

“To love others as Christ loves us”

**Christ Church Episcopal Vestry Minutes
Christ Church All Saints Center – Room 100
Tuesday, April 16, 2024**

Attending: Harrison McLeod (Rector), Bill Hardaway (Senior Warden), Bryant Nixon (Junior Warden), Cecil Nelson (Chancellor), Nelson Arrington (Treasurer), Chris Klasing (Asst. Treasurer), Betsy Baumgardner, Betty Parker Ellis, Norma Givens, Julie Haas, Dexter Hagy, Kay Jenkins, Paul Landis, Smyth McKissick IV, Angelle Reichert.

Minutes Taken by: Wes Clarke

Attending by Phone: Phil Peterson

Not in Attendance: Wade Kolb III (Asst. Chancellor), Martha Louise Lewis, Mary Holt Murphy.

Guests: Kevin Mertens, Joyce Thompson

Welcome & Prayer

The Reverend Dr. Harrison McLeod (Rector) opened the meeting in Prayer at 5:01pm.

Ministry Area Update

Harrison welcomed Kevin Mertens, Director of Faith in Action & Hospitality Ministries. Prior to Kevin’s report, Harrison recognized that Kevin was recently granted Postulancy for the Order of the Diaconate by the Bishop, after being recommended by the Commission on Ministry, and has started formation.

Kevin opened by stating clearly that Faith in Action is Hospitality, and Hospitality is Faith in Action. He provided multiple examples of recent and typical activities of the Faith in Action & Hospitality Ministries in the categories of Outreach, Newcomer Welcoming Ministries, the Reception Area, Building & Grounds, Safety, and the Food Ministry.

Outreach might be the highest profile of the Faith in Action ministries and calls us to help the least of these in our community. Recent activities include Men’s Ministry participation in Rebuild Upstate, completing a Habitat for Humanity build, Project Host garden work, EYC baking 800 cookies for the Kairos Prison ministry, and the GOAL Nehemiah Action rally the evening prior to the Vestry meeting, which drew 1650 people to Bethlehem Baptist Church, with more than 60 representing Christ Church. See more below.

The Newcomer Welcoming Ministry recently hosted 24 participants in a revamped single-day Discovery Weekend format that seemed to work better than the previous model. Fourteen of those participants were confirmed or received or reaffirmed, along with 4 from Holy Trinity in Clemson and 6 youth from Christ Church. The other 10 participants have already transferred in by letter. With Carrie Moore assuming her new position, this Ministry is now moving to Parish Life.

The Reception Area ministry has combined with the Pre-school reception area to provide a more consistent presence both during and outside of Parish House hours.

The Building & Grounds Ministry supports an enormous amount of activity on campus many hours each day; a staff member is always present if someone is on church grounds or if an event is happening. This team of 3 (Jim Cothran, Fabio Neira, and Gary Farrar) is currently down a person, and wishes Gary a speedy recovery from recent surgery. Within this ministry is the Safety Committee, which is routinely reviewing or updating written security procedures, conducting active shooter training, installing protective film on windows, changing door locks, and installing security cameras. See more below.

Finally, Kevin reminded us that the Kitchen Ministry prepared and served 10,000 meals in 2019, and 100,000 in 2020 because of the Project Host assistance ministry. Of the meals prepared in 2023, over 15,000 were for parishioners and their guests, and over 31,000 were for community outreach. Kevin introduced Joyce Thompson, Assistant Director of Food Ministries, who credited this ministry's volunteers and thanked so many people for their participation, eliciting a laugh by proclaiming, "This is an eating church!" Joyce shared that Karen Walker, Director of Food Ministries, is constantly ensuring that no event runs out of food. Joyce also stated that she has been serving her community in this way for her whole life.

Kevin concluded by offering that everything we do at Christ Church is tied to a meal, whether around a table or at the communion rail; hospitality is core to church purpose and mission.

Rector's Report – Harrison McLeod

Harrison thanked the Vestry for joining the bishop, who enjoyed his visit to Christ Church, for lunch the previous Sunday. The worship service to bless the font was a joyful one.

Carrie Moore, described as outgoing, enthusiastic, and faithful, has joined the staff as the Welcoming Ministry leader in a 20 hour per week role. As a result of shifting some responsibilities, Betty Parker Ellis has agreed to take on volunteer Registrar responsibilities, a large and important role. National church canons require paper records, and Betty Parker's efforts are much appreciated. A question was posed about the extent and protection of the historical records (minutes, baptisms, weddings, burials, etc.), which go back decades and centuries and are kept in fire vaults. A lost time capsule was once buried in the north corner of the church, which is why the new time capsule was buried in the wall in the church.

