

## **Advance Draft of Minutes for Approval**

*“To love others as Christ loves us”*

### **Christ Church Episcopal Vestry Minutes Virtual Zoom Saturday, January 24, 2026**

**Attending:** Nancy Kennedy (Senior Warden), Nelson Arrington III (Treasurer), Walker Black (Asst. Treasurer), Wade Kolb III (Chancellor), Wes Clarke, Jane Harrison Fisher, Derek Lewis, James McKissick, Mary Holt Murphy, Dorothy Nicholson, Phil Peterson, Angelle Reichert, Margot Stewart, Bud Thomas, John Wood.

**Minutes Taken by:** Wes Clarke.

**Attending by Phone:** None.

**Not in Attendance:** Chan Boyd (Junior Warden), Smyth McKissick IV.

**Guests:** None.

**Welcome & Prayer:**

Nancy Kennedy (Senior Warden) opened the meeting in prayer at 9:02am.

**Senior Warden’s Report – Nancy Kennedy:**

Nancy began the meeting by reminding the Vestry of the confidentiality of its work.

As reenrollment is set to begin, the Preschool plans to change its policy and no longer allow religious exemption for vaccinations for new enrollees. Current students will be grandfathered under the previous practice, and there may be some students permitted medical exemptions or stays on a case by case basis.

Next, Nancy mentioned the communicated decision to close the Church campus tomorrow (Sunday) due to the inclement weather. The Preschool has also announced that it will be closed Monday. Beyond that, both the Church and the Preschool will make decisions day by day.

The Church staff continues to do a great job, with everyone settling into their usual roles during the Rector transition. Nancy attends all leadership team meetings and some staff meetings.

The Diocesan office continues to seek Interim Rector candidates to refer. In the meantime, Canon Rhoades is working with Donald on rotations to invite more clergy into the pulpit and avoid burning out Scott and Lindy. The Rev. David Upton is helping to serve the Parish, is now listed as a Priest Associate, and receives honoraria when he serves.

Nancy encouraged the Vestry to continue to be as visible as possible and show up for events during this transition period.

**Junior Warden's Report – Chan Boyd:**

Nancy reported for Chan, who was en route to Atlanta due to the impending winter storm. The fascia repairs on Finlay Hall have been completed, with leftover money being allocated to repair and paint the windows. The Parish House water leak has been located under a hall in the Preschool, and will require a week to repair. The repair will be completed during the first week of March, during Preschool Spring Break.

A gift has been received to upgrade the kitchen in the All Saints Center. Karen and Joleen have collaborated on a plan to improve the countertops, purchase two larger microwaves, and install a deeper sink and a commercial dishwasher to hold bigger pots and pans.

**Treasurer's Report – Nelson Arrington & Walker Black:**

Nelson introduced new Assistant Treasurer Walker Black, whom the Vestry will work with in time.

December financials were good, leaving 2025 revenue only slightly low for the year. The Pre-school numbers lag by a month and will be updated next month. Pledges ended the year ~\$30k (1.1%) below budget.

Expense controls really helped the annual budget, and a big part of that was salary vacancies. Specifically, net expenses ended the year ~\$175k (5.2%) below budget.

The budget year ended with a gain of ~\$80k, which is ~\$121k better than the budgeted loss. The Vestry will decide how to deploy this surplus. Nelson's recommendation is to place the ~\$80k in a deficit reserve that was set up in 2020 for Vestry use. Draws from this reserve do not require payback. By contrast, the Church operating reserve is well funded at about \$300k, and withdrawals must be paid back over three or five years. Mary Holt moved to approve this deposit into the deficit reserve, and John seconded. All voted in favor, with none opposed.

The Church Finance Committee has replaced those rolling off at the end of the year. New members are Rusty Copey, Gash Clayton, and JP Cullen, with Dottie Hollis also filling a one year vacancy.

