Draft, Vestry Meeting Minutes, St. Christopher by the River Episcopal Church, August 16, 2026

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 *Guest:* Becky Everett

Openings

Prayer and Welcome. The meeting began at 11:30 a.m. Fr. Gabriel shared a collect with us.

Minutes, July 19, 2026. ***Moved: Approve the July minutes as submitted, John; Second, Ron > Carried***

Report, Priest-in-Charge, Rev. Gabriel Lawrence

—Baptisms. Two people have recently been baptized.

—New Members. Three new members have transferred their membership to us in the last month; five households have joined since February. 1. Additional families are attending regularly. A welcoming service will be planned.

—Fall Adult Forums. Program development has begun. The first of six sessions well be held on September 20 to discern our parish values and purposes. Reed Stith will co-facilitate the discussions. Following these, Vestry will conduct strategic planning during the October or November meeting.

—Liturgical Volunteers. A call will be made for members to serve as ushers, lectors, eucharistic ministers — and in other roles. Ministry representatives will be available on Rally Sunday to engage interested parishioners. Fr. Gabriel will conduct ad hoc training sessions based upon the number of volunteers. A broader review may be planned in the coming months. [On Sunday, August 23, James will describe the work of a Eucharistic minister to the congregation.]

—Planning. Fr. Gabriel plans to develop a multi-year strategic plan. Rick will develop a multi-year financial estimate.

—Kids' Corner. Two pews are set aside for children. Ushers will be notified to direct families there.

—Malachi House. $1,400, the amount from the July 26th collection plate was donated to this organization.

—Out of Office. Fr. Gabriel will be away Sept. 21-27 for a minor medical procedure. Fr. Dan Schoonmaker will serve as supply priest on September 27.

Annual Budget, Rick Hamilton

—2027 Draft. Rick overviewed the budget draft. The finance team [Mary, Patti, Fr. Gabriel] will review it to make sure it's reasonable from an expense perspective. Questions for resolution:

1. Why are personnel expenses less than our plan as of 6/30/2026?
2. How best should we handle the Guild finances? Rick suggests separating them out as a "below the line" item so both revenue and expenses are separate from the operating expense costs of the church.
3. How much do we want to fund the Rector's Discretionary fund? [It is at $3,800 as of 6/30, and estimated $4K/year.]
4. How will we handle depreciation expenses?

—Slight Budget Increase. After discussion, Vestry agreed to increase the annual budget by $10,000, taking the 2027 target to $195,000, a 5.4% increase. This is necessary to cover past cost-of-living raises, new pension payments — and to support staffing growth and programming development. Rick will discuss the increase at an upcoming service, noting the changes in expenses over the years, and describing our strategy for supporting the church with a combination of community support, grants and investment income.

Moved, increase the stewardship campaign goal by $10k, John; Second, Haley > Carried

—Stewardship Process. Going forward, the Vestry, the Treasurer and Fr. Gabriel will present the annual campaign goal and recommendations to the Annual Giving Committee for the campaign.

—Budget Timing. Rick noted that we must finalize the budget for the 2028 Annual Giving campaign by June 2027.

Senior Warden's Report, Dr. John Irwin

A $15,000 gift has been received from the Figgie Foundation.

Junior Warden's Report, Charlene Currutt

—Updates, Steeple Work. The steeple restoration is well underway; fencing has been removed and repairs are progressing. Photos have been sent by our contractor Frost to document progress. They will match the existing white paint. Work completion is targeted prior to the "Blessing of the Hