

Christ Church Vestry Meeting
February 25, 2025
In-Person & Zoom

Attendance

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

Others: Melanie Gray, Julie Simonton, John Weaver, & Dave Rees

2025: Jack Hutcheson, Andrea McNicholas, Susan Magill*, & Betsy Powell*

2026: Cornelia Horner, Ken Knapp*, & Jay Purcell Manchester

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

* attended via Zoom

Absent: Steve Reed

Call to Order & Opening Prayer

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

Opening Prayer was led by Susan Magill.

Consent Agenda - Jay Manchester

Thank you to Kathleen Hickman for taking the minutes in January. Andrea McNicholas moved, and Chris Thompson seconded to accept the January vestry meeting minutes. The motion carried with four abstentions.

Staff Introduction - Melanie Gray

- Melanie has been with us for 11 years.
- Many thanks for bringing Liz on for more hours - this has been a big help.
- We won an award for our participation in the George Washington parade in Old Town.
- The church participation in the bag lunches was fantastic especially for children.
 - She's hoping to do three more of these church-wide events for the rest of the year.
- March 9th will have the restoration & legal aid group speaking on the state of immigration as of that date.
- She has been involved in many different programs over her time including:
 - West End Food Pantry & legal aide
 - Refugee Ministry
 - Emergency Ministry from government shutdown in 2019
 - Redesigned all ministries during COVID
 - Afghanistan response through the refugee ministry starting in 2021
- Everyone we serve currently are being impacted by our current environment so she's assembling a group to try and help.
- We have 188 members active in outreach at the church.

There were questions about what we can do and discussion about fundraising for the Lazarus ministry. An anonymous donor just gave \$50K to Lazarus.

She sends an email about Lazarus and the people that have been helped each week. If you'd like to get that sent to you, please let her know.

Stewardship Report - Julie Simonton

- 2025 giving - we are at 96% of our budgeted goal with 335 pledges and a little over \$1.54M.
 - Pledging is still showing increased pledging overall with an average increase of 6.5%.
 - The Annual Meeting usually brings in pledges, and we have seen a few this week.
- We don't know how the government layoffs will affect pledging including a potential shut down on March 14.
 - To the extent it can be tracked, it will be.
 - The Finance Committee is also discussing this.
- We sent all of our contribution statements electronically, which will allow us to get back to sending quarterly statements.
- New electronic giving cards will be coming soon to the pews which will allow online givers to embody the giving in church.

Treasurer's Report – Dave Rees

- One month in for 2025, and things are generally in line with where they should be.
- Lia Sanchez and Anne Richardson are double checking some of their calculations.
- Audit update - we expect to have reviews for 2021-2023 completed this week.
 - There was conversation about what future audit requirements are once we are caught up.
 - There will be more information on this at the next meeting.
- We will have a broader review of the budget in March.

January Revenues: \$178K

January Expenses: \$184K

Executive Session

Kathleen Hickman moved & Jack Hutcheson seconded that the vestry go into executive session. The motion passed unanimously, and the executive session began at 7:59 pm.

Fowler House Update - John Weaver

A memo updating the vestry on the current negotiations was distributed earlier.

- We have sent our edits to the lease to Linder with a deadline of March 1.
- The new lease includes rent for the basement space on a calendar year basis likely beginning July 1.
 - \$60K for first year
 - \$80K for second year if needed
 - \$100K for third year if needed

- They may look at painting and carpet in the area they will be using including furniture for the teen center.
- They would be required to clean and maintain the space.
- Their special use permit has their drop off and pick up on Columbus Street.
- Linder's goal is to complete the first floor in phase 1 and mezzanine at a later date.
- We have also reached out to Ross about renewing the lease.
 - They were outraged at the proposal of a 2% increase.
 - We will continue these discussions.
- This will require Campagna Center to stop using the classrooms in our basement.
- There was discussion around security and their needs.
- A question was asked about the elevator in that building.
 - Shindler has not been responsive to fixing that elevator.
 - Noelle has reached out to our legal department for help.
- There is still a question about the balance of when the broker fees must be paid - market conditions today tend to have half paid when the lease is signed and half when they take occupancy. We will push for it to be as late as possible.

Wendy moved & Nan seconded the motion to approve the contract as long as the provisions do not change in such a way that is materially adverse.

This will still be confidential until there has been a signature.

Noelle moved & Chris seconded the return from executive session.
Executive session returned at 8:37 pm.

Wilkes Street Cemetery Update - Rev. Noelle York-Simmons

- **moved to rector's report**

Vestry Elections - Rev. Noelle York-Simmons

Jack Hutcheson moved and Nan Lawson seconded a motion to approve the full ballot for election to the vestry with the following candidates:

- Carrie Ann Alford
- Jane Baird
- Terry Brown
- Paula Dubberly
- Jessica Hughes
- Mary Catherine Nelson
- Steve Slaton

2024 Parochial Report - Rev. Noelle York-Simmons

The 2024 parochial report was distributed prior to the meeting for review and comment. There were new questions presented.

Ken Knapp motioned and Nan Lawson seconded to send the parochial report subject to the staff feeling comfortable with the numbers being correct. The motion passed with one abstention.

News & Notes

- The Inclusive Memorialization group is continuing to work towards a proposal.
- We have a new wooden chalice that was from the early 1700's and belongs to Christ Church that was made from a tree on the property.

Rector's Report - Rev. Noelle York-Simmons

- We have a number of people in the parish that work for or are being affected by work with the government which is causing heavy emotions
 - the first support group was held Sunday, Feb 23 with 25 people
 - Robbie and the Hostetlers will begin a Wednesday night group
 - both will be open to contractors too
- The partnership with Alfred Street Baptist Church for renting space has come to an end due to a need for HIPAA compliant wifi.
- Wilkes Street Cemetery has learned that Douglass Cemetery, which is adjacent, is having their flood problem being fixed by the city which will also help our land.
- The properties committee was contacted by the DAR that Col. George Gilpin was buried in Wilkes Street Cemetery - he was one of George Washington's pallbearers.
- largest covenant class in a long time - 25 signed up but likely will grow to 27
- 6 new LEMs
- New classroom at the end of the hall near the nursery for adult learning and smaller groups
- Wes Lunsford is a new parishioner who has an urban farm. He has ordered bees and a hive for the church yard

Warden's Reports - Jay Purcell Manchester

- Our current wardens are both in the class of '26 this year. It would be good to elect someone from the class of '27 as junior warden for next year. Please be thinking about that for next month.

Announcements & Upcoming Events

- 29 March - Vestry Retreat at VTS
- 6 April (Lent 5) – Bishop Harris visit.
- Julie Simonton has a new round of thank you notes for anyone that would like to write them to our pledgers.

Closing Prayer

Nan Lawson offered the Closing Prayer.

The meeting adjourned at 9:24 pm.