

# CHRIST CHURCH CHRISTIANA HUNDRED

## Vestry Minutes

November 2, 2023

7:00 PM

**Present:** Chuck Arensberg, Ruth Beresford, Michael Flynn, Sherri Howell, Ted Ledden, Scott Nickle, Bart Reese, Mike Rushlow, Suzanne Smith, Jaq Whalen

**Also Present:** Stacey Carpenter, Nancy Greenberg, Deb Piper

**Absent:** Louise Barton, Audrey Bruce, Alexander Maynard, Eliza Phillips, Alexia Wolf

The meeting was called to order by the rector at 7:04 PM, and she offered the opening prayer.

### Leadership and Governance

**The Green Show:** Nancy Greenberg spoke as Chair of the 70<sup>th</sup> annual Green Show. She reported that with one month to go until the event, all major leadership positions are filled except for Silent Auction, so Nancy is leading that herself with help, as Becky Rogers did last year. She reviewed last year's financials with Ted, and Parties and Getaways are the biggest money makers—they have several lined up this year. They are light on sports donations. Based on feedback from last year's Saturday Luncheon chairs and the community, this year they will serve brunch from 10 AM to 12:30 PM. They are expecting this to be a welcome change, and Tom Desper is leading this team. Inside Greens is working on preorder forms and waiting on pricing for greens. There will be a new Santa this year along with Mrs. Claus. Artwork donations are focusing on original artwork. Green Show week is challenging for preschool parents, so this year they are only utilizing classrooms on the same level as the Parish Halls. Upstairs classrooms will remain in use as classrooms all week, and CCEP will have their Christmas party there on Saturday, December 2. Downstairs classrooms will hold vendors and children's activities. They wanted to get preschool parents more involved, so they are having a soup-making night and offering the opportunity to make soup at home. They will again hold a wreath-making workshop for preschool parents, which was a big hit in past years. Chuck Arensberg is heading up the Property Committee, and he will be a helpful liaison with the school. Ruth asked if Vestry is needed to be greeters on Saturday; Nancy said this is not on her radar. She remarked that it has been difficult in general to get volunteers.

**Friendsgiving Planning:** Ruth explained that this year's Friendsgiving event will not be a ministry fair but a request and opportunity to bring friends to church. Because it is a third Sunday of the month with all-ages fellowship, a big coffee hour spread is planned, and Vestry members are the hosts. Ruth will ask Arwen DeCostanza or Laura Muhlbauer to organize an activity for children. Stacey offered to ask Mike Socha and Jane Rubini to set up a Ministry Match station, but Suzanne responded that it might create awkwardness asking for visitors to volunteer right away. Instead, she will create a display from last year's Friendsgiving leaves on which people wrote the things they are thankful for at Christ Church. Jenno will set up a Signup Genius for the food and drinks.

**Determine Diocesan Apportionment:** Ruth summarized how our contribution to the diocese is determined and what the money goes to. Last year for the first time we went below the 10.8% minimum apportionment to 10%. Michael Flynn said that at his meeting with the treasurers and the Finance Committee, their recommendation was to go back up to 10.8% for 2024. It was recognized that many parishes give less than the 10.8% minimum, and only a handful give the fair share of 14.3%. Ruth holds that this contribution represents our first fruits that we give to the diocese and thence to the national church. Ted moved to approve the 10.8% apportionment, Suzanne seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Vestry Resolution for Master Fund A Disbursement:** Ruth reminded the Vestry that in 2022 she made the decision to use some Reynolds-Cooch Rector's Discretionary funds to pay for a part-time administrative position, filled by Mitchell Frizzell, that would enable Sherry to focus on strategic planning. The proposed withdrawal would cover the salary he was paid this year. He left in July and will not be replaced at this time. Ruth presented the resolution for a one-time disbursement of \$50,742 from the Reynolds-Cooch Endowment held in Master Fund A. Michael Flynn moved, Ted seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

