

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

*“To love others as Christ loves us”*

### **Christ Church Episcopal Vestry Minutes Earle Conference Room Tuesday, February 17, 2026**

**Attending:** Nancy Kennedy (Senior Warden), Chan Boyd (Junior Warden), Nelson Arrington III (Treasurer), Walker Black (Asst. Treasurer), Wade Kolb III (Chancellor), Wes Clarke, Jane Harrison Fisher, Derek Lewis, James McKissick, Smyth McKissick IV, 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:** None.

**Guests:** Kevin Mertens (Director of Faith in Action & Hospitality Ministries).

**Welcome & Prayer:**

Nancy Kennedy (Senior Warden) invited Kevin Mertens to open the meeting in prayer at 5:01pm.

**Kevin Mertens- Approval of next steps in ordination**

Kevin spoke to the current stage and overall process toward his ordination. In response to a question regarding the role of a Deacon, Kevin explained that the primary role is to serve, discerning needs in the world and bringing them to the congregation. The major differences between a Deacon and a Priest can be remembered as ABCs: a Deacon cannot give absolution (A), or give blessings (B) as in the BCP, or consecrate (C) the bread and wine. Additionally, a Deacon reports directly to the Bishop.

Smyth then moved for the Vestry to sign a Letter of Support for Kevin’s Candidacy for Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate to Rt. Rev. Richards, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Upper South Carolina, Pursuant to Title III, Canon III.6.4. John seconded. All voted in favor, with none opposed.

As Kevin departed, the Vestry thanked him for his efforts during the Rector transition, and Kevin returned thanks to the parish for his foundation in ministry.

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

Nancy shared that she has no update on our Interim Rector search. She also relayed that the Bishop was moved and grateful for our commitment to increase our parish contribution toward the Diocesan ask.

The "Winter Storm Watch" Eucharist on January 30 was a wonderful example of adaptation and teamwork. Nancy encouraged the Vestry to attend an Ash Wednesday service the following day, and the Common Table beginning the Wednesday after.

Annual Giving for 2026 is inching upwards. Kristin is confident that we will get to \$2.9 million.

The EverKind respite care ministry is on pause, unfortunately. It is a good idea, but not the right time for the parish.

Jenn Quinn and Joleen Nelson chair the staff engagement committee, and are interested in a Vestry liaison. Nancy asked Vestry members interested in serving in such a role to let her know. Nancy also asked the Vestry to let her know of any parishioners who would be interested and a good fit to serve as delegates to the annual Diocesan Convention. Among eight total delegates from Christ Church, two are appointed by the Vestry, to four year terms. This appointment also includes invitation to optional quarterly Diocesan meetings.

Nancy thanked Vestry members who have completed Safe Church training, and encouraged those who have not to do so as soon as possible.

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

Chan began by sharing the good news that the broken windows in Finlay Hall have been replaced, caulked and painted.

The HVAC system in the Boy Scout Hut died a couple of weeks ago, about ten years past its life expectancy. Replacement of the heating components only was to cost ~\$4.5k, or repair of both heat and air was ~\$20k. The full repair of both was completed the previous Friday. Chan requested a disbursement of up to \$20k from the Hatch Fund to cover these costs, and Jane Harrison seconded. After brief discussion as to the timing of requesting funds and paying for repairs, it was clarified that the Hatch Fund is purposed for capital improvements that are non-recurring within a five year period, with a minimum amount of \$10k. The Hut currently hosts several Church meetings weekly. An additional question was raised regarding the adjacent building, now designated as historical by the Zoning Commission, as to whether the Church might revisit that designation. It contains some old pews and fabrics, and is insured for liability only. All voted in favor of the request from the Hatch Fund, with none opposed.

The water leak in the Preschool is set to be repaired the week after next. There is no cost estimate until the vendor can see precisely where and how bad the leak is. In addition, there is some concern as to whether the technique of isolating the leak will increase water pressure elsewhere within the terra cotta pipes under the building. Currently, the leak is costing an additional \$1k each month, and there is no better time to schedule the repair, with only one week scheduled for Preschool closure in the summer. Every effort will be made to complete the water leak repair during the ten days of Preschool Spring Break, counting the adjacent weekends and the teacher weekday the following Monday.

Next, Chan shared for Vestry awareness that the Parish House chiller is approximately 12 years past its life expectancy of 17-20 years. Ordering a replacement takes 16 weeks. If the chiller were to break, the alternative is to rent a flatbed unit for ~\$20k per month. One replacement estimate for ~\$219k has been obtained, and another has been requested. Bryant Nixon is helping to consult, and Kristin is thinking of potential capital donors.

