Vestry Meeting Minutes, St. Christoper By-the-River, June 21, 2026 (R1)

Attendance. *Present:* Rev. Gabriel Lawrence, Charlene Currutt, James Gallagher, Dr. John Irwin, Linda Sylor, Kitty Thomas, Brian Wright *Absent*: Hayley Kosmatka, Rick Hamilton, Ron Lee *Guests.* Centennial Committee: Laura Cotton, Judy Holmes, Leslie Marting, Allison Wolf; History Research*:* Eric Sylor

Openings

Prayer and Welcome. The Vestry meeting began at 11:40 a.m. Fr. Gabriel shared a collect with us.

Minutes, May 9, 2026. ***Moved: Approve the April minutes as submitted, Rick; Second, Brian > Carried***

Centennial Committee Updates and Discussion

Planning, Saint Christopher's Day Events, July 24-25, 2027. The main celebrations will be held on Saturday and Sunday. We want to have "Save the Date" flyers ready before July 4, 2026.

Gala Event, Saturday, July 24. Ideas for a combined free reception followed by a ticketed luncheon were revised due to concerns about cost exclusivity. Instead, we want to hold a more modest, ticketed gala buffet-style dinner at the Hunt Club — with a cash bar and high-top tables. $85-$100 per person is the estimated cost for perhaps 150-200 people. Fr. Gabriel has offered to provide floral arrangements. Entertainment provided by area musicians is preferred rather than a keynote speaker. We would comp rectors who attend; others would be self-pay. We could issue a general invitation to all our members — and people in Gates Mills. Note: The Hunt Club is booked for 7/24/27. It was suggested that we also consider the Gates Mills Community Center as a lower cost venue. [The facility fee would likely be waived.] This event could be open to the community.

Funding. Absent budgeted funds, the event will have to be ticketed, or funding sourced. A benefactor could help reduce the meal cost, perhaps to $25/person. We could also make the event a fundraiser with three donor tiers; $100, $500 or $1000. This could also help to fund the Sunday champagne reception discussed — and possibly other Centennial activities. [Char expects that steeple funding efforts will conclude in July, freeing us to focus on the gala.] Fr. Gabriel believes we can successfully raise some funds. We'll get dates into the Pink Sheet. Separating the Saturday gala event and the Sunday reception could help support solicitations.

Volunteers. More help will likely be needed, along with possible financial help through the vestry.

Community. These events could bring new people to our parish; families, couples — and area residents.

Hunt Club Reservation. If we do hold the venue there, we should confirm and provide a guest number soon.

Proposal. The committee must create a proposal with costs by July 12, then present this to the Vestry on July 19.

Publicity. Fr. Gabriel has discussed a centennial "Save the Centennial Date" flyer and literature for the July 4th parade day with Mary. He noted that Sunday service attendance has increased; some people aren't Gates Mills residents or east siders. We also want to have "Save the Date" magnets ready soon.

Service and Reception, July 25. The Bishop would join our single 10:15 a.m. service that could include baptisms and confirmations — and conclude with a champagne reception, perhaps on the lawn, using white chairs loaned from the Village. Yuri is planning special music to play. [For that, perhaps we gather inside instead?]

Other Potential Centennial Programming Opportunities

Concert, Yuri. She would like to perform in early 2027, perhaps along with a Historical Society member.

Concert, Carillon. This is also a possibility.

Ceremonies, Gates Mills Cemeteries, Nov. 1 & 2. [North, near Sherman — and South, just south of Old Mill Road]

Photo Exhibit. We could display photos of our parish weddings — and possibly interest some new members.

Reports, Priest-in-Charge, Rev. Gabriel Lawrence [And Other Contributors]

Trinity Sunday. This one service concluded our formal program year. Seven new members were welcomed into to the parish. Two wonderful guest musicians performed.

Pentecost Picnic. This successful event was well attended and appreciated.

Attendance. Total attendance for both services on May 9 was 65.

Contemplative Prayer. 16 people attended the session led by Deacon Lydia last week.

Pride Parade. Fr. Gabriel and many other area Episcopalians marched in the June 6th parade in Cleveland.

