Christ Church Vestry Meeting  
May 24, 2022 – Hybrid (in person and via Zoom)

Evening Prayer was led by the Rev. Noelle York-Simmons in the chapel at 6:40 p.m.

Attending
Clergy: Noelle York-Simmons, *Lauren Banks  
2023: *Betsy Hahn, *Brett Levanto (Sr. Warden), Liz Nelson, Anne Ramsey  
2025: Susan Magill, Andrea McNicholas, Tom Suydam  
Others: Jilinda Crowley, Robbie Laughton, *Russ Randle, Ariel Rudy 
*via Zoom

Call to Order and Opening Prayer
The Rev. Noelle York-Simmons called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.  
Susan Magill offered the opening prayer.

Staff Introduction – Ariel Rudy, Director of Children’s Ministries
Ariel teaches our children about our rituals, history, beliefs, and scripture, and she ensures they know they are valued. Ariel manages the following:

- Children’s Worship  
  o Children’s Chapel – mini sermons and children’s Prayers of the People  
  o Family services for Christmas, Palm Sunday, and Easter
- Children’s Education  
  o Sunday School – recruiting Sunday School teachers and discerning appropriate curriculum for classes with parent input  
  o Midweek formation classes during Lent and Easter
- Children in the Life of the Parish – seeking opportunities for children’s involvement in church activities not necessarily aimed for children.
- Faith at Home – providing resources to parents modeling how to talk to kids to children about religion, beliefs, justice, etc.

Ariel’s “hopes and dreams” are 1) enough and a broader range of Sunday School teachers; 2) fellowship opportunities, such as “One Sock On…” for parents of older children; and 3) service projects for the fifth graders. In addition to her primary duties as Director of Children’s Ministries, Ariel also serves as Membership Coordinator and maintains the Shelby Next data base.

Introduction of Bishop Candidates – Russ Randle
An election for our next Bishop Diocesan will be held on June 4 at a special Diocesan Convention. The four candidates—The Rev. Joseph H. Hensley, Jr.; The Rev. Canon Alan C. James; The Very Rev. Gideon L. K. Pollach; and The Rev. Canon E. Mark Stevenson—were nominated by the search committee, which was in turn appointed by the Standing Committee. The Rt. Rev. Jennifer Brooke-Davidson’s name was submitted during the Petition Process, but the Standing Committee, which has the authority over such matters, voted against adding her to the slate. No women or people of color are on the slate, which has sparked controversy. Fewer than twenty candidates gave their permission to be considered for the position, and very few of these were women. It is unclear if any people of color allowed their names to be put forward.
Six “walk about” sessions, each lasting about two hours, where the four final candidates were each asked the same questions, were held from May 20–24, at six different parishes in the diocese. The candidates responded to different questions at each of the sessions. The proceedings of five of these sessions were live-streamed and recordings were placed on the Search Committee website. That website also contains substantial additional information on the candidates. Russ Randle invited the vestry to review those materials and communicate their views to the Christ Church delegates to Convention.

During the election, successive ballots are taken until one nominee has a majority in both the lay and clergy orders. After the election, a majority of the bishops and of the Standing Committees of the 109 Episcopal dioceses must consent to the election results. [Note: At the June 4 Convention, the Convention voted against adding Bishop Jennifer Brooke-Davidson to the slate. In subsequent voting, the Rev. Canon Mark Stevenson was elected on the second ballot.]

Treasurer’s Report – Jilinda Crowley
April revenue was $29,700 less than budgeted, and the year-to-date revenue was $46,700 less than planned. Overall expenses in April were $27,300 less than budget this month and nearly $61,000 lower than budgeted year-to-date. Salaries should be closer to budget from now on since Robbie Laughton has joined the staff. Worship costs were a bit higher than projected due to Easter and hiring of guest musicians. IT support expenses were higher than planned in order to resolve some unexpected complex problems. In April, we had a $2,400 deficit, and year-to-date our deficit is $21,800—better than budget. There is no cause for concern as there is generally fluctuation during the year. Anne Richardson is constantly monitoring the income.

Approval of Robbie Laughton for Postulancy – Noelle York Simmons
The usual order toward becoming a priest is: Aspirant, Postulant, Candidate (one attends seminary), Deacon, and Priest. Robbie has already attended Berkeley School of Divinity at Yale University for his seminary training. For Robbie to move on in the ordination process, the vestry must recommend Robbie for postulancy. Robbie has all the training Noelle and Lauren have but is not able to perform sacraments until he is ordained to the Deaconate. Robbie will be on the preaching and pastoral rotation. Libby moved to recommend Robbie for postulancy; Tom seconded. The motion carried.