Finally, Chan proposed a Vestry-sponsored luncheon for the Church staff, numbering approximately 34-35 people. They work hard and are attentive to budgets, preserving rather than spending year-end surpluses. Some Vestry members would cook and some might collect or donate funding, so that staff can just enjoy and not do anything to prepare. Chan will report back on a date, perhaps a Tuesday in March.

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

January revenues tracked ahead of 2025, with a net gain of ~\$453k. It is typical for January to be larger, due to prepaid pledges. Once we have approved a 2026 budget, Nelson will compare expenditure lines.

More good news is that the Preschool budget was near break-even for 2025, plus grant monies. A big factor was Katelyn reorganizing the staff and realizing efficiencies.

Next, Nelson presented a 2026 Budget proposal for Vestry approval. It includes \$2.9 million for annual giving, an increase of \$25k in the Diocesan ask (to \$325k), and a forecasted ~\$57k loss. Nelson is hoping that actuals might be more favorable than predicted, in the event that annual giving results in more than \$2.9 million, or some open positions are not filled. Smyth moved to approve the 2026 Budget as presented, and Phil seconded the motion. All voted in favor, with none opposed.

The annual Parochial Report for submission to the Diocese was shared. A couple of minor email address typos were corrected.

The first quarter endowment distribution, in the amount of ~\$117k for ministry and ~\$149k overall, was presented for approval. Chan moved to approve the distribution, and Smyth seconded the motion. All voted in favor, with none opposed.

Nelson shared that closing the books for 2025 revealed an additional kitchen surplus. Such surpluses are typically deposited into a reserve for the kitchen, and Nelson recommends this again. Chan moved to approve the surplus deposit into the kitchen reserve, and Angelle seconded. All voted in favor, with none opposed.

Finally, at the last meeting, the Vestry had considered using the Parish House Fund to pay ~\$40k for half of a request for Preschool playground equipment. Upon additional research, Nelson discovered ~\$71k from the Preschool Annual Fund; an additional ~\$111k in prior year surpluses in a Preschool reserve account; and the ~\$197k current year Preschool surplus from grant monies. Therefore, he recommends that the Preschool pay the full ~\$80k for the playground equipment. Moreover, he recommends that the Preschool pay for an additional ~\$4k which the Vestry voted to contribute last year toward a playground wall, and for security enhancements to upgrade exterior doors with a crash bar and key fob readers, pending the Safety Committee taking another look at OSHA requirements for emergency exit doors. The total of these three expenditures, which the Preschool would fund, is approximately \$108k, and the Preschool would still have plenty in their reserve fund. In response to a question about goodwill with the Preschool community, Nelson said he had spoken with Katelyn, and they agreed that reinvesting surpluses back into the Preschool makes sense. Jane Harrison moved to approve up to \$108k in specified expenses from the Preschool budget, and Smyth seconded. All voted in favor, with none opposed.

**Approval of Minutes from January 24, 2026:**

James moved to approve the January minutes, and John seconded the motion. All voted in favor, with none opposed.

**New Business:**

None.

**Committee/Team Reports:**

Smyth reported on the recent CCES Board meeting. The School appealed its placement in the AAA athletics classification, and the High School League commended their logic, but still rejected the appeal.

The CCES Board passed a budget based upon a 6.5% average tuition increase, with Primer tuition increasing 18%. The tuition schedule was part of an endeavor to reduce from 6 tuition tiers to only 3.

Margot has undertaken tutorials on Annual Giving. The current amount pledged is \$2.833 million, which is higher than last year, even without any additional pledges. Pledges received totalled 708, with 97 new pledges, and 346 increased pledges, all of which are increased from last year. The average pledge amount is ~\$4k.

Angelle reported that 22 parishioners attended a GOAL meeting Sunday afternoon, and appreciates the impact and meaning of different faith communities coming together through GOAL.

James reported that the recent men's retreat was a great success, with 44 men signed up and Bishop Richards in attendance.

Derek reported that the trip to Greece opportunity has closed, with none of our youth attending. Joleen and Cara are rethinking demand for youth mission trips. Derek also requested an analysis of pay rates for the nursery, to determine the impact upon our labor pool.

**Other Business:**

None.

Chan offered closing prayer, and Nancy adjourned the meeting at 6:25pm.