

Christ Church Vestry Meeting
September 30, 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

Call to Order & Opening Prayer

The Rev. Noelle York-Simmons called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

Opening Prayer was led by Jessica Hughes.

Consent Agenda - Steve Reed

It was moved and seconded to accept the August vestry meeting minutes. There were a few edits made. The motion carried unanimously.

Staff Introduction - Lia Sanchez, Accounting

Lia gave her personal side talking about her kids and grandkids. She is the director of finance or Comptroller, handling all of the finances at the church. She has worked to streamline processes to reduce the wait on check signing. She has implemented a lot of online processes which is more efficient and saves money. This also is in compliance with many of our vendors.

She also manages payroll and HR with all the paperwork that entails. One of our challenges is reducing paper usage. It's still a goal.

We are working through the 2023 review and are determined to finish 2024 this year. It was discussed how often we should have a full audit v. a review. The Chair of the Finance Committee and the CPA recommend this should be about every 5 years.

She supports Julie Simonton with stewardship and pledges.

She would welcome us to visit her office any time.

A discussion was had on the complexities of managing three properties with all of the utilities and certificates of insurance and the like.

Lia was commended for what a wonderful job she has done navigating this complexity.

Stewardship Report - Julie Simonton

Julie started with the fact that we are doing very well.

- Annual Giving mailing will be on time going out this week thanks to the Stewardship Committee and others who have helped with this.
- A reminder that if we haven't gotten our pledges in, please do so.

For 2025, we are currently standing at \$1,570,356 and have recently gotten a couple of new pledges for 2025. We are well ahead for this time of year for percentage of pledges received.

Tourism continues to be steady and ahead of budget.

Leadership pledges for 2026 are showing annual increases.

Comprehensive Campaign - we are continuing to progress to get the needed work done before we can do the feasibility study. The architect's work has been done, so he is getting a bid for the work. There was discussion about what this includes. The feasibility study will help us to know the capacity of what we can raise.

Treasurer's Report – Rev. Noelle York-Simmons

Noelle shared the numbers for August which shows expenses in line with expectations and revenues are higher than typical with our summer slump.

- The space rentals are continuing to help this.
- Supporting revenues are overall doing well.
- Things are going smoothly with Linder.

August Revenues: \$140K

August Expenses: \$173K

There is a new elevator vendor that is keeping the Fowler House elevator working and costs significantly less than the previous vendor.

There was discussion about the impending government shutdown and whether we should model our year end revenue projections to account for that. It is difficult to predict this given that it has been 6 years since a major shut down has occurred. Noelle will discuss this with the finance team.

The next Finance Committee meeting is being held on zoom on October 22 at 6 pm, and all are welcome to attend. Please reach out to Anne Richardson if you'd like the link.

2026 Budget - Rev. Noelle York-Simmons

There are two things that are budgetary priorities for 2026

1. Staff COLA and right-sizing salaries

2. 2025 full audit rather than a review

There was a discussion about market data that's used for determining fair salaries. The diocese has metrics for clergy, but the other salaries are based on a variety of sources. There was also a comment to bring a portion of the salary for a third clergy into the budget.

There was also a discussion about the revenue offset that will need to occur with the loss of Ross rent until Linder's rent upstairs kicks in. The discussion surrounded whether the Offutt Fund for the Fowler House could be used to cover this. It was requested that the vestry see a copy of the Offutt Fund documents, so it will be sent.

If there are other priorities for next year's budget that have not been identified by the Finance Committee, please bring them up.

Foundation Trustees - Rev. Noelle York-Simmons

The candidates for trustees will be presented next month.

Security - Nan Lawson

Nan brought up the recent tragedies at houses of worship and whether we need a plan for our facilities. She is proposing a committee to include vestry members and properties committee members to make recommendations to the vestry. The historic church is the biggest challenge. The newer buildings have more measures in place.

- A component to consider would be training for ushers & docents
- There is a button in the gift shop that calls the police and a similar one in the sacristy

Nan Lawson will serve as the chair of this committee. Wendy Montes de Oca & Jay Purcell Manchester offered that they are willing to serve on the committee. If others are interested, please reach out to Nan.

News & Notes

The teenagers are having coffee on Sunday mornings, and it is going well.

The Fowler House is alive and kicking during Sunday school.

The Democracy Circle event had 50 people in attendance. They did small groups and one of the discussions was on encouraging people to vote and how we could do this. This is a non-partisan group. What are others' thoughts on having a table or a parish life article on this - people are supportive. The Episcopal Church has resources to encourage people to "Vote Faithfully".

Our Little Roses was supported this summer, and there is conversation about how this will continue. Jane Baird plans to write an article about this for Extraordinary Times. Steve & Anne Reed will be traveling there soon.

Shrine Mont 2026 activities are starting.

Rector's Report - Rev. Noelle York-Simmons

Noelle participated in the Racial Justice Pilgrimage in Alexandria last week. It was well done and she encourages others to join when they do this again. It was 5 days and included Christ Church. It was the first time she'd presented on our experience and all that we've done since 2017, and it was great to reflect on how much has happened.

She is in the process of interviewing a potential clergy member to join the church which is very exciting. There will be a committee interviewing this person next week followed by Julie Simonton & Robbie Laughton.

October is full! Dinner church, covenant class, the concerts, etc.

She and the staff are keeping their eyes and ears open around the government shutdown pastorally, as well as financially.

She's going to William & Mary this weekend!

Warden's Reports - Steve Reed

We received the letter from Ross saying they will vacate in January as expected.

The Outreach & Mission Investment Committee will likely meet in October - date TBD.

Announcements & Upcoming Events

- October 1 - Dinner Church & VTS Have Mercy discussion
- October 5 - Blessing of the Pets
- October 5 - Special Evensong Reception with the vestry resolution presented & a specially commissioned piece of music
- March 7-8, 2026 - Women's Retreat at Chanko on the James
- April 17-18, 2026 - Vestry Retreat at Claggett Center

Closing Prayer

Kathleen Hickman offered the Closing Prayer.

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 pm.