"Getting to Know You" Time. Fr. Gabriel continues joining parishioners during lunch and dinner meetings.

July 4th 2026 Plans. Char & John will handle the cotton candy machine, covered by a tent — and with a banner. Patterson's Fruit Farm is donating red, white and blue cones. James offered to help distribute cotton candy. John will reach out to Debbie Cole. Candy will be ordered from Amazon. Informational cards with church school dates will be given to children to share with their parents. The church doors will be kept open for visitors. Laura can help us procure a float.

Report, Senior Warden, Dr. John Irwin

John suggested that we pull together a float about the church for next year's parade. Laura may be able to help us procure one. Also, Kitty knows a few carpenters.

Report, Junior Warden, Charlene Currutt

Steeple Donations. Someone who read the Pink Sheet spoke with Char, after which we received a $5k donation from someone in the Gates Mills community.
Downspout. One blew away; the Gutter Guys can scope the repair. Mitch is coming this week to clean the gutters.
Guild Room A/C Replacement. The installation is complete, handled by Burton Sheet Metal.

Report, Treasurer, Rick Hamilton

Revenues. Year to date [YTD] community support is slightly above plan, with $101K received, 45% of the expected amount for 2026. Stronger pledge receipts, special gifts and Easter giving are driving the better than expected performance. Investment draws are slightly below target, but will be at target when the June St. Christopher fund disbursement is recorded.

Expenses. Overall, we are on plan; net revenue YTD is $6K. Personnel expense YTD is 38% of the budgeted amount, compared with 42% expected as of May month end. Property expenses are running ahead of plan; 59% of the budget is used. [Property maintenance, gas expense, water/sewer and property taxes.] Restricted expenses of $2.8K reflect the purchase of choir handbells funded by a parishioner's donation. This will be reclassified under program expenses in June.

Balance Sheet. Total assets were $4.0M as of May month end. Cash in the bank and investments totaled $86K. Unrestricted funds totaled $546K.

Committee Audit. The Vestry is being asked to approve the committee audit conducted in March 2026. The document provided contains the notes the committee prepared [yellow font] and the summary [blue font], prepared for the Diocese. While the detailed notes provide useful color, the Diocese will likely benefit from a more concise summary. The yellow notes will be removed from the document prior to submission.

Moved, Approve the Audit; Linda > Second, Brian > Carried

Expense Approval Policy. The Vestry is asked to review, amend as needed and approve the draft expense approval policy. The policy lists the procedures to be followed when authorizing expenses and disbursing funds. This policy will address the issue noted in the 2025 Committee Audit.

Moved, Approve the Expense Approval Policy; John > Second, Char > Carried

Diocesan Assessment. Pursuant to the proposed Expense Approval Policy, the committee is asked to review and approve the monthly Diocesan assessment. The form attachment contains YTD assessment amounts. ***Moved, Approve the Expense Approval Policy; John > Second, Char > Carried***

Report, Event Planning, Ron Lee

Fr. Gabriel reported that on behalf of Ron, that the Pentecost picnic was well-attended and went very well.

Discussion/New Business/Follow Up

Growth Committee. There is no follow-up to date.
Vault Purchase. James will try to source the vault at Home Depot; we have tax-exempt status with them. The cost should include delivery. John has a strong dolly, and there is also one in the rectory garage.

Upcoming Dates, Rev. Gabriel Lawrence

September 8, Celebration of New Ministry. There will be one service. Yuri will source an oboist and a soprano singer. Char suggested that we open the rectory for tours, and that Vestry sponsor a coffee hour "reception" with food on the back patio under a tent. A table could also be brought over. Perhaps Ron can help with planning; we'll discuss this at our July meeting.
Steeple Work Recognition. Char suggests that we make a formal thank you to donors. The parish could also appropriately sing "Lift High the Cross". Fr. Gabriel suggested that we have someone get into a bucket truck and give a steeple blessing. He would like to invite community members and parishioners that have given toward this project to speak, making for a nice community event.
Closing Prayer. Fr. Gabriel led a prayer to conclude our meeting. After a motion was made and approved, the meeting ended at 1:15 p.m. Respectfully submitted, Linda Sylor, Clerk and Vestry Member