Vestry Meeting Minutes, St. Christoper By-the-River, May 9, 2026 (R0)

Hosted at the home of Dr. John and Mrs. Nancy Irwin

Attendance. *Present:* Rev. Gabriel Lawrence, Charlene Currutt, James Gallagher, Rick Hamilton, Dr. John Irwin, Hayley Kosmatka, Aud.D., Ron Lee, Linda Sylor, Kitty Thomas, Brian Wright

Openings

Prayer and Welcome. The Vestry meeting convened at approximately 12:30 p.m. after the conclusion of our Retreat session and a brief lunch break. Fr. Gabriel led us in prayer.

Minutes, April 19, 2026. ***Moved: Approve the April minutes, Ron; Second, Rick > Carried***

Reports, Priest-in-Charge, Fr. Gabriel

Loss of Dr. Bruce Long. Susan Long visited St. Christopher to express her thanks to our parish. She made a donation.

Book Study. Fr. Gabriel will be facilitating another book study with DOK.

Diocesan Planning Conference. He planned worship services for an upcoming clergy conference that he will attend.

New Members. He will recognize the Horvitz and Stith families [and possibly others] during the May 31 service.

April Bargain Box. About $6,000 was raised, a bit lower due given fewer donations of furniture and jewelry. Hayley suggested that the days and hours of the event are worth revisiting. Noted: The fall sale will include clothing and shoes.

Celebration of New Ministry. Fr. Gabriel attended the service for Rev. Charlie Knuth, Christ Church, Hudson. His own St. Christopher service is on Tuesday, September 8th at 6:00 p.m. The Bishop will be present.

Promoting Coffee Hour. After services, Clergy should guide attendees toward the Guild room for socializing.

Children's Ministry. It was proposed that we create a carpeted play area in the nave with a low table and toys as an interim solution since we lack a nursery worker. A concern about the stability of the baptismal font will be investigated.

Church Growth Strategy. A "growth committee" will be formed for advertising, social media and streaming initiatives. John will spearhead communication to explore this new group. Purchase of a small streaming camera was suggested.

Deacons' Letter of Agreement. For expectations clarity, the Diocese now requires an LOA for Lydia, our parish — and the Diocese. They will pay her $25 for her two services monthly, cover her participation in the Church Pension Group — and pay the 18% pension assessment on that compensation. The LOA sets clear boundaries regarding hours and time off.

Moved: Approve the LOA for Deacon Lydia Baily, Ron; Second, Rick > Carried

The Gates Mills Fourth of July Parade [200th Anniversary Year]

Clergy. Fr. Gabriel and two other clergy members from Gates Mills churches are expected to join the parade.

Food/Beverages. Debbie Cole or John can run the cotton candy machine. We should have water and hard candy on hand.

Seating. Perhaps bleachers can be set up in James' yard. He'll check options and pricing. Since we've seen past parade spectators sitting on our lawn, perhaps we can also add bleachers. Hayley suggested we add a tent for any who need shade. John will speak with Luis about these options. James suggested a sign, "Reserved for Families".

Information Resources. A member should be on hand to discuss our church and answer questions. Char recommended cards, including "the church school" and/or "start your family here" topics — and wedding and baptism information.

Report, Senior Warden, Dr. John Irwin

John found our retreat, facilitated by Fr. Gabriel to be meaningful. He will work on growth committee establishment.

Reports, Junior Warden, Charlene Currutt

Air Conditioner. We will replace the broken 32 year-old unit serving the guild room, nursery and children's chapel, and its basement air handler. [The freon in use is being phased out, industry-wide.] Char summarized the features, benefits and costs of the systems proposed by BSM, Kobella and W. F. Hann & Sons. Beyond being well-known in the area, the comprehensive Hann proposal was $600 less. Vestry will consider a formal yearly maintenance plan later. Char will follow up about procurement of two thermostats.

Moved: Approve the W. F. Hann & Sons air conditioning proposal, Ron; Second, Rick > Carried

Steeple. Work will begin after July fourth and take four to six weeks. No down payment is needed, providing a window to raise the needed funds. We can cover the cost with some earmarked funds. Interest also remains for sourcing donations through a multi-pronged fundraising strategy. *Details discussed:*

—Grants. Haley will apply to the Diocese by June 1 for one-third of the cost, about $30,000. If approved, this is a grant, while another third is a low-interest Diocese loan. We must fund the third amount, $35,000. If, however we can raise this internally, we're not obligated to take the loan.

Other grant sources are also being researched. Below are actions and ideas discussed.

—Donors. Fr. Gabriel and Becky have met to consider potential donors. Char wishes to help with this effort.

—Campaigns. Beyond Stewardship funding, there may be a separate steeple initiative. We must be clear; any donated steeple funds are separate. A letter to high-value potential donors will be signed by Fr. Gabriel, Char, John and Rick.

—Marketing. Char suggested that we have "Support the Steeple" flyers available during the July 4th village parade.

—Community Outreach. The steeple is a village identifier; we could create a Pink Sheet ad including a QR code.

—Recognition. Hayley suggested that having donors see their names on a plaque could make for a nice opportunity.

—Participation. James recommended that we consider involving people whom we think might enjoy participating.

—Ceremony. A public event to bless the newly repaired steeple is planned.

—Next Steps. Char proposed that those involved meet to compose a letter regarding this funding opportunity. James offered to work with a list of funding leads outside the Diocese based on a list Char provided to Brian.

Report, Treasurer, Rick Hamilton

Shortfall. Funds are low in May, about $15,000 — $16,000 this month.

The St. Christopher Fund. This balance with Key Bank is between $3 and $3.5 million.

UBS. This fund has a balance of approximately $550,000.

Vanguard. In this fund, dedicated to our organization, there is $325,000 — $350,000.

Cash Flow. After a cash flow meeting last week, around $30,000 will be moved from the UBS account to the main checking account to cover the air conditioner payment and the anticipated May shortfall. [The money market savings account will be depleted by this.]

Rector's Discretionary Account. This fund with about $3,000 will be closed. The money will be moved into the operating account as a separate line item. Fr. Gabriel will still be able to submit his expense receipts. Reconciliation will be simplified, and recipients' privacy will be maintained.

Report, Ron Lee, Event Planning

Picnic. Ron hopes for favorable weather and a balance of side dishes. Sign-up sheets will be placed on the bulletin board.

Event Planning Efforts. James will help with event planning, replacing Bruce. Ron expressed his appreciation.

Digital Media. We need a new committee to foster growth through the use of digital tools. John will look into this.

Upcoming Dates

—May 31, Pentecost Picnic

—June 21, Vestry Meeting

—September 8, Celebration of New Ministry. We should open the rectory afterward and perhaps have some music soloists during a reception to which the Gates Mills community should be invited.

Closings

Vestry expressed appreciation to John and Nancy for their gracious hospitality.

Fr. Gabriel led a collect as we concluded our meeting.

Moved: Adjourn the meeting, Hayley; Second, Linda > Carried

The meeting ended at approximately 1:40 p.m. Respectfully submitted, Linda Sylor, Vestry Clerk