

Christ Church Vestry Meeting  
October 28, 2025  
In-Person & Zoom

Attendance

Clergy: Rev. Noelle York-Simmons & Rev. Robbie Laughton

Others: Julie Simonton, Anne Richardson, \*Dave Rees, John Cole, Russ Haymes, & Pouyan Meghdadian

2026: Steve Reed, Cornelia Horner, Ken Knapp, & Jay Purcell Manchester

2027: \*Wendy Montes de Oca, Kathleen Hickman, Chris Thompson & Nan Lawson

2028: Paula Dubberly, Jane Baird, Jessica Hughes & Steve Slaton

\* attended via Zoom

Absent: none

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Call to Order & Opening Prayer

The Rev. Noelle York-Simmons called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

Opening Prayer was led by Steve Reed.

Consent Agenda - Steve Reed

Jay Purcell Manchester moved and Kathleen Hickman seconded to accept the September vestry meeting minutes. There were a few minor edits made. The motion carried unanimously.

Staff Introduction - Rev. Robbie Laughton, Youth

Rev. Robbie visits the vestry twice to discuss his roles and today will discuss his work with the youth program.

- What is youth ministry?
  - Youth are an end in and of themselves
- What can the church offer?
  - A place where they can show up and be themselves
  - Know someone will show up for them
  - Build relationships with each other and the adult leaders
- Youth are not just the church of tomorrow - they are the church of today
- Programs
  - Faith Formation for Middle School (6th & 7th grades usually together - 8th graders with them this year)
  - Confirmation - 9th grade and above with "Confirm not Conform" curriculum adapted to fit our program
  - Cozier classroom makes it feel less like a classroom
  - Youth Group - different than Sunday School offering fellowship and less formal, structured formation.
    - Middle School 2 times a month
    - High Schoolers post confirmation meet for coffee on Sunday mornings at the time others are having Sunday School

- Ski Trip with both ages
- Regional events with other Alexandria churches
- Diocese is offering some wider regional events
- Young Adults (aka 20s/30s Group)
  - Trivia Nights with 8 - 12 people

A discussion was held around whether the current economic environment has impacted the group. It's not obvious, but they are watching.

#### Stewardship Report - Julie Simonton

Julie started with telling us that things are steady for both 2025 and 2026.

- We expect to meet the budget goal for 2025

The packets for 2026 were delayed by a week since the government shutdown occurred the week we had planned to start. Pledges for 2026 are showing a positive trend ahead of 2025.

#### Treasurer's Report – Anne Richardson & Dave Rees

Dave shared the numbers for September which shows expenses in line with expectations and revenues are ahead thanks to space rental.

- 2023 Financial Review is in the final stages, and the 2024 Review is expected to be completed by the end of the year.
- Recent disbursements have gone out from the operating fund but will be replenished from the appropriate funds as is a normal course of action.
- The Offutt Fowler House Fund Balance is \$687K

August Revenues: \$181K

August Expenses: \$179K

Projecting a positive trend for year end with a bigger surplus than budgeted.

#### 2026 Budget - Anne Richardson

Anne began with an overview of the schedule. Tonight she will share a first draft of the budget in order to meet our goal of passing the budget at the December meeting.

2026 will be a revenue gap year due to the loss of Ross revenue. It will be partially replaced with the Linder rent. Existing resources will need to be used to sustain operations during the gap.

It is important to the group that the professional staff receive higher compensation since no across the board COLAs have been given in two years. The budget first draft includes a 5% COLA.

If anyone would like to discuss the numbers in detail, Anne will hold officer hours and all are invited to the Finance Committee meetings, which occur the Wednesday prior to the vestry meeting.

A discussion was held on the compensation for the third clergy person which is being covered by a seed donation to the comprehensive campaign.

The budget presented includes our projected year end revenues for 2025 plus an increase in giving for 2026.

Comprehensive Campaign - Julie Simonton, Pouyan Meghdadian, John Cole & Russ Haymes  
Design renderings were passed around.