Nelson is close to presenting a final budget for 2026. As of now, the budget contemplates a \$50k deficit. But that budget includes the original Annual Giving goal of \$3 million. As of 1/21, 607 pledges had been received, totaling \$2.7 million, but Kristin Bennett feels comfortable planning for \$2.9 million, which would be the highest total in a long time, and perhaps ever. Thus, ministry areas are looking for an additional \$100k in cuts to finalize a budget for Vestry approval.

In response to a question about budgeting for an Interim and/or new Rector, Nancy and Nelson responded that the Diocese recommended a benchmark percentage of typical salary norms for the Interim Rector, with a current assumed start date of April 1.

**Approval of Minutes from December 16, 2025:**

Margot moved to approve the December minutes, and Phil seconded the motion. All voted in favor, with none opposed.

**New Business:**

Nancy initiated a discussion about increasing the Church's contribution to the Diocesan ask. In recent years, our annual contribution has been \$300k, while the Diocesan ask for 2026 is either \$478k or \$494k,

based upon a calculation called SNOI and depending upon which accounting method is utilized. It was shared that some other parishes also do not contribute the full ask, and that the Diocese annually covers benefits for the priests of the parish through its budget.

There was a clear consensus among the Vestry members to work on a plan to increase the contribution over time. It was pointed out that the Diocese would welcome any plan, even one that starts small but commits to annual increases to reduce the gap. Such a gesture would build goodwill, but one suggestion was to be very specific about the wording of our intended plan, and allow the Vestry to review it prior to sharing with the Diocese.

A contribution increase on the order of \$25k for 2026 seemed to meet with Vestry approval, as did including the increase in the 2026 budget to be approved soon. Nancy plans to be in touch about forming a small task force to devise a plan moving forward.

#### **Committee/Team Reports:**

Mary Holt reported that Canterbury Counseling Center (CCC) has signed the rental renewal through 10/31/29. She is glad that the lease has been extended, and that CCC can seek additional space in the meantime.

Angelle reported on a recent GOAL meeting via Zoom. The Nehemiah Action meeting scheduled for 4/9 will be back at nearby First Baptist, and Angelle encourages Vestry attendance.

Margot plans to meet with Kristin about the 2026 Annual Giving campaign.

Jane Harrison met with Katelyn Barnett, who has a final bid for the interior courtyard playground. CCEP parent leadership is on board with the concept and desires installation before spring. The specific request is that the Church pays half and CCEP pays the other half, with the CCEP portion ready. It will take eight weeks to get on the installation calendar. The estimate includes a new surface, equipment, materials, and labor, with some elements at 20% off if approved before 2/25. The total cost is just under \$80k.

Nelson plans to connect with Katelyn in order to verify eligibility, but believes the Church's portion could come from the Hatch Fund (balance ~\$800k) or the Parish House Fund (~\$80k). After discussion of a follow-up email vote, which requires 100% participation and unanimous vote, or waiting until the next Vestry meeting, consensus was to move forward at this meeting. Jane Harrison moved to approve a withdrawal of up to \$40k from either fund, as confirmed by Nelson, to cover the expected expenses for the interior playground. Mary Holt seconded. During discussion, it was suggested to donate equipment from the old playground to a worthy recipient. It was also pointed out that the old playground could still be used for certain special events. Upon Vestry approval, the motion will go to the Endowment Committee for its approval. All voted in favor of the motion, with none opposed.

Lindy deserves a ton of credit for her persistence in securing the arrangements for Bishop Curry to visit.

#### **Other Business:**

The appointment of Michael Fletcher to the Endowment Board was presented for Vestry approval. Michael has accepted an invitation to a three year term. James moved to approve his appointment, and Angelle seconded. All voted in favor, with none opposed.

Next, Nancy read a notice from Bishop Richards to all Clergy and Vestries of the Diocese, among others, pursuant to Title III, Canon III.9.9, regarding the release and removal of The Rev. Kiah S. Webster from the ordained Ministry of the Church for causes which do not affect the person's moral character.

Nancy shared that she will send Vestry ministry area assignments very soon. Mary Holt expressed gratitude for Nancy's extra efforts, which was heartily echoed by other Vestry members.

Nancy adjourned the meeting at 10:26am.