Minutes of the Meeting of the Vestry of The Chapel of the Cross

16 October 2025

The Vestry of The Chapel of the Cross met on Thursday, October 16, 2025, in the Overlook Room and via Zoom.

Vestry members present were as follows: Anita Howell, Katherine Lavine, Eliza McAllister, Alan Rimer, Perri Kersh (Sr. Warden, via Zoom), Strother Murray-Ndinga (Jr. Warden), Kevin Trapani, Scott Beddingfield, Emma Griffith, M.C. Ragsdale, and Michael Reeves.

The following Clergy were present: The Reverend Mary Catherine Young (Associate Rector for University Ministry) and The Reverend Dr. Karen Connor McGugan (Associate Rector).

Also present were Diane McOmie (Director of Operations and Finance), Alistair Nevius (Treasurer), and Alice Cotten (Clerk).

Call to Order: In the absence of the Rector, who was on retreat, Jr. Warden Strother Murray-Ndinga presided and called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M.

She noted that Sr. Warden Perri Kersh (joining by Zoom) and Carter Kersh were in New York and had been present at the Hobart Theology Lecture at St. Thomas Church on October 15, at which The Rt. Rev. Mariann Budde, Bishop of the Diocese of Washington, spoke, along with Pádraig Ó Tuama, on "A Conversation on Sanctuary, Belonging, and Courage."

Devotion/Prayer: Scott Beddingfield read selections from *A Spirituality of Fundraising* by Henri Nouwen. Nouwen points out that fundraising is the opposite of begging: it's not "please help us out;" instead, it's "we have a vision, and we invite you to join us." Nouwen encourages us to see fundraising as a ministry that begins with prayer and includes gratitude for who we are and what we have. Mr. Beddingfield ended with a prayer.

Preliminaries: Ms. Murray-Ndinga asked for any feedback from the letter the wardens had recently sent to parish leaders about honoring and respecting staff time and deadlines. Staff schedules will be made more widely available in an effort to respect their scheduled time off and to help parish leaders know when they can expect to be able to reach staff. Appointments with clergy and staff are encouraged.

Before the meeting began, Ms. Murray-Ndinga had written words and numbers on the whiteboards in the room. She asked those present to identify the sources of those cryptic writings, which were (mostly) from the Consent Agenda documents. (For example: almost 40, top .5%, 18-22, Faith250, 37.) The exercise was challenging but fun, and it drew attention to the importance of materials included in the Consent Agenda.

Approval of Consent Agenda: Upon motion by Alan Rimer, seconded by Scott Beddingfield, the Consent Agenda was approved unanimously, with no abstentions.

Standing Committee Updates

Building & Grounds: Chair Alan Rimer reported three things—1) The lighting work for the Chapel will likely not take place until July 2026. The bid we have received is above the budgeted estimate, and a new request will need to go to the Finance Committee and then to the Vestry.
2) The Preschool is looking to rehabilitate or replace the playground equipment.
3) Two air handlers need replacing, at a probable total cost of about $65,000. Replacing air handlers was part of the parish's long-range plan for two years ago but had been postponed because of other urgent needs.
Facilities Manager Joe Rosemond was scheduled to be back on October 17.
Mr. Rimer also noted that when he steps down next year as he finishes his Vestry term, he will have served 23 years on the Building & Grounds Committee.

Finance: Chair Emma Griffith asked Treasurer Alistair Nevius to report first. Mr. Nevius reported that through September, total operating revenues for the year were $1,736,836, which was $50,889 ahead of the straight-line budget. Revenue for the month was $146,587, which was $40,740 under budget for the month.
September expenses were $33,199 under budget. Year to date expenses are $21,436 under budget. There was a small operating deficit of $7,542 for September, but for the year to date, the parish has an operating surplus of $72,326.
Through September, total assets were $5,610,773, including cash of $1,442,558 ($484,553 in bank accounts, $958,004 in brokerage accounts) and investments of $4,156,873. Total liabilities were $350,190.

Ms. Griffith said that, at the Rector's request, the Finance Committee is looking over a proposed document retention policy.
In response to a question about whether there are any early warning financial signals that the parish should pay attention to, there was discussion of the overall financial position of the parish, the effect of the government shutdown, and the fact that the parish has significant investment in the stock market. Mr. Nevius commented that 2025 pledges are coming in on target and noted that our parish budgets with a 3-4% discount on pledges.

Personnel: Chair Kevin Trapani reported that the Personnel Committee is currently working with two job descriptions. One, for music and liturgy, has been approved. Another, a child care position, is being written. The committee wants to help provide appropriate volunteer support to staff, and members are talking with staff to find out what additional support they would like and developing a clear sense of the responsibilities each position requires. He expects these staff interviews and volunteer job descriptions to be completed by the end of the year. M.C.

Ragsdale recently interviewed The Rev'd. Mary Cat Young and commented that it was both useful and fun to have this kind of conversation with a staff member. Mr. Trapani requested that Vestry members let him know about any of their own experiences as parish volunteers.

Stewardship: Chair Katherine Lavine reported that the 2026 campaign officially began on October 5 and that so far there have been 199 pledges totaling $956,538. The average pledge to date is $4806. The median pledge is $3000. About 111 households have increased their pledges by an average of 18.5%. Compared with the 2025 campaign at the same point last year, we are ahead by 17 pledges and $87,713.
Caller night is scheduled for October 30. Sr. Warden Perri Kersh commented that she made calls during the day this year and got better results, suggesting that other callers might try daytime calling. Ms. Lavine added that she discovered that calling from a 919 landline gets better results than calling from her out of state cell phone number. She also suggested that callers consider calling from a landline within the church.
Mr. Trapani urged continuing to "pull out all the stops" to ensure parish financial goals are met, commenting that first pledgers are often the biggest.
Ms. McOmie said that it has been a pleasure to welcome to the staff Breta Stroud, the parish's new Director of Parish Giving. Ms.Stroud will be present at the October 30 calling event.

Other reports/updates, as needed:
1) Choral Evensong for The Feast of Saint Luke will be held at 4 P.M. on October 19. The service includes a blessing for medical professionals.
2) The Diocesan Convention will be held in Winston-Salem on November 21-22.
3) Support the IFC by buying a pumpkin at Olin T. Binkley Baptist Church this year. Proceeds will go to the IFC.
4) Project 5000 is underway. Fill a bag, or several bags. This year there are also opportunities to have a tour of the IFC. Watch for additional information.
5) Michael Reeves brought up the subject of foyer groups and how to encourage more participation by young families. This prompted a discussion about various ways of forming foyer groups and advantages and disadvantages of each model. Jr. Warden Strother Murray-Ndinga will suggest a focus group for further foyer group discussion.

The Rev'd Dr. Karen Connor McGugan offered a closing prayer.

The Jr. Warden, Strother Murray-Ndinga, adjourned the meeting at 7:24 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice R. Cotten
Clerk of the Vestry