Vote on Expenditure to Upgrade to Microsoft 365 – Noelle York-Simmons
Sean moved to authorize expenditure $10,608, to be paid to OSIBeyond, to upgrade the Christ Church computers to Microsoft 365; Betsy seconded. The motion carried.

Volunteer Recruitment – Brett Levanto
In addition to Sunday School teachers, new volunteers are needed for many church activities and committees. Brett asked the Vestry to review the list of “Who Does What,” which was distributed along with the staff reports for this meeting, and consider how we can work to engage parishioners in these opportunities. Brett asked the Vestry to think about parishioners who might be good fits for these volunteer roles and about how to recruit them. We should also for ideas to rejuvenate volunteers. Andrea suggested that we concentrate on making connections with potential volunteers rather than simply recruiting them. This topic will be added to the agenda on another meeting.

Rector’s Report – Noelle York-Simmons
Noelle’s primary concern now is the election of the bishop. Christ Church’s delegates for the election and the General Convention are Cindi Bartol, Andy Hoefer, Anna McClure, Russ Randle, and The Rev. Dr.
Noelle York-Simmons. The Rev. Lauren Banks is not eligible to be a delegate as she has not served long enough in the Diocese. Our delegates are looking for input from the congregation. One opportunity to provide such input will be a session with the delegates scheduled for May 29. Noelle will meet with Cindi and Russ to figure out how to choose delegates in the future.

The staff planning day for the upcoming year was successful. The entire staff was together in person for the first time since Covid started. Getting back to the usual planning process is exciting.

We have a new part-time FA, Kevin, who will do a couple shifts a week and serve as a backup for the full-time FAs.

A rally on National Gun Violence Awareness will be held on June 3 at 7 p.m. in Market Square. Wear orange to show support. Christ Church is sponsoring as a community partner.

There is no significant news about Fowler House. The committee continues to work on the details of the agreement with the developer. Escalation in an inflationary environment is being discussed.

Noelle met with Don Edwards, founder of Justice and Sustainability Associates, to help us figure out a process to understand our church history with enslaved people and consider how we might honor them with a memorial during the 250th Celebration.

Tom Suydam identified two issues that he would like to see as agenda items for each vestry meeting: Fowler House and racial justice and reconciliation. He would like to be briefed on the Vestry History Project (Noelle noted that this committee is mis-named and is not actually a project of the Vestry). Noelle said there is not a single body or committee at Christ Church that makes decisions about how Christ Church handles racial justice and reconciliation issues—addressing these issues is, instead, a systemic part of many church activities; many actions/activities have already been accomplished and more are planned. Andrea requested the vestry consider Christ Church’s potential participation in the Alexandria Community Remembrance Project, a multi-year, multi-year, multi-prong initiative to come to terms with the city’s history of lynching. Due to the late hour, additional discussion was tabled.

Wardens’ Reports – Brett Levanto and Libby Witt
Brett encouraged vestry members to explore the new website; Meredith Bracco is open to feedback. Tom was surprised there is not a central site for vestry materials, policies, etc. Jason’s wedding gift is almost here; don’t forget to contribute should you feel inclined to.

Libby noted that the Diocese website is posting most of the recordings of the candidate for Bishop meet and greets. She formally thanked Barry Stauffer for his incredible tours of the Christ Church campus properties.

Consent Agenda – Brett Levanto
Sean moved to accept the March vestry meeting minutes, the April 6 “off-schedule” vestry meeting minutes, and the April vestry meeting minutes with corrections; Betsy seconded. The motion carried.

Liz moved to elect Jack Hutcheson and Tom Suydam as new vestry members of the Offutt Fund Investment Committee; Sean seconded. The motion carried.
Announcements & Upcoming Events

- Pentecost Celebration – June 4
- Women’s Luncheon – June 12
- Vestry Meeting – June 14 (note date change; 3rd Tuesday, not 4th)-finance committee needs to meet before this meeting
- Shrine Mont Parish Weekend – June 17-19
- Camino de Santiago trip – June 21-30

Closing Prayer
Libby Witt offered the closing prayer.
The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.