**2024 Annual Stewardship—"There's A Place For You Here":** Deb reported that the Stewardship Team this year is small but very energetic and active. Deborah Webb did a great job on the materials for the annual appeal. To date, we have received 210 pledges, on par with last year. The strategic plan's goal is 415 to 430, and Deb is optimistic that we will achieve that. They will be doing follow-up through the end of the year. So far, pledges total \$742,604, ahead of last year by over \$68K. The average pledge is \$3,570. She is trying to have the committee operate year-round on different projects, not just the drive in the fall. They are creating a brochure about different forms of giving (pledging, planned giving, etc.) and working on reconciling lists of planned givers; record-keeping on legacy gifts has not been consistent in the past. They will establish a clear procedure for becoming a member of the Legacy Society. They are considering holding an event on this topic in April 2024, which would feature some professionals in estate planning and templates to make it easy for people to make the arrangements. Suzanne remarked that there is the perception that to be a Legacy Society member, one's intended contribution must be large, and that is not the case. Mike Rushlow agreed that it is important not to create the impression that the church only cares about what it will get when the giver dies. Jaq responded that to prevent that, it is crucial to emphasize the "why" of planned giving. The Stewardship team is also engaging with other committees so that their presence is visible outside of stewardship season. We took in \$11K from the golf outing. A revised gift acceptance policy is in the draft stage, and Deb and Michael Flynn will discuss it further with a working group.

**Preparing for 2024 Ministry Budget—Personnel:** Ruth recalled that David Hearn retired and has not been replaced; Jo Harney is being paid as Director of Choristers. Bruce is filling in with guest organists as needed, but he would like to fill the role permanently. Ruth is looking for Vestry members with HR experience to assist the Personnel Committee in looking at the various music positions, Minister for Children and Youth, etc. Mike Rushlow and Bart Reese volunteered.

## **State of the Parish**

**CCEP Report:** Chuck reported on the October 10 Board of Trustees meeting. Topics included a thorough report from the Interim Head of School, the range of post-secondary education levels among the faculty, a potential tuition reimbursement plan, the planned 2024 budget that will be presented at the next meeting (flat to 2023), and changes to the summer camp policy regarding cancellation. The Running of the Rams was very successful, with 75-80 runners despite the poor weather. Upcoming meetings will address a review of the strategic plan that was discussed at the Vestry Retreat. For the Head of School search, Educators Collaborative was chosen as the search firm, to be paid from a proposed one-time draw from unrestricted endowment funds. The search consultant visited the school the day prior and met with parents after drop-off and then with Trustees in the evening. He will be preparing an in-depth job description and information for applicants, a survey for the parents, and a search page on the school website. The Trustees feel very good about this consultant.

**Finance Committee Report:** Ted reminded the Vestry that as of the end of third quarter, income was under by more than \$78K or about 7%, with several large pledges outstanding. An update for October was received the day prior, and perhaps in response to the 2024 pledge drive, a few of those big 2023 pledges were paid. Now only \$42K in two pledges remain outstanding, leaving income down by only \$36K or about 3%. Mark Parsells will wait until early December before reaching out to those donors. Ruth asked Mark to follow up on a delayed pension transfer of \$23K, which will improve our bottom line. Recent expenses are in line with budget.

**Rector's Report:** Ruth remarked that her ministry has changed significantly since Michelle's resignation. She is now sending the weekly children's ministries email to the parish and preschool parents and running the senior high youth group on Sunday nights. That group did setup and cleanup for Trunk 'n Treat and then joined a Zoom meeting with the search consultant for the Minister for Children and Youth. Children's formation got off to a great start on October 22. The confirmation class is going strong with attendance and participation; last Sunday they counted the offering and discussed to which outreach partner they would like to give the donations from the pancake breakfast. Lisa Tuleya reported that book fair income will go to the preschool in the Dominican Republic. Other classes are growing in attendance. The 9:00 double services are taxing on the clergy and other ministries, but many families are helping. Attendance has been holding steady in the 40s in the church and 50s in the chapel. The 10:30 attendance has not noticeably changed. The parish choir led that service the prior week; they are small in number but there are new volunteers. Next week's service will feature the baptisms of four adults (the oldest in her 80s) and three children. The Lord is doing great things in and among us and through us, and the strategic plan is in our hearts. The three-week rotation of preaching has been well received. Regarding December, we will celebrate three Sundays of Advent with no morning services on December 24, but we will still hold the Saturday afternoon service on December 23. Christmas Eve and Christmas will follow the same service schedule as in years past. On Sunday, December 31, we will hold services at 8:00, combine the two 9:00 services in the church, and at 10:30 as usual.

### **Monthly Management Tasks**

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

**Other Concerns and For the Record / Communication and Gratitude:** Stacey expressed gratitude to the Elder Ministry for the wonderful event with Lucas Clawson on November 1. Ruth offered gratitude to those who organized the reception for our guests from St. George's College in Jerusalem; we hosted about 50 people from around the diocese and region.

The closing prayer was offered by Sherri Howell. The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer O'Connor, Clerke