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

19 March 2026

The Vestry of the Chapel of the Cross met on Thursday, March 19, 2026 in the Overlook Room and via Zoom.

Vestry members in attendance were Scott Beddingfield, Lucy Falk, Sally Goodnight, Emma Griffith, Mary Kent Hill, Perri Kersh (Sr. Warden), Strother Murray-Ndinga, M.C. Ragsdale (Jr. Warden), Michael Reeves, Kevin Trapani (Zoom), and Carl Wilke (Zoom).

The following Clergy were present: The Rev. Elizabeth Marie Melchionna (Rector), The Rev. Mary Catherine Young, The Rev. Keith Esposito, and The Rev. Dr. Karen Connor McGugan.

Also present were Diane McOmie (Director of Operations and Finance), Alistair Nevius (Treasurer), and Harriet Pegram (Clerk of Vestry)

Call to Order: The Rector called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. She welcomed the new vestry members.

Devotion/Prayer: Perri Kersh offered the opening devotion and prayer. She reminded the vestry that March 19 is the Feast of St. Joseph, and she brought a pasta salad to mark the occasion. She thanked Keith for his contributions to the vestry retreat earlier in the month, his focus on our mission statement, and especially on "growing in faith". She then remarked on how little there is in the Bible about St. Joseph. She shared a passage about Joseph hearing the word of God and what God intended for him to do. He "took up his cross" and carried it as God commanded, and as Jesus calls us to do. She ended the devotion with the Collect for March 19.

Sally Goodnight oriented new vestry members to VPOD duties and CCRC signups. She emphasized the importance of being welcoming, answering questions following worship services, and bringing people closer into community. The CCRC services allow opportunities to connect with those who might not be able to get to church, and she offered a reminder that many of our CCRC residents are very generous givers.

Consent Agenda: Items on the Consent Agenda were Minutes of the Annual Meeting on February 22, 2026, Minutes of the business portion of the Vestry and staff Retreat on March 1, 2026, the March Rector's Vestry Report, the March Vestry Report for the Associate Rector for University Ministry, the March Vestry Report for the Associate Rector, the March Vestry Report for the Director of Music and Organist, the March Christian Formation Vestry Report, the March Communications and Community Engagement Update, the March

Vestry report for the Parish Life and Worship Coordinator, The March Vestry Report for the Director of Operations and Finance, The March Vestry Report for the Director of Parish Giving, February Finance Committee minutes, March Stewardship Committee report, and the February Building and Grounds Meeting minutes. *Upon motion by Sally Goodnight, seconded by Strother Murray-Ndinga, the Consent Agenda was approved unanimously, with no abstentions.*

Rector's Update: Elizabeth Marie began by mentioning that the staff team is reviewing our church mission statement. She also thanked the vestry for making it possible to hire new staff members. The parish is already reaping the benefits of the new hires.

She remarked on the success of the recent ABC Sale. The addition of noonday prayers and Eucharist on Friday for volunteers was well-received.

Elizabeth Marie reported on the recent Episcopal Parish Network (EPN) Conference in Charlotte. The conference provided opportunities for thinking about our mission of forming disciples of Jesus with a renewed sense of creating practices at a high level and at the committee level, and not just relating to finances. How do we remove system barriers to engaging and connecting? The staff team will look at "preparing the way" by examining our systems. The Presiding Bishop, The Most Rev. Sean Rowe gave accolades to the work going on at The Chapel of the Cross. She also met the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion at the conference. The Rector identified "pain points" in the denomination, including that there are more retirements than ordinations. She noted that our parish is bucking the trend of declining parishes.

Keith remarked that at the EPN Conference he was impressed that COTC is already implementing initiatives that were suggested. He heard a focus on the importance of planning ahead, and "programming for collisions", or fostering connections, especially intergenerationally.

Elizabeth Marie concluded her remarks by saying that Holy Week preparations are well under way. She expressed her gratitude especially for the altar guild's efforts during that week.

The Rector asked Keith to provide follow-up from the recent vestry and staff retreat. Keith thanked the vestry and staff for the work during the session. He requested that summary documents based on that work be completed, and he asked vestry members to ask their committees what they might let go of that is not beneficial and to refine their goals for the coming year. He hopes the vestry will identify goals for this program year that the parish can focus on.

The Rector asked Mary Cat to offer insight on the Forum for Theological Exploration, which Mary Cat mentioned in her March report. She received a grant to attend the meeting, and noted she was the only Episcopalian. She appreciated the ecumenical engagement she shared with other parishes.

The Rector gave Karen an opportunity to update the vestry on the upcoming EYC pilgrimage to the Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing in Atlanta, and to Montgomery and Selma. The parish has signed a contract with the Center in preparation for that visit. The Center will send facilitators to COTC to provide a daylong "pilgrimage", a training session for the adults who will accompany the young people. There will be an emphasis on living our Baptismal Covenant.

Standing Committee Updates

Building and Grounds: Chairperson Scott Beddingfield reported that Facility Manager Joe Rosemond is away for two weeks, and left the parish in good shape for facility management while he is on vacation. A job description is being created for a parish volunteer who can support facilities management. Roof repair has been completed at the Welcome Center entrance.

Finance Committee: Alistair Nevius provided a short orientation to new vestry members about what they will see in preparation for vestry meetings. He reported that that February was a good month. Revenues were $26K ahead of budget. Operating expenses are under budget for March. We are operating with a $62K surplus thus far for 2026.

Emma Griffith presented an item that was added to the agenda prior to the meeting and emailed to vestry members. The Investment Committee, in their meeting this week, reviewed the Investment Policy Statement and approved a recommendation to remove the final line of Section 3, Investment Guidelines. This eliminates a confusing and possibly contradictory sentence. After several questions about whether this change eliminates the fund manager's ability to vet the wide range of funds, it was decided to table this discussion until the Investment Committee clarifies the meaning of this sentence.

The Finance Committee approved AV improvements for the Overlook Room.

Personnel Committee: Kevin Trapani reported that the parish is in its second year of the "human capital project". He noted that the effort includes adding staff, strengthening volunteer resources, and adding revenue. The committee is defining and expanding volunteer job descriptions, and asked that vestry members identify volunteer jobs that might not have job descriptions. He emphasized that clergy and staff have been overwhelmed over the past few years, and there needs to be sensitivity while navigating through the changing job roles and adding positions. Onboarding will be critical during the

process. M.C. Ragsdale, who is already very involved in the committee, will succeed Kevin as chairperson. She thanked Kevin for his leadership, and noted that he will remain on the committee.

Stewardship Committee: In Eliza McAlister's absence, Diane McOmie reported that Gentry Hodnett is onboarding. The ABC Sale grossed $47K.

Strother Murray-Ndinga reported on Faith in Action. The Crop Hunger Walk is this Sunday, March 22, with a fundraising goal of $50,000. The COTC Seed Fund is now accepting grant proposals for the 2026 grant cycle. There will be a Tech Recycling Day on May 2. The Orange County Repair Café is May 11. Volunteer repair coaches can help repair appliances, furniture, and other items. There will be a "Lunch and Learn" Monday, April 13 at COTC. The guest speaker will be Gregor Levy of the St. Joseph's Breakfast Ministry. El Buen Pastor's Food Sorts are now the first, second, and fifth Saturday of each month. There are opportunities for volunteering.

Elizabeth Marie acknowledged that Carl Wilke is in Spruce Pine, NC cutting down trees from Hurricane Helene. He volunteers with Team Rubicon.

The Rev. Dr. Karen Connor McGugan offered closing prayer, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:08 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Harriet Pegram, Clerk of Vestry