

Christ Church Vestry Meeting  
August 26, 2025  
In-Person & Zoom

Attendance

Clergy: Rev. Noelle York-Simmons

Others: Julie Simonton & Anne Richardson

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 7:01 pm.

Opening Prayer was led by Cornelia Horner.

Consent Agenda - Steve Reed

It was moved and seconded to accept the July vestry meeting minutes. There were edits to spelling of a few names and clarification on the permanence of the easement. The motion carried with 2 abstaining.

Staff Introduction - Julie Simonton, Stewardship

Julie began with a discussion about her role at the church and the fact that this is the second time she has worked here. She came back into a healthy church with healthy processes. Her approach is to use the gifts God gives us as a way to approach stewardship. Knowing that God's gifts are always shifting.

She is quite visual and likes to watch stories unfold which led her to adding social media to her role at the church. She works hard to meet people where they are and where Jesus is to help tell the story we want told.

Each year, she tries to tweak the stewardship campaigns to help people think about their relationship to the church. This year, one of the big shifts was sending digital giving statements, which was a challenge in the way the data is currently stored.

Every three or four years, bigger changes are needed to allow people to see things in a different way and to engage differently.

The staff at the church are amazing, and a joy to work with. In addition, the community here is very engaged.

She was asked to give more about her bio - she's from Georgia and went to Converse College. Served as a flight attendant and then went to get a masters in German literature and lived in other parts of the world. She returned to Virginia and took a temporary job at Christ Church that turned into a permanent role, left for a bit to go to Hawaii and then VTS before going to Richmond and eventually back here.

Another question was asked about her co-horts in the diocese and the church at large, which she elaborated about.

### Stewardship Report - Julie Simonton

Julie started with the announcement that we have all received our pledge cards with a letter inviting us to pledge.

- A broader letter will be distributed to the parish along with the brochures.
- She also shared the new online giving cards that will be distributed throughout the pews and are encouraged to be put in the plates during the services
- An invitation to help with welcome Sunday will be coming out soon
- Online pledging is up and ready on the website as well as the Shelby app for 2026
- The vestry is asked to return our pledges by September 15 along with the stewardship and finance committees

For 2025, we are currently standing at \$1,570,000. Knowing there are people who pledge later in the year, and anticipating what they usually give, we anticipate that we will come in on budget.

A question was asked about the number of pledgers dropping for those below \$1K, and it was discussed that many of those are people who join at the end of the year.

The percentage of pledges is coming in ahead of where we were in 2024.

Tourism is coming in nicely as well.

Comprehensive Campaign - this will be launched soon! We should receive the architect's information in the next few weeks along with the schedule and rhythm of the campaign from our consultants.

### Treasurer's Report – Anne Richardson

Anne shared the numbers for July which shows expenses and revenues are both as expected.

- The summer slump was later this year and seems to be less of a slump than recent years.
- Supporting revenue such as space rentals are coming in above expectations.
- The quarterly insurance bill came in higher, so it's being reviewed.
- There was also a software cost that was unanticipated since it is a three-year renewal, but it will be tracked moving forward.

The 2021 Review is completed, and the 2022 draft is in hand. 2023 and 2024 will also be reviews rather than full audits.

July Revenues: \$138K

July Expenses: \$198K

### 2026 Budget - Anne Richardson

Anne shared slides with a breakdown of what is included in the budget and how the plan will work to get to our presented budget.

- She reiterated the importance of passing the budget in December to give the church the authority to spend the money needed for things to run.
- The budget is a way to allocate the unrestricted gifts.
- It also helps us to know what is needed to be raised to cover the expenses.
- We reviewed the history of the budgets v actuals for the last 8 years looking specifically at deficits and surplus years.

A discussion was held about the replenishment of the reserve funds in years when there is a surplus.

### Fowler House Update - Rev. Noelle York-Simmons

The Linder school is moving in and is painting and getting ready for their school year, which starts next week.

The teen center has been redecorated as it will be shared space.

The Ross lease ends January 31, 2026, and the school will begin renovations shortly after that.

### News & Notes

Chris Thompson shared that there is a move to get our Wilkes Street Cemetery registered on the national registry of historic spaces.

Welcome Sunday is coming up on Sept. 7 - please wear your nametags and vestry pins.

We will be getting 10 pew torches to be used during evening services such as weddings, Christmas Eve, Lessons and Carols, the Easter Vigil, etc.

The new lighting on the steeple looks great!

The neighborhood gatherings were great events.

Sunday School starts in a couple of weeks - Sept. 14.

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

We are entering a season of creation - we will have River Keeper Clean Up Day as well as other faith formation sessions on caring for creation. Libby Witt will be leading a series for small groups. All of this is to answer the question of "Why should we care?"

Jason Abel's 20th anniversary is October 8th and there will be a special evensong with a reception on October 5th. Could someone draft a vestry resolution commemorating this? Kathleen Hickman volunteered to bring a draft to the next meeting.

Noelle is beginning to draw up a job description and start the process of hiring a third member of the clergy thanks to an advanced pledge for the comprehensive campaign. This will likely be an associate rector for congregational life, which could include membership, hospitality, Shrine Mont and small groups.

#### Warden's Reports - Steve Reed

Nothing new to report

#### Announcements & Upcoming Events

- September 7 - Welcome Sunday
- September 14 - first week of Sunday School
- September 30 - Vestry Meeting
- October 5 - Special Evensong Reception

#### Closing Prayer

Jessica Hughes offered the Closing Prayer.

The meeting adjourned at 8:53 pm.