

“To love others as Christ loves us”

**Christ Church Episcopal Vestry Minutes
Christ Church All Saints Center – Room 100
Tuesday, May 21, 2024**

Attending: Harrison McLeod (Rector), Bill Hardaway (Senior Warden), Bryant Nixon (Junior Warden), Wade Kolb III (Asst. Chancellor), Nelson Arrington (Treasurer), Chris Klasing (Asst. Treasurer), Betty Parker Ellis, Norma Givens, Julie Haas, Dexter Hagy, Kay Jenkins, Paul Landis, Martha Louise Lewis, Smyth McKissick IV, Mary Holt Murphy, Angelle Reichert.

Minutes Taken by: Wes Clarke

Attending by Phone:

Not in Attendance: Cecil Nelson (Chancellor), Betsy Baumgardner, Phil Peterson.

Guests: Jessica St. Clair Smith and Kristin Bennett

Welcome & Prayer

The Reverend Dr. Harrison McLeod (Rector) opened the meeting in Prayer at 5:00pm.

Ministry Area Update

Harrison welcomed Jessica St. Clair Smith, Director of Strategic Marketing and Communications, and Kristin Bennett, Director of Resource Development.

Jessica distributed a handout that lists many church programs planned for promotion through December, as well as many varied channels for promotion of those programs and events. The handout also compared Christ Church online subscribers through Youtube, Instagram, and Facebook with similarly-sized churches in Greenville, and the comparisons were generally favorable. Youtube subscribers have increased from 35 in 2019 to 924 in 2024.

Jessica specifically mentioned three current special projects:

- The church van will soon be branded with the church name and a QR code that drives to the church website.
- In development is a "digital offering plate" allowing for mobile giving in the pew on Sunday mornings, with a card that will contain a QR code.
- She is exploring Google Ads for Non-Profits, a program that will hopefully allow for some digital advertising for little-to-no cost.

Next, Kristin shared her enthusiasm that the Vardry McBee Society/Endowment Legacy Brunch on May 5 numbered 55 attendees, a blend of current and prospective members. Legacy giving through the Vardry McBee Society is most simply thought of as planned giving. In response to a question, Kristin stated that legacy gifts and memorial gifts that are not specified go toward the church endowment. It was also shared that the church endowment has grown by about \$2 million in the past decade from bequests. Kristin is following up with brunch attendees, and those who could not attend, in order to express

gratitude, understand intentions for potential estate gifts, and share the collective impact of planned giving.

Kristin distributed a handout with a 7-year comparison of Christ Church Annual Giving campaigns, and walked through some data related to the recently completed campaign. As of 5/14, 694 pledges have been received for 2024, totaling \$2,684,213.34 in pledge commitments. There have been 23 new pledges from parishioners under 40. Twenty-eight percent of the campaign total pledged the same amount as last year, while sixty percent reflected increased pledges. There were 119 pledges that lapsed from 2023 to 2024, due to reasons including change in employment, death, or change in church membership; these comprise roughly 10% of the 2023 campaign.

The most important thing the Vestry can do to support resource development efforts is just to continue to contagiously spread enthusiasm for and encourage engagement at the church.

Finally, Kristin and Jessica emphasized how much they enjoy their jobs and working closely together.

Rector's Report – Harrison McLeod

Harrison invited Paul and then Smyth to speak to the Vestry's ongoing strategic initiatives. Paul began with an overview, summarizing that these four areas of focus essentially constitute an effort to remain disciplined in assessing how to best serve the church membership:

1. Resource development and utilization
2. Master plan of fixed assets
3. Engagement
4. Governance and leadership

The regular practice of assessing the health of current activities and researching the practices of other churches in these areas represents a growth mindset and the pursuit of our church's sustainability and vitality. How do we develop formal structures for building upon our vibrant community of belonging in Christ? Smyth explained a 7-step problem-solving process, supported by a handout which Bill passed around. The process is really currently at step 0. Paul added that there will be broad involvement by a lot of people (staff, parishioners, etc.) who will contribute a lot of good ideas. In response to a question regarding timeline, Smyth stated that first concrete steps should be taken by the end of the year, but as this is ongoing work, different initiatives will have different timeframes. It is clear that both Paul and Smyth are really enthused about this work.

After expressing his excitement for the strategic initiatives, Harrison shared that church leadership and staff had discussed undertaking a time study in the fall, in order to gather data about current allocations, determine ones, and consider shifts accordingly.

The church will host a signature event featuring speaker Becca Stevens during the last weekend in October, the 25th through 27th. She will co-lead with her husband Marcus, who is a Grammy-winning musician in Nashville, where they live. This weekend will touch all ministry areas.

This past weekend the congregation participated in a wonderful Pentecost service, with baptisms and strong attendance, a BBQ lunch gathering, and the joy of fellowship.

Harrison urged the Vestry to complete Safeguarding training as an example for the congregation, even amidst ongoing work to interpret as broadly as possible the scope of the need for training.

Ushers and staff recently completed active shooter training, and the church recently purchased 20 tourniquets for availability during a threatening situation, or even a significant accident.

Senior Warden's Report – Bill Hardaway

At Kristin's initiation, four birthdays were recognized at the outset of the meeting, including Bill's own.

Bill echoed the importance of completing Safeguarding training and urged the Vestry to reach 100% compliance.

Junior Warden's Report – Bryant Nixon

Protective window film was installed throughout the Parish House, with one more window to be completed. A leak was identified and should be repaired in June. There was brief discussion of feedback regarding visibility in Markley Chapel: could brighter light bulbs be installed, or the ceiling painted?

Treasurer's Report – Nelson Arrington and Chris Klasing

Nelson offered an overview of monthly financial progress. Overall, we are tracking favorably on pledges so far this year, running \$88k ahead of budget. Expenses for April were ~ 11% over budget: Buildings and Grounds was over due to building maintenance expenses, overrun in salaries and benefits, and increased spending on security; and Administration was \$27k over budget due to Salaries and Benefits overrun and Communications. CCEP first quarter net income of \$84k was ~\$58k better than budget.

Approval of Minutes from April 16, 2024:

Betty Parker moved to approve the April minutes, and Norma seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All were in favor. None were opposed.

New Business

The meeting proceeded with the election of representatives for the Nominations & Elections Committee.

First, two Vestry members, with one rotating out and one continuing, were nominated to serve a 2-year term:

Julie Haas (Rotating)

Angelle Reichert (Continuing)

Next, the Rector, Senior Warden, Junior Warden each offered appointees to serve a 2-year term:

Susan Clark – appointed by the Rector, Harrison McLeod

James McKissick – appointed by the Senior Warden, Bill Hardaway

Adam Quattlebaum – appointed by the Junior Warden, Bryant Nixon

Finally, Bud Thomas was appointed by Bryant Nixon for 2024 only as a replacement for Malia Dunn.

Some follow-up discussion ensued regarding a letter from Dena Benedict that had been referred to the Chancellors last month. Wade reported that he has drafted a response containing guidance to the Nominations & Elections Committee for their consideration. Any changes in process or interpretation of

the by-laws would ultimately come to the Vestry for approval. It was stated that Dena and Nelson, as previous Wardens, chair the Committee.

After Wade's report, Bryant moved to accept the 6 nominees put forth. Mary Holt seconded. All were in favor. None were opposed.

Committee/Team Reports:

None.

Other Business

None.

As a closing Devotion, Wade read a passage authored by William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury in the 1940s, with a Pentecost theme to match Harrison's opening prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 6:29 pm.