

Advance Draft of Minutes for Approval

“To love others as Christ loves us”

Christ Church Episcopal Vestry Minutes Earle Conference Room Tuesday, March 18, 2025

Attending: Harrison McLeod (Rector), Chan Boyd (Junior Warden), Cecil Nelson (Chancellor), Nelson Arrington III (Asst. Treasurer), Chris Klasing (Treasurer), Betsy Baumgardner, Wes Clarke, Betty Parker Ellis, Jane Harrison Fisher, Norma Givens, Martha Louise Lewis, Smyth McKissick IV, Mary Holt Murphy, Dorothy Nicholson, Phil Peterson, Angelle Reichert, John Wood.

Minutes Taken by: Wes Clarke.

Attending by Phone: Nancy Kennedy (Senior Warden).

Not in Attendance: Wade Kolb III (Asst. Chancellor).

Guests: None.

Welcome & Prayer:

The Reverend Dr. Harrison McLeod (Rector) opened the meeting in prayer at 5:04pm.

Ministry Area Updates:

Angelle encouraged Vestry members and parishioners to attend GOAL Nehemiah Action at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Simpsonville on April 10th, offering a willingness to organize carpools. The focus will be on two main issues: affordable housing, including the high eviction rate in Greenville County and a request for the County to establish an eviction court; and pedestrian safety. SCDOT will be petitioned to improve the lighting at an unsafe intersection near the Walmart in Berea. Last Thursday, approximately 13 parishioners from Christ Church attended the GOAL rally at Valley Brook Baptist Church, but we would like to get more involved.

Rector’s Report – Harrison McLeod:

Harrison reported upon the leadership transition in the Preschool. Last Monday he spoke with about 60 parent attendees at a Town Hall Meeting for a little over an hour. Jane Harrison has an additional meeting scheduled for after this week’s Spring Break, mostly around financials. Chris offered his help. Harrison also spent about two hours with Preschool faculty on Friday afternoon, and most seemed satisfied with the expectation that there would be fewer exceptional cases and an emphasis on fair standards. Joanne remains their point of contact for HR matters. By the end of March, Harrison expects that there will be a new Director job description, then a search, and thereafter, an evolved leadership structure. Meanwhile, re-enrollment for next year is still open, with only a 5k class that is not quite full.

Next, Harrison updated the Vestry regarding an opportunity for insurance coverage, after a meeting with several companies, including a benefit broker and a primary care practice. Currently, the church pays ~\$1k per month per person for single coverage, and the meeting suggested potential savings of up

to 50%. This new possibility is subscriber based, with stopgap over a certain amount, and a big part of the savings comes from paying cash.

One obstacle, as reported by Stephen Rhoads, who was involved with the meeting, is that the Church is bound by national canon to the denominational health plan, as of 2012. Under this plan, the Diocese chooses from among 6 national plans that together cover ~15k employees of the Episcopal church. Harrison has an appointment with the Bishop to determine if he might be a willing advocate. Episcopal Preschools might possibly be a carve-out from the canon. Harrison will keep the Vestry posted.

Next, Harrison requested that Mary Holt update the Vestry as to meeting with Canterbury Counseling Center (CCC) regarding their lease of space (\$1 per year) on the church campus. Mary Holt reviewed their questions and how we might develop our responses. In a meeting with CCC Executive Director Mollie Murphy, a member of the CCC Board's Facilities Committee, and CCC Board Vice Chair Rev. Gary Eichelberger, they brought up the possibility of CCC starting to pay rent to Christ Church. During this meeting Mary Holt examined the building CCC occupied and was impressed that it is in pretty good shape, in part because CCC has completed some painting and other repairs. CCC paid ~\$7k last year for utilities and general maintenance. The current lease expires in December of this year, 2025.

