

Christ Church Vestry Meeting
May 27, 2025
In-Person & Zoom

Attendance

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

Others: Mark Pretzat, Julie Simonton,* Anne Richardson*, Dave Rees, & Jason Abel

2026: Steve Reed, Cornelia Horner & Jay Purcell Manchester

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

2028: Paula Dubberly, Jessica Hughes & Steve Slaton

* attended via Zoom

Absent: Jane Baird, Ken Knapp

Call to Order & Opening Prayer

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

Opening Prayer was led by Wendy Montes de Oca.

Consent Agenda - Steve Reed

Nan Lawson moved and Paula Dubberly seconded to accept the April vestry meeting minutes. The motion carried.

Staff Introduction - Jason Abel, Director of Music

- Jason began with a review of the past year with the number of choir members and activities that were held.
 - One new series that he highlighted was the concert series which was funded by an anonymous donor who has agreed to fund one more year.
 - We will need more in donations to cover costs without the donor.
- Next year will mark another 7 years for Jason, so he will be taking another sabbatical.
- A few things of note:
 - We are out of space to store copies of the anthems used by the choir. Copyright rules may preclude them from being digitized.
 - The pianos in both the choir room and the church are nearing the end of their lives. The one in the church is due to humidity fluctuations.
 - There is some concern over the number of kids in the choir post covid - in the upcoming school year, there won't be any teens singing.
- He's grateful for the money allocated for the music program allowing us to pay competitively where necessary.

A question was asked about the humidity and how it could affect the organ. We do have a humidifier for the winter months, and the piano is more affected due to the amount of wood. It would likely cost \$35K for a piano to replace the one in the church and move that one to the choir room plus the cost of moving them.

His 20 year anniversary is coming up, and all celebrated him for that.

Stewardship Report - Julie Simonton

Julie started with an update on the number of pledges for 2025. We have reached 97% of the budget goal.

- One pledge has declined.
- Pledges on average have increased by 6%.
- We are a bit ahead in received funds compared to our three year average.
- TipTap pay continues to do well and is ahead of last year.
- We also received the \$4K donation from a tourist company.
- Lia turned in foreign coins that brought in close to \$4K.

The discussion turned to the comprehensive campaign.

- Carol Donlan is writing support for the feasibility study.
- The Building and Property committee and Poulan are working to get estimates for a range of projects including a new elevator.
- The hope is that the feasibility study will begin the second week of June.
- A parish announcement will be made when the parish survey is set to go.

Treasurer's Report – Dave Rees & Anne Richardson

Dave shared the numbers for April which shows that our financials are on track for what has been budgeted for this year.

April Revenues: \$168K

April Expenses: \$186K

Audit Update: we have a statement on the 2021 review and hope to have 2022 signed off in June followed by 2023.

A question was asked about our risk for rental income on the Ross lease. They are required to give 6 months notice to leave early, so we are almost there. We will also be getting the rent from Linder for the basement this year that wasn't in the budget.

Inclusive Memorials Update - Kathleen Hickman & Mark Pretzat

The group was started a few years ago to help memorialize people who helped build this church that aren't already recognized.

They are working on several aspects of what a memorial could look like.

- Placement on the grounds is being whittled down to two or three locations to present to the vestry.

- Wording for what to be included is close to being finalized.
- The committee has contacted Allan Bittle who helped design the Smithsonian African American Museum, and he seems interested in helping find an artist. Renderings would need some funding to help develop this any further. Without renderings, we can't get cost estimates for the actual installation of a memorial.
- The group is asking the vestry to establish a new designated account for this memorial and donate \$10K from the reserves with the idea that this will be repaid from funds out of the comprehensive campaign. The money would be used primarily for renderings but also for a utility mapping of what is lying beneath the churchyard.

A question was asked about the development of the designated fund to state that any money left in the fund after the memorial is created could be used in some other way. This can be done by noting this in the solicitations so donors are not surprised.

The church does have a gardens fund with a balance of \$14K. It's also possible the Foundation distribution could be used if it's not already earmarked.

Paula Dubberly moved and Jessica Hughes seconded a motion that the inclusive memorialization group may use up to \$10K from the garden designated fund for the purpose of planning and research. The motion carried unanimously.

Fowler House Update - Rev. Noelle York-Simmons

Elevators

- The Fowler House has two elevators - a freight elevator as well as a passenger elevator.
- The freight elevator has recently been fixed, but it needs an inspection before it can be used, and it is likely to be a month before an inspector can come.
- The passenger elevator has also gone out and may need to be totally replaced quickly.
 - Poulan is soliciting bids
 - Due to the timing, the Offutt Fowler House Fund may need to be used.

Brokers

- The first part of the brokers' fees (\$25K each) have been paid and another amount will be due when the school takes possession of the upper floor of the building in January.
- We will also need to pay a small fee when they begin classes in the basement level

ACTION: The balance of the Offutt Fowler House Fund was discussed, and given that there are some big amounts due, we should review at the next meeting. This discussion should also include a focus on the rent for the next couple of years and what may need to be made up.

Timeline:

- We are looking at the various things the church needs to do to ready the basement level for the school to begin in September.
- We may need to address the heat in the lower level.

Summer Schedule - Rev. Noelle York-Simmons

We usually take one month off during the summer. Noelle will be traveling at the time of the June meeting, so we will take that month off rather than one later in the summer.

Clergy Assistance - Noelle York-Simmons

Noelle has come to an agreement with Abbott Bailey to serve six Sundays through the rest of this year to cover for when Noelle and Robbie are not available. This will not cover everything, but it will be a tremendous help.

The vestry needs to vote on any agreement with clergy.

Jay Purcell Manchester moved and Steve Slaton seconded a motion to enter the contract with Rev. Abbott Bailey and to approve the amount paid will be designated as housing allowance. The motion passed unanimously.

News & Notes

- There was a meeting at the end of April with parents of high schoolers and rising high schoolers with Noelle and Robbie.
 - They learned that the big events are not draws.
 - There is a potential loss from Sunday morning formation since they are used to that, so an idea was for a group to gather at Misha's from 9 - 9:45 on Sunday mornings for hanging out as well as an opportunity for deeper conversations.

Rector's Report - Rev. Noelle York-Simmons

- Pride Eucharist will include guest preacher Will Dickinson and potentially the new bishop as presider. The organist from Grace will play.
- Training and safety protocols are being put in place for the various populations that are here during the week for food assistance, financial assistance and language assistance.
 - We are passing out "Red Cards" with information in English on one side and many other languages on the other that describes the rights of the individuals.
 - We have done some education among food pantry folks in case there are questions about people lurking or asking questions. Most are trained to say they don't know people.
 - We have signs about the areas that are private space.
 - We are making sure staff and close volunteers have given emergency contact information in case it's needed.
 - It is a balance for helping people feel comfortable coming to the church but knowing if a warrant is presented, there's not much we can do.
 - Thankfully, this has not come to pass.

Warden's Reports - Steve Reed

- Register for Shrine Mont! The vestry will be hosting the ice cream social.
- We will also have several international students there on scholarship as they will not be able to travel home for the summer.

Announcements & Upcoming Events

- **June 13 - 15 - Shrine Mont**
- **June 28 - Pride Eucharist**

Closing Prayer

Cornelia Horner offered the Closing Prayer.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.