

CHRIST CHURCH CHRISTIANA HUNDRED

Vestry Minutes

September 12, 2024

7:00 PM

Present: Ran Barton, Ruth Beresford, Audrey Bruce, Cindi Cozza, Barb King, Ted Ledden, Alexander Maynard, Thorpe Moeckel, Scott Nickle, Jamie Poston, Jaq Whalen, Alexia Wolf

Also Present: Mason Cruz

Absent: Chuck Arensberg, Eliza Phillips, Bart Reese

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

Leadership and Governance

Organizing Vestry to Accomplish Strategic Plan: Ruth recalled that Ran started a discussion at the July Vestry meeting regarding how the Vestry can support the ongoing work to fulfill the strategic plan. Ran reported that this topic has been further discussed in the Wardens' meetings and at the August Vestry meeting, when the Treasurers and Strategic Planning Team Leader were present. Our original contract with Ministry Architects (MA) ends this fall, and some ideas had been floated for how we might further benefit from the discipline and support they provide that enables us to work toward our vision with coherence and confidence. MA responded with suggestions for an ongoing but reduced role, providing a framework and coaching for soliciting volunteers that would help parish leaders become more comfortable and effective at making the ask. MA has not brought us a cost proposal yet. Thorpe asked if they could be on call for per-hour consultation, and we will ask them if that is an option.

Ruth created three groups of Vestry members to focus on the three goals:

1. (Grow Community) – Audrey, Barb, Chuck, Bart, Ran
2. (Grow Relationships) – Jaq, Jamie, Cindi, Alexander, Alexia (Mason to join for tonight)
3. (Steward Resources) – Thorpe, Scott, Ted, Eliza (Ruth to join for tonight)

Teams held break-out sessions to review the details and benchmarks of their assigned goal, review the DACI chart, discuss what is happening in related areas of ministry that the Vestry knows about (or does not and whom to ask), and brainstorm ideas on how the Vestry can best support the efforts toward that goal. Each team was to choose a facilitator, a recorder of notes, and begin their conversation with a prayer.

Personnel: Ruth reported that the Personnel Committee will be meeting before the end of September to plan the cost-of-living adjustment that they will be proposing to the Vestry for the 2025 budget. The position description for the open clergy role will be updated to reflect the role of an Associate Rector and the areas of ministry expertise that we are hiring for, including adult formation and pastoral care. Ruth has begun reaching out to her network for prospects; Mason,

Sheila Abio, and Ruth will attend the National Association of Episcopal Schools Biennial Conference in November, which will offer another opportunity for networking. In the meantime, Ruth and Michael will divide up the work to ensure that worship services are covered in collaboration with staff and parish ministry leaders. Bill Lane will continue serving as a Pastoral Associate. There has been discussion of an Interim Associate being brought in to help with the services in December.

Presence of the Vestry at Parish Events: Ruth explained that this new item on the monthly agenda is intended to ensure that Vestry members are aware of opportunities to connect with various constituencies of parishioners. She is not asking for Vestry to formally sign up to cover these events, but if they plan to or would like to attend, to let her know that they will be present. Ran reminded members to wear their red Vestry name tags.

- Golf Classic at Hartefeld on Thursday, September 19
- Recovery Eucharist at 4:00 PM on Sunday, September 29
- Creations Care Event (Recycling and Planting) on Saturday, October 19
- All Ages Fellowship on Sunday, October 20, a pancake breakfast hosted by the Confirmation and Senior High classes
- Outreach Agency Networking Breakfast on Thursday, October 17 (note change in date from what was reported at the vestry meeting)
- CCEP Family Worship (Bishop's Visit) on Thursday, October 24
- Running of the Rams on Saturday, October 26
- Stewardship Ingathering for 2025 Pledges on Saturday/Sunday, October 26 and 27
 - Scott reported that the pledge mailing is being prepared with a letter from Ruth and an updated trifold brochure. Pledge cards will be collected and blessed at all services that weekend, and the Stewardship Committee will host Coffee & Community at 9:30 AM on the 27th. Ruth encouraged all Vestry to attend that gathering and invite others (unless teaching a class during that time).

State of the Parish

Rector's Report: Ruth has seen the draft of the Stewardship brochure and is very pleased with it. She was delighted by the energy at the Parish Picnic. Mason is in discussion with a relatively new member who has expressed interest in teaching Sunday School. As a follow-up task from last month's meeting, one more Alternate Delegate was required for our parish deputation to the 2024 Diocesan Convention. Ted moved that Jim Whalen be appointed, Cindi seconded, and the motion carried unanimously with one abstention.

Wardens' Report: Ran spoke about what to expect at the Vestry Retreat, with freedom from distractions and time for more extended discussions, and for both social and personal time. Ruth passed around a sign-up sheet for all to indicate their attendance plans and contributions of pre-dinner snacks. Ran then addressed the need for a better solution for document management with Vestry meetings. To begin with, we will investigate using a shared folder on the church's SharePoint, and Ran will arrange a training session when the approach has been decided.

CCEP Update: Cindi reported that the school year is off to a smooth start. Professional development was held for the faculty, and three new substitutes were hired. Enrollment is down to 70 students from 62 families, representing a 20% decrease from last year. At the same time costs have increased, so the 2024-25 budget has not yet been finalized. It will likely be a deficit budget bolstered by reserves, which are fairly healthy, but that approach is not sustainable in the long term. We need approximately four more students in the 3-year-old class; some families are enrolling for additional days, which will boost revenue. Sheila, the Board of Trustees, and Ruth have been handling an issue with a family that has withdrawn their child. A deep cleaning of all the school spaces was performed, which had not been done in more than ten years, and that expense may contribute to the deficit. The school hired a new cleaning contractor who will clean both the classrooms and the kitchen on a nightly basis.

Finance Update: Ted reported that we are on budget with pledge income; 108 pledges have been completely fulfilled (compared to 101 last year at this time), and expenses are on track. Once the Finance Committee meets in the third week of the month, reports will be shared.

Thorpe reported from the Property Committee that there is work ongoing with the church lighting improvements. There was a delay with one contractor, but the project is close to being finished. The next big project that is likely to impact the budget is the resolution of persistent and proliferating ceiling leaks in the newer wing of the parish center. The committee has engaged a consultant to develop a plan of approach, and then the work will be bid out. It is likely to be expensive and may need to be done in phases. A lot of landscaping work was done over the summer, and the preschool paid for work done in the outdoor classroom and playground.

Monthly Management Tasks

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

Other Concerns and For the Record: Audrey shared that a parishioner's husband has cancer, and there is a GoFundMe link to assist with their medical bills. Ruth expressed her gratitude to the Parish Fellowship team for their work on the picnic. She noted that very few of the people who attended the 9:00 AM service came back for the picnic, and the Children's Ministry and Parish Fellowship teams will need to consider how to address that next year.

The closing prayer was offered by Cindi. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer O'Connor, Clerke