Harrison has been gratified by the generosity of the congregation to address a multi-year financial need. Everyone has been very receptive to his philanthropic requests, and he has spoken with people of a wide variety of giving capacities.

The Leadership Team has identified a list of over 400 parishioners to contact. Each Leadership Team member has selected 10 names for cultivating relationships, and asking people to become more involved where they desire. The tracking of these efforts is intentional. Both the folks being contacted, and the parish would be enriched by them increasing their participation.

Dena Benedict wrote a letter requesting that the Vestry look at its bylaws and offer some clarifications. In turn, Harrison has asked Cecil and Wade to look at Dena's memo and suggest amendment language to the Vestry. Examples of issues to be examined include how many Vestry nominees a person may submit, and whether a paper ballot needs to be signed. It was noted that there are safeguards to make sure no person votes more than once.

Betsy suggested that the Vestry promote engagement and completion of Safe Church training over the summer so that there is a pool of volunteers ready for engagement by the fall.

Senior Warden's Report – Bill Hardaway

Bill recognized Cecil's birthday. He then followed up to Kevin's remarks about the Goal Nehemiah Action event the evening prior. Christ Church was well represented among the 28 churches in partnership. Programs from the very moving event were distributed, indicating two areas of focus: affordable housing and mental health. There are letter-writing campaigns to ask local governments to allocate funding to address the shortage of 11k homes for families making less than \$30k per year, and to ask the state government to fund the 988 mental health crisis line, whose call center is located in the Upstate. The next event is a Justice Ministry Celebration at 6:30pm on 6/17 at Greenville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.

Bill is pleased with the Vestry's timely completion of Safe Church training and requests any feedback about the training to share with the Diocesan House. Discovery weekend was a success and represents the future of our Parish. It has been announced that the Diocesan Convention will be held on November 8th and 9th at Trinity Cathedral in Columbia.

Junior Warden's Report – Bryant Nixon

No report.

Treasurer's Report – Nelson Arrington and Chris Klasing

Nelson offered a straightforward overview of monthly financials. Pledge revenues and overall revenues month-by-month and year-to-date are favorable to this point in 2023. No expenses are included yet.

Nelson solicited a motion to approve a request, as submitted by Suzanne Mize, to draw \$24k from the Parish House endowment for server upgrade, licensing, and installation labor. Paul moved and Kay seconded. All were in favor. None were opposed.

Nelson also requested a motion for the regular quarterly draw from the endowment for the church budget. Paul moved to approve the motion as submitted. Smyth seconded. No discussion. All were in favor. None were opposed.

Chris called attention to a revision to the Parochial Report that reflects the correction of a clerical error. Smyth moved and Betty Parker seconded to approve the report as amended. All were in favor. None were opposed.

Approval of Minutes from March 19, 2024:

Betty Parker proposed to amend the Advance Minutes from the March meeting to substitute "churchyard" for "cemetery" and "Director of Welcoming Ministries" for "Coordinator". With those changes, Betty Parker moved to approve the minutes, and Smyth seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All were in favor. None were opposed.

New Business

The Pre-school has asked the Parish to pay for half of a \$71k quote to update the playground, including re-surfacing and adding some new elements. The other half of the expense will come from the Pre-school annual fund. The Parish source will be the same as for the previously approved server upgrade:

the Parish House-restricted fund. Harrison requested a motion. After a brief question about the HATCH fund, which is effectively the same funding source, Kay moved, and Julie seconded. All were in favor. None were opposed.

Committee/Team Reports: By phone, Phil offered an update on the Safety Committee's work. Two-way radios have been ordered, and the next step is to file paperwork with the FCC for our own radio frequency. Some guidelines to manage radio usage are under development, and then users will be trained. Bleed control kits have also been ordered and will be distributed to different buildings. A document is being prepared for ushers to address someone who may interrupt worship. At some point, the Committee will explore additional security cameras for the All-Saints Center; nothing has been decided yet. Phil is researching grants for these expenses.

Other Business

None.

The Closing Devotion was offered by Angelle Reichart on the topic of Compassion, in connection to Faith in Action Ministry Area Update from Kevin Mertens.

After the devotion, the meeting was adjourned with prayer at 6:13 pm.