Russ laid out the background on the plans. The original work was done to examine how we could use the Parish House if we didn't have the Fowler House, but now that we know the future of that building, these designs will allow us to better use the space we have.

Our architect John Cole presented the changes on the renderings.

Questions:

- How will the new elevator fit in the outside space?
  - There is already an area that has been dug out, but that area will need to be made bigger to provide access to the first floor (lower level).
  - The new elevator will be ADA compliant.
- What happens with the storage being used in the alley?
  - That is at the beginning stages of planning, but it will likely have to move.
- Will occupancy of the library change?
  - By rules of the fire marshall, yes, but that room is not used for large groups, so it will still accommodate what's needed.
  - The burial memorial list will likely move to the chapel for better viewing availability.
- Will there still be a coat closet off the auditorium?
  - We can have mobile racks in the hallway near the new bathrooms.
- Will we still have enough offices with the changes to the first floor?
  - Yes, there are spaces that aren't being used now, and the lower level has possibilities too.

We have just received estimates for this space so are ready to finish the case study allowing us to move to the feasibility study.

### Foundation Trustees - Rev. Noelle York-Simmons

The vestry is called on each year to vote on three new trustees.

The nominees for this year are:

- Glen Hewitt (2nd term)
- Anne Houston (2nd term)
- Ed Mills (1st term)

Ken Knapp moved & Jane Baird seconded a motion to approve all three nominees. The motion passed unanimously.

### Offutt Investment Committee for Mission & Outreach - Nan Lawson

Nan gave the annual report of the Fund including background of the Fund as well as the requirements of the Charter. The Committee met and reviewed the charter and investment policy statement and will be presenting proposed changes after the committee finalizes their review. The fund balance is approximately \$450K which has incurred an 8% return for 2025.

The committee voted to distribute \$12,500 for the year.

### Approval of Clergy Letter of Agreement - Rev. Noelle York-Simmons

Rev.. Beth Bingham has agreed to come on board as the third clergy member as of December 1st. She comes from a career in marketing and has also served churches here in Virginia as well as Michigan and has also served in prison ministry.

The diocese requires the vestry to approve the letter of agreement, which she has already approved.

Nan Lawson moved and Jane Baird seconded to accept the letter of agreement of the Rev. Elizabeth Bingham to be the Associate Rector for Congregational Life. The motion passed unanimously. The letter was signed by the senior warden and will be sent to the bishop for final approval.

### News & Notes

Democracy Circle is going strong and moving forward. The minister at Fairlington United Methodist is interested in more information about this.

Please come to the November 9th Forum on the Inclusive Memorial. There are 8 or 9 submissions from artists. It has been suggested that we connect with the league of descendants at Mt. Vernon to find out more about the people that we are memorializing.

### Rector's Report - Rev. Noelle York-Simmons

Today was one of two all day staff planning days that happen each year. It is tiring and energizing all at the same time reviewing ideas for the coming year.

Very excited to have a new clergy person on board.

The Annual Convention of the diocese is next week in Fredericksburg. Both clergy members and six parishioners will be there representing us. Others will be there in different capacities.

Christ Church has been invited on a pilgrimage to Turkey with the Seminary next October. More information will come out in the next month or so.

Three funerals and a wedding happening in the next six weeks.

We had a medical event in church Sunday morning. The ushers, vergers and other parishioners cared for him very well. It was suggested that people can be invited to put an emergency contact in Shelby.

We have several new acolytes and a young new member of the chancel chapter. Thanks to Debbie Baker for teaching children about this ministry.

### Warden's Reports - Steve Reed

Nothing new to report

### Announcements & Upcoming Events

- November 5 - Dinner Church
- November 23 - Gift Shop Holiday Open House
- December 4 - Vestry & Staff Christmas party at Noelle's home
- January 31 - Empty Building Party at the newly vacant store
- March 7-8, 2026 - Women's Retreat at Chanko on the James
- April 17-18, 2026 - Vestry Retreat at Claggett Center

### Closing Prayer

Wendy Montes de Oca offered the Closing Prayer.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm.