

Christ Church Vestry Meeting
November 18, 2025
In-Person & Zoom

Attendance

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

Others: Julie Simonton, *Anne Richardson, & Ariel Rudy

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

2027: Wendy Montes de Oca, Kathleen Hickman, & Chris Thompson

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

* attended via Zoom

Absent: Ken Knapp & Nan Lawson

Call to Order & Opening Prayer

The Rev. Noelle York-Simmons called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

Opening Prayer was led by Paula Dubberly.

Consent Agenda - Steve Reed

Paula Dubberly moved and Steve Slaton seconded to accept the October vestry meeting minutes.

There were a few minor edits made. The motion carried unanimously.

Staff Introduction - Ariel Rudy, Children & Family Ministries

Ariel is in her 7th year here at Christ Church.

Why do we have a children's ministry?

- We are trying to equip children to be followers of Jesus right now.
- They will carry these things with them into adulthood.
- They are a valuable part of our community with a specific set of needs.

Children's Chapel

- Shared prayers
- A children's sermon
- Following the same readings as the big church
- 50 Sundays a year
- 15 - 25 kids during the program year

Family Services

- Easter
- Christmas
- Stations of the Cross in Nature
- Ash Wednesday

Sunday School September through May - Different Classes with different curricula for different needs

- Preschool - Godly Play
- Kindergarten (and 1st grade) - Episcopal Children's Curriculum
- 2nd & 3rd Grades - Weaving God's Promises
- 4th & 5th Grades - Re:Form - they are also incorporating service projects, junior chancel chapter & acolyte training
- Around 70 kids enrolled from 40 - 50 families
- Closer to 40 kids in attendance on average with low of 30 or high at 60
 - Not including One Sock On fellowship group for infant parents
- 16 full time teachers & 5 substitutes
 - Recruiting teachers is the largest source of stress in her role
 - She has a plan to help make it easier for the teachers

Nursery & Infants

- Average 5 kids in nursery which is an increase from recent years
- Madina & Katrina are a great team
- Offered child care during Evensong this year and will offer it for Lessons & Carols too

Special Events

- Wreath Making
- Christmas Pageant
- Pancake Races
- Easter Egg Hunt

Children are welcome in nearly everything we do, and it's Ariel's job to make sure they know this. Kids learn how to be in church by being in church.

A question was asked - what would she like more of? The easy answer is more teachers, but also she'd like people to feel more empowered to talk about what they love here.

Stewardship Report - Julie Simonton

We are holding steady with our 2025 pledges, and she expects we will be right on target for our goal. We are ahead of our three year average.

Pledges have come in this week, but we are a bit behind due to the government shutdown. Now that the government has reopened, they have increased.

Tourism continues to be strong, especially for the weeks that the museums were closed.

Comprehensive Campaign update - the interviews have occurred. Brief overview that most came across as positive and not worried about the changes proposed. If we have comments on the materials, please let Julie know.

Thank you note packets were handed out, and all are encouraged to participate in a pledge call night this Thursday, November 20th. There will be more call nights in January.

Treasurer's Report – Anne Richardson

We are still on track with the budget for a projected surplus of revenue greater than what was budgeted.

No news on the annual reviews.

October Revenues: \$180K

October Expenses: \$199K

2026 Budget - Anne Richardson

We are in the home stretch of the budget process. The detailed draft budget will be sent to the vestry by the end of this week.

- Anne will hold "office hour" conversations on 4 different occasions
 - November 30 at 3:00 pm
 - December 2 at 7:00 pm
 - December 3 at 8:00 am or 4:00 pm
- Please let her know if you would like a separate time

The final budget will be distributed for review on December 9 to be voted on at the December 16 vestry meeting.

There have been questions since the last meeting on personnel. This is our largest category of expenses because people = program.

Personnel changes in 2026 include:

- Returning to 3 full time facilities assistants
- Adding a 3rd full time member of the clergy, although this is not in the operating budget for the first three years due to a large gift.

Anne then described what expenses are related to personnel such as wages, retirement benefits, health care, parking, cellular phones, continuing education and payroll taxes.

The budget also includes a COLA for the professional staff of 5%.

The question was asked about what we will vote on in December. This vote will be on the budget that will likely include a rather large deficit due to the rental income abatement for the first part of the year. This will be a cash flow issue eventually in the year.

A discussion was held on when we should discuss what assets will be used for the proposed revenue gap. If nothing is voted on, the assumption is that the reserve fund will be used to cover the deficit. There was discussion that the Offutt Fowler House Fund could be used instead.

Memorials - Noelle York-Simmons

Vestry approval is required of any new memorial in the church yard or at Wilkes Street for certain sized memorials.

1. The family of Martha Wilcox have requested to put a bench in memoriam to her in the church yard. The properties committee and SOD have agreed it would be nice and have ideas for a location.

A question was asked about whether we would see the design prior to approval - the vestry can require that if that's what we'd like.

Paula Dubberly moved and Chris Thompson second to approve adding a bench to the church yard in memory of Martha Wilcox subject to vestry approval of the design. The motion carried.

2. The grave of George Gilpin, a revolutionary war hero and pallbearer of George Washington, has been discovered at Wilkes Street Cemetery with no marker. His wife Mary has a marker that is broken. The idea is to repair her stone and design a stone for him that would match her stone, but since it's an upright stone, the vestry needs to approve the addition of a new stone.

Jay Purcell Manchester moved and Kathleen Hickman seconded to allow for the repair of Mary's stone and the addition of a headstone and footstone to mark the grave of George in similar fashion. The motion carried.

Rector's Report - Rev. Noelle York-Simmons

Nothing to report

Warden's Reports - Steve Reed

The various accounts and their balances managed by the Foundation were shared. There are four funds - 2 Foundation Funds including the Smith Trust, which can only be used for the historic church; the Tricentennial Fund; and the Offutt Fowler Fund. They have a formula they use to determine how much is distributed each year for the use of caring for the properties.

We want to make sure we are addressing questions. The Wardens meet every Thursday, so please reach out to them or the Rector prior to our meetings to discuss items or propose items for inclusion on the vestry agenda.

Announcements & Upcoming Events

- 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

Steve Reed offered the Closing Prayer.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.