

# CHRIST CHURCH CHRISTIANA HUNDRED

## Vestry Minutes

December 12, 2024

7:00 PM

**Present:** Chuck Arensberg, Ran Barton, Ruth Beresford, Cindi Cozza, Barb King, Ted Ledden, Thorpe Moeckel, Scott Nickle, Eliza Phillips, Jamie Poston, Bart Reese, Jaq Whalen, Alexia Wolf

**Also Present:** David Beresford, Mason Cruz, Michael Kurth

**Absent:** Audrey Bruce, Alexander Maynard

The meeting was called to order by the rector at 7:02 PM, and she offered the opening prayer.

### Leading the Congregation

**Determining Presence of Vestry at Parish Events:** Ruth reviewed the list of fellowship, formation, and ministry events from December 19 through January 18. She highlighted the preschool's pageant on December 19 and added that Alex Ergon's funeral will also take place that day. David will lead the Celtic service for Epiphany on January 6. The 5 PM service on January 18 will be video recorded to capture footage of that style of worship for the website and social media posts; afterward, there will be fellowship time with hors d'oeuvres. Thorpe asked if the Vestry is to attend the CCEP Board of Directors meeting on December 17; Ruth confirmed that all Vestry members are also part of that body, which meets twice a year. Ran reminded all to wear their red Vestry name tags when they attend these parish events.

### Driving the Strategic Plan

**Goal 2: We will grow deeper relationships with God and with each other, following Jesus Christ.**  
Children and youth ministries – Jaq introduced Mason to speak about children and youth ministries. He summarized the parish and preschool activities over which he has oversight, then reported on the typical attendance of each of the Sunday formation options, efforts to boost participation in high school offerings, promoting parish involvement at the CCEP Running of the Rams, and youth volunteering for the Green Show. He shared an urgent need for adult volunteers to be assistant teachers for Sunday morning faith formation classes and for a female co-leader for the Sunday night high school youth group. Going forward he will be focusing on family-oriented events, both to build community between the preschool and parish and to grow the all-ages fellowship offerings on third Sundays. Ruth added that the parish's pageant at 2 PM on Christmas Eve will feature 59 children and youth (compared to only about 46 last year), some of whom are CCEP students not yet affiliated with the parish.

Outreach volunteerism – Alexia spoke about the benchmark to identify three to five community agencies on whom to focus our volunteer efforts. She, Michael, and Ruth met with Carol Morley and Geri Krolin-Taylor of the Outreach Committee, and their discussion revealed that we already have a small number of partners where our activity is concentrated, but we must do more to tell the

story of our impacts. Eliza mentioned a slide deck that Jane Romano prepared about Friendship House involvement by CCCH parishioners, which she will forward to Alexia and Michael.

Ministry Match – Alexia, Jaq, and Cindi participated in a webinar about Ministry Match in October, where Alexia won a free hour of training on the tool. The Goal 2 team would like to offer the training to all the ministry leaders early next year, and Ministry Architects is being very accommodating about the number of trainees. They have observed that the more leaders use the tool, the more successful the ministries are. Jaq mentioned that the webinar provided promising ideas for how to use the information the tool collects.

Adult formation – Cindi and Michael are working on compiling an inventory of adult formation offerings over the last five years and developing a survey to gather insight into needs and interests in this area. They are aware of the risk of survey overload, given the benchmark requirement to collect worship feedback twice a year. David is taking over responsibility for this area from Michael, and Ran offered to share some additional history with David.

Pastoral care – Jaq spoke about pastoral care, which has been in a holding pattern since Stacey Carpenter left in August, though David is now getting up to speed. They will meet in January to discuss options for lay pastoral care, who would be involved, what we want to accomplish, and the path toward it. Mike Socha and John Newlin wish to continue working in this area, and we need to build a team around them.

Preschool connections – Jaq noted that they initially held off on addressing preschool/parish connections while Sheila Abio was new in her role, and Michael provided an update that Lisa Stevens from the preschool staff has been attending IWC meetings and has facilitated some actions already. Eliza suggested following up with Green Show leaders to see what new volunteers they had this year from CCEP. Ruth added that Michael's article in the CCEP newsletter netted several candidates for baptism at the January 12 service, thus there are plans to promote that date as "CCEP Sunday."

Effectiveness coaching – Cindi reported that she, Jaq, and Thorpe had their first coaching session with Ministry Architects on being effective at their strategic plan work. Barb will view the recording of the session.

