

*“To love others as Christ loves us”*

**Christ Church Episcopal Vestry Minutes  
Christ Church Episcopal School Presentation Room  
Tuesday, October 15, 2024**

**Attending:** Harrison McLeod (Rector), Bill Hardaway (Senior Warden), Bryant Nixon (Junior Warden), Wade Kolb III (Asst. Chancellor), Chris Klasing (Asst. Treasurer), Betsy Baumgardner, Betty Parker Ellis, Norma Givens, Julie Haas, Dexter Hagy, Martha Louise Lewis, Smyth McKissick IV, Angelle Reichert.

**Minutes Taken by:** Wes Clarke

**Attending by Phone:** Phil Peterson.

**Not in Attendance:** Cecil Nelson (Chancellor), Nelson Arrington III (Treasurer), Kay Jenkins, Paul Landis, Mary Holt Murphy.

**Guests:** David Padilla (Head of School at CCES), Kristin Bennett (Director of Resource Development), Erin Hudson (2025 Annual Giving Chair).

**Welcome & Prayer:**

Beginning at 4pm, approximately 8 members of the Vestry attended an optional tour of the CCES campus. The official meeting was opened at 5pm in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd with a prayer service, which concluded with CCES Senior Chaplain Wallace Adams-Riley offering the following prayer on the occasion of the feast day of Teresa of Avila, a 16th century Spanish nun, religious reformer, and mystic. The prayer is known as St. Teresa’s “bookmark”.

Let nothing disturb you;

Let nothing frighten you.

Everything is passing.

God does not change.

Patience accomplishes all things.

The one who has God lacks nothing.

God alone suffices.

**Update on Christ Church Episcopal School:**

After the group proceeded to the Presentation Room, the Reverend Dr. Harrison McLeod (Rector) introduced Head of School David Padilla for an update on Christ Church Episcopal School. David lifted up the ongoing relationship between CCES and Christ Church, pointing out that CCES Commencement has been held at Christ Church every year except for three, one during church construction and two that were Covid-impacted.

David continued by stating that Covid presented a unique opportunity for CCES: demand increased and attrition remained low. The School opened the 24-25 school year with 1228 students. Arts, athletics, and service programs remain core to school operation. A few years ago, the School undertook campus master planning, and is now on the cusp of beginning some construction, which is not predicated on an

increase in enrollment, making for an exciting time in the life of a school. In addition, the School is in the first year of implementation of a strategic plan.

David closed by stating that the School's Episcopal Identity is at the heart of what it does, whether after the tragic death of a student 18 months ago, or as we re-convened after Hurricane Helene last week.

**Ministry Area Update:**

After David departed, Harrison continued by turning over a segment of the meeting to Erin Hudson and Kristin Bennett. Erin grew up at Christ Church, and she and her husband, Josh, were married here. Both attended Wofford, and after some time in Kentucky, she convinced him to return to Greenville. The Hudsons are a family of 5: nine-year-old Camp, and Charlie and Madigan, 10th grade twins at GHS, are both on the EYC Student Leadership Team. Their family has taken advantage of so many programs, and they understand that pledging is crucial. People would find that they get from church engagement much more than they give.

Kristin continued by sharing that the Hudsons have lots of great ideas and ask thoughtful questions. For example, How do we share information with the Parish that mobilizes people to want to give? And, Kristin added, How can we get more families like the Hudsons involved and engaged? This year's annual fund goal is \$3 million.

Harrison shared what a privilege it is to work with Kristin. Her arrival at Christ Church has been providential. He also appreciates the commitment and service of the Hudsons to Christ Church.

**Rector's Report – Harrison McLeod:**

Harrison distributed a card for the nominating committee so that Vestry members could sign and express their gratitude. He then thanked many people for stepping up to relieve challenges in the wake of Hurricane Helene. The church has served over 900 meals and used the new van to deliver supplies to Hendersonville.

The October 25-27 weekend with Becca Stevens and Marcus Hummon will be a signature event. She is one of the most powerful preachers in the Episcopal Church, and there will be programming for all ages, including a simultaneous youth retreat to Camp Awanita.

The approved Slate for Vestry nomination included one nominee for Senior Warden, and one for Junior Warden. Harrison suggested that he invite both to attend the November Vestry meeting in support of smooth onboarding prior to the December meeting. The Vestry agreed.

The Rev. Scott Fleischer is recovering from open heart surgery. All signs are good, and he has been released for some light work duties by the end of this month. Please keep him in your prayers.

Harrison then shared that he has spoken with the Wardens about commencing a targeted capital campaign to complete restoration work in Markley Chapel. He has resisted such an effort for years, due in part to the potential connection with a campaign to also renovate the Parish House. However, to exhaustively conduct master planning is probably a two-year process, followed by a campaign, and the construction, so a 4-5 year process in total. Yet Markley Chapel is in more immediate need, and so Harrison desires some Vestry feedback about that idea. Already, a few unspecified pledges total approximately \$2 million, and additional donors have expressed some impatience and desire to support Chapel work. The scope of the campaign may comprise a dozen to twenty donors who have expressed a

specific interest in Markley Chapel. The campaign would be quiet, and not advertised. Most donors who would be approached would likely also be willing to contribute to a possible Parish House campaign in a few years.