The other half of the building is rented by Sentinel Offender Services, a private, for-profit founded in 1993. Their lease is for ~\$48k annually, and so this amount less the ~\$7k noted above approximates Christ Church's 2024 contribution to CCC. The Sentinel lease expires in October of 2026, and Sentinel has an option to extend for 3 years at a 3% annual increase, with a requirement to notify us 90 days prior to expiration. The lease does contain a provision that Sentinel can cancel it with 90 days notice if they lose public funding. Sentinel replaced the heating and air last year at their expense, and seems likely to extend. The two buildings share a common wall, with nearly identical square footage of 2500 for CCC and 2564 for Sentinel.

As a ministry, CCC seems to have passed its incubator phase, and is ready to expand. It originally found a home at Christ Church because Buncombe St. Methodist was having the same conversation twenty years ago. Our clergy, who serve as spiritual advisors, can usually tell immediately if a parishioner needs something more significant, and routinely refers parishioners to CCC, who can provide pastoral counseling at the option of the client.

A suggestion was made to extend the CCC lease to October of 2026, so that the two leases coincide, and to allow time for a more deliberate conversation about appropriate rent. For reference, CCC collects rent from its own counselors totaling ~\$121k per year. This approach does not seem to require Vestry action beyond offering collective guidance to Mary Holt as she continues to represent the Vestry in ongoing conversations. Perhaps CCC Executive Director Mollie Murphy can attend an upcoming Vestry meeting.

Lastly, Harrison noted that the Bishop will attend Confirmation on April 27, with 22 youth and 19 adults currently scheduled, and that preliminary interviews with candidates for the Director of Senior Adult Ministries position have begun.

Senior Warden's Report – Nancy Kennedy:

No report.

Junior Warden's Report – Chan Boyd:

Chan reported some facilities concerns: a leak at 101 Broadus, HVAC issues in the Boy Scout Hut, and a stove in the Parish House kitchen that has stopped working. The stove may be replaced via lease, as leasing a dishwasher is working well. A repair to the ice maker will be made from the kitchen reserve fund. Chan thanked several helpers in cleaning out the basement, including Dorothy.

Treasurer's Report – Nelson Arrington & Chris Klasing:

Chris pointed briefly to the monthly Treasurer's report that had just been shared, and did not review all bullet points. Total year-to-date revenue of \$967k was slightly lower than in 2024, although February pledge giving of \$236k was ~30% higher than February 2024. February expenses of ~\$282k were ~20% lower than February 2024, with total year-to-date expenses ~3% lower than 2024. As a result, year-to-date net results of a \$375k surplus were within half of a percent lower than last year. Once we have a final budget in March, we will be able to compare actual performance with budget.

We passed the 2025 budget last year, and now is time to true it up based on pledges of \$2.8 million, versus \$3 million originally budgeted. Harrison proposed to balance it by removing \$200k in salaries and benefits of unfilled positions. We will not bring on a 4th priest, a youth assistant, or administrative support for Parish Life and Faith Development. With these revisions, Chan moved to approve the 2025 budget, and Smyth seconded. All were in favor, and none were opposed.

Chris then suggested that the Vestry should repurpose the Habitat for Humanity Reserve of \$29,534 as a Choral Academy Reserve. The Vestry had previously designated this fund for Faith in Action, and it will still be allocated to Faith in Action, in order to cover Church contributions to the Choral Academy. Chan moved, and Smyth seconded. All voted in favor, with none opposed.

Approval of Minutes from February 18, 2025:

John moved to approve the revised February minutes that had been distributed, and Phil seconded the motion. All were in favor. None were opposed.

New Business:

None.

Committee/Team Reports:

Martha Louise shared that Vestry members are invited to Christ Church Episcopal School for Palm Sunday Chapel services on 4/10, Stations of the Cross on 4/15, and an Easter service on 4/24 with the entire school in McCall Field House.

Angelle noted John Malik's column on the 10 year anniversary of Jasmine Kitchen in the Greenville Journal.

Other Business:

Harrison thanked Betty Parker for her preparation and distribution of a handout comparing Parochial Report data from 2023 and 2024 on an apples-to-apples basis, despite some differences in the questions between the respective years. She walked the Vestry through some of those year-upon-year comparisons. In response to a question from John, Harrison stated that church mailers go to 1800 households.

In lieu of a Devotion, Harrison offered a closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 6:36pm.