## **Managing Parish Resources**

**Finance – Budget Priorities & First Look at the 2025 Ministry Budget:** Ruth reviewed the current funding priority statements and the proposed revisions to them that were drafted by Barb, Jaq, and Cindi, and she asked that we keep both in mind during budget discussions. Barb explained that the "living water" statement is meant to address the nurturing of our existing community, apart from growth. Ruth provided the latest figures on 2025 pledging from Mike Sayer: \$1.151 million so far with \$276K in yet-to-pledge. Deb Piper, Mike, and Ruth will meet to further discuss how to reach out to those who have yet to pledge and those who never pledge yet give consistently. Ran noted that half of the pledges show no change, which Ruth said is consistent year after year, while about one third have increased and less than a tenth have decreased. Deb and Ruth agreed that a letter will be sent before Christmas only to those with no history of pledging. Eliza suggested reminding people that they can fulfill their pledge with gifts of stock. Ruth then shared the first draft of the

2025 budget, developed by the Finance Committee led by their new convener, Christine Cook, with the assistance of Treasurer Mark Parsells and Assistant Treasurer Bob Reardon. It was important to the committee to deliver a balanced budget. Ruth went through the budget line by line to explain the methodology or thought process behind the numbers.

#### INCOME

- There is a 2% increase in budgeted pledge income over 2024.
- Endowment income is based on a 5% draw. Because of the strength of the stock market, a 6% one-time draw was floated, only if we are able to clearly define the usage and justification for it (e.g., to further the strategic plan or address pinch points). *The roof repairs are a separate capital project not reflected in the operating budget. The Finance Committee does not want to use endowment funds for that but instead raise the money needed.*
- Total income shows a 2% decrease from 2024.

#### EXPENSE

- On the expense side, there is a 5% increase in the operating budget allocation to Outreach, and total giving beyond the parish (including the diocesan contribution) is 15% of income.
- Interview and relocation expenses for a new Associate Rector are budgeted.
- Program ministry is 11.5% of income.
- There is a new expense line for Delaware Paid Leave, which is 0.32% of pay for eligible employees.
- Personnel represents 56% of income; that has grown from 48-50% when Ruth arrived at CCCH in 2007.
- Capital project funding shows a large, one-time cut, from \$100K down to \$25K, in order to balance the budget.

Discussion followed. Chuck asked how much of the funds budgeted for Parish House repairs are earmarked for anticipated leak damage; Ruth will inquire, because this repair budget may be adjusted if the roof is fully fixed within the year. Thorpe asked for a report on how the endowment is invested and its performance. Ran reiterated that the operating budget does not address the roof project, and we still have to figure out that scope and funding. Eliza shared how donors tend to make major gifts from their assets, whereas pledges are typically given from their income. We have an opening in which to capitalize on our momentum and develop a larger ask that goes beyond fixing the roof. For donors who might not be inspired to give toward repairs, we could find ways to assign dollar values to program enhancements, outreach impacts, kitchen renovations, etc. We need creative ways to tell the story of how crucial the roof is to everything else we are building and dreaming for the parish. Ruth asked the Vestry to brainstorm potential members of a capital campaign team. The final 2025 operating budget will be passed in January or February.

**Property:** Thorpe addressed the written report from John Faulkner that was distributed in advance. Ruth confirmed that the last step of the sanctuary lighting project was just completed. A team is being formed to develop ideas and plans for renovating the kitchen.

#### Meeting Tasks and Takeaways

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

**Resolutions to Approve Clergy Housing Allowances for 2025:** Jenno read the following motions. “Be it resolved that the Rev. Michael Kurth’s compensation for the year 2025 includes the amount of \$35,756 as a designated allowance for the expenses of providing a home, based upon the attached statement of the Rev. Kurth’s estimated housing expenses for the year 2025.”

Ted moved, Thorpe seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

“Be it resolved that the Rev. Ruth Beresford’s compensation for the year 2025 includes the amount of \$6,000 as a designated allowance for the expenses of providing a home, based upon the attached statement of the Rev. Beresford’s estimated housing expenses for the year 2025.”

Ted moved, Barb seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

**Report from the Clergy:** Ruth spoke about the division of duties between Michael and David, given that they are both experienced priests, neither one a curate. Michael’s areas of focus will be outward facing (outreach, evangelism, the preschool, growth), while David’s focus areas will be inward facing (pastoral care, adult formation, spiritual direction, fellowship).

**Concerns and Thanksgivings:** Ruth recognized Nancy Greenberg’s leadership of the Green Show. Ran moved that the Vestry expresses its heartfelt gratitude and deep appreciation to Nancy for leading the event two years in a row, in light of all the benefits it provides to our parish and the wider community. Eliza seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. Ruth asked that everyone keep the family of Alexandra Ergon in their prayers.

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

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer O’Connor, Clerke