or on a weeknight. He is considering opening up youth group to middle schoolers. The middle school service project concept has been successful; however, he notes that while parents want a service group, kids want a more traditional youth group experience. The middle school service team will be assisting with a blood drive at the church on May 23. He will be involving the youth in preparations, publicity, and day-of support. Service team meeting attendance has been down since January due to snowstorms, Presidents Day weekend, and school spring breaks. Dominican Republic mission trip planning is underway, with 12 participants confirmed. Four will be going for the first time, including two 8th graders. Hannah Walker will attend again as a chaperone. The UrbanPromise workday on May 2 is required for all DR trip participants, but it has been opened up to the whole parish to participate. Chuck mentioned that there have been discussions about involving preschool parents or perhaps some of our vendors in supporting the DR mission; Mason responded that Brad du Pont would be the contact for that. The work in Jalonga this year will involve building a storage shed. Barb asked whether these projects help students to fulfill service hours requirements for school, and Mason confirmed that they do. The acolyte ministry is losing four seniors, and Jane Rubini has stated that she already struggles to fill special services; Mason reported that he is diligently recruiting new acolytes from the rising 7th and 8th graders. John asked if we have done any benchmarking of our youth programs compared to other

churches; Mason responded that he is the only paid full-time person in a role like his in the diocese, and most parishes have very small programs. Some diocese-wide youth events have been floated, but again, it is difficult to schedule dates that will be well-attended. Third Sunday all-ages fellowship is attended primarily by 9 AM worshippers with 30 to 40 present each month, and he would like to see more participation from the 8 and 10:30AM congregations. Sunday School attendance is consistent at six to ten per class, but there are challenges with taking attendance using the Shelby app. Parents of young children really enjoy coffee hour while their kids are in formation. Therefore, he is focusing his recruiting of Sunday school teachers on those who do not have children in the program, but it is an annual challenge to find teams of four for each class. He offered an update related to the strategic plan: by 2027 our goal was to have 150 children and 70 youth actively participating. The plan does not define the dividing line between the two; Mason sees grades 6-12 as youth and preschool to 5th grade as children. Mason believes we could reach up to 40 youth and 70-80 children, or a little over half of the initial goals. He remarked that we must continue to stress to parents that they are the drivers of their children's participation in church. Jaq recommended to Mason to work with Suzanne Smith regarding using Ministry Match to identify potential teachers.

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.

Roof Remediation Project – Thorpe reported that a couple items remain to be completed under the umbrella of the roof remediation project, namely the doors at either end of the patio.

Year-Round Stewardship – Deb Piper is leading this effort, and she is seeking to coordinate with other committee leaders to identify who else can assist. Sherry has created a system for managing the quotes about stewardship that appear in the eNEWS and social media.

Legacy Society – The 1848 Legacy Society will have an event on November 1.

Facility Master Plan Update – Work began last December and is going well. The surveys were successful. The parish meeting on February 21 was well attended, and it resulted in feedback that has assisted the team in working toward space planning. Another parish meeting is planned for April 25 to provide an update on progress and gauge parish expectations and understanding of the work. The team is on track to give a presentation at the annual meeting in May. Thom asked if there is a contingency plan if the final report is not ready by then. Ran explained that we are obligated to present something on the FMP, but we are not envisioning a completely finalized plan at that point. We will report on what we have learned and that we will continue working on the FMP in conjunction with what our fundraising targets might be.

Capital Campaign Development – Ran recalled that the need for a capital campaign came out of the necessity to fix the roof immediately. We were fortunate to have an endowment to borrow against while we took time for more intentional planning of a campaign, something we have not done since before Ruth became the rector. She has spoken with clergy colleagues and found that few parishes have the knowledge to mount a campaign themselves. Some hire staff, but more hire consultants. We considered the firm we used in 2006 and decided against that. We then got a

referral from Ministry Architects for The FOCUS Group, whose motto is “Jesus, Relationships, and Fun,” and the references that Ran spoke to affirmed that they embodied that. A representative from the firm visited our campus in February, and members of the FMP team who met with him were impressed with his approach and focus on listening to us rather than selling us something. The FOCUS Group submitted a proposal in March, and it was thoroughly reviewed by Eliza Phillips, Michael Flynn, Ruth, Ran, and others. Their consensus is to accept the proposal, the cost of which would be less than hiring and paying benefits to a staff member. Ruth proposed to pay for it out of the Reynolds Cooch discretionary fund, to be repaid from the proceeds of the campaign. Ran offered to share the proposal with the Vestry and hold a vote via email whether to accept it. He and John will work together to craft a resolution by Tuesday, April 21, to be voted on by Friday, April 24.

Leading the Congregation

Presence of Vestry at Parish Events: Ran reviewed the list of fellowship, formation, and ministry events from April 17 through May 17.

Report from the Clergy: Thom reported that worship continues to flourish and is fun to lead. Many parishioners are in need of pastoral care for illness and life transitions. They have not yet identified another person to undergo training to become a Stephen Minister trainer, though the four individuals they approached are interested in first becoming Stephen Ministers who assist clergy with pastoral visitations.

Report from the Wardens: No report.

Meeting Tasks and Takeaways

Approval of Minutes: March’s meeting minutes were approved as presented.

Concerns and Thanksgivings: John reported that the nominating team has assembled an excellent slate of candidates for Vestry. He also mentioned there is an email scam involving birthday party invitations from Punchbowl that appear to be from parishioners; it would be helpful to have Sherry mention this in the eNEWS. Barb expressed thanks for Mason’s visit.

To-Do Assignments and Talk-Abouts: Jenno recapped the tasks identified throughout the meeting. The next meeting Vestry meeting begins at 7:45 PM on May 14, following the Ascension Day service at 7 PM.

The closing prayer was offered by Cindi. The meeting adjourned at 9:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer O’Connor, Clerke