In response to a question about what types of work are most desperate in the Chapel, Harrison responded by including floors, walls, electrical, HVAC, roof, the non-functioning organ, and perhaps the windows. He would consider all of those elements urgent.

Some Vestry discussion of a full-blown campaign ensued. Would starting the Chapel work motivate others toward a bigger campaign? Bryant shared that we need to start with a professional to begin defining the scope of the work, and then determine a budget. Harrison wants donors to understand that it would be a two-phase process, Markley and then the Parish House. A specialized liturgical architect would be helpful. The opportunity exists to reimagine the Chapel, perhaps enhancing or enlarging the chancel, as in the Church renovation. The sacristy is barely adequate and could perhaps be expanded. Maybe the organ could be removed, and the pipes placed over the entrance door. This would be a real construction project. Chris offered that the narthex might be widened. The Chapel was built in 1890. Around 2000, it received a new roof, the organ made of used parts from the old church that no longer works, and an upgrade to the Church Street entrance. Sprinklers were installed with the Preschool renovation in 2008.

Smyth suggested that the Chapel work could be marketed as a jumping off point, the start of a bigger plan. We would want to be as transparent as possible. Harrison will touch base with Kristin, Bryant, and others outside of the meeting, and begin a list of must-have items for the Chapel. These discussions could be a beginning point for the future, and not merely a self-contained pursuit.

**Senior Warden's Report – Bill Hardaway:**

Bill stated that this is the time of year for the Vestry to write letters of appreciation for the Church staff. He will send assignments so that the letters can be completed the week before Thanksgiving.

**Junior Warden's Report – Bryant Nixon:**

Bryant pointed out that the next Vestry meeting is 11/19, after the Annual Meeting on 11/17. He then distributed designs for Preschool finishes, including paint and carpet in the hallways. He has asked for pricing for the bathrooms also, and a decision will need to be taken quickly about whether to proceed without the bathroom work over Christmas. The pricing is not for all restrooms in the parish house, but a handful. A ballpark figure for the work would be \$50-100k, with the bathroom work another amount that is similar. The funding source would be a combination of the Parish House Fund and the Hatch Fund. Harrison stated that the Preschool is a vital ministry, the most sizable single ministry financially, with a \$2.5 million budget. Any investment that sustains that priority is worthwhile.

Some discussion ensued as to whether this work provided the Parish with a mixed message, when combined with the need for a more comprehensive Parish House renovation later. That continued into a rich discussion of longer-term dreams for the whole Church campus, including possibilities for leveraging the Church's real estate. As part of that discussion, the CCES property was mentioned, for which the Church receives up to 8 scholarships annually, valued around \$25k each. The Sterling Hope Center was also mentioned, as was the old Jervey Eye Clinic, which was given to the Church for the benefit of that community and must remain in that purpose. In total, there are twelve parcels of Church property.

**Treasurer's Report – Chris Klasing:**

Chris shared that complete September budget numbers were not available due to lost work days from Hurricane Helene, and Nelson will send the Treasurer's report next week. The revenue numbers for September are not encouraging, with pledges about \$103k lower than expected. Bridge gifts are behind budget, and total revenue is about \$53k, or 2%, below budget year-to-date.

The staff has completed a first draft of the 2025 budget, which always shows a deficit, prior to making some decisions to prioritize. Music and Buildings & Grounds are higher than 2024 but reflect actual 2024 amounts that are over what was budgeted.

Harrison mentioned soliciting additional bridge gifts but wanted to know more about pledge trending first. He solicited some direction from the Vestry in terms of spreading bridge gifts over multiple years for planning. Each year, the top fifty pledgers can expect a visit from Harrison, and this year, everybody will be asked to do more. This year's situation is not uncommon.

**Approval of Minutes from September 17, 2024:**

An extra 'v' at the bottom of page two was removed. Smyth moved to approve the September minutes, and Betty Parker seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All were in favor. None were opposed.

**New Business:**

None.

**Committee/Team Reports:**

Phil shared by phone that the safety committee is considering whether to reduce the security presence on Sundays from two officers to one, eliminating the one by the All-Saints Center, and also relocating the Sunday evening officer to the All Saints Center where the youth are. This might better allocate resources. No conclusion has been reached yet. Using digital radios will help with communication if that reduction is indeed made.

**Other Business:**

The regular quarterly distribution for the 4th quarter of 2024, in the amount of \$136,529, was submitted for approval. Smyth moved to approve the distribution, and Martha Louise seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All were in favor. None were opposed.

The closing Devotion was offered by Smyth and included the poem *If*, by Rudyard Kipling, and a prayer upon themes of resilience and toughness in the aftermath of natural disaster. The meeting was adjourned at 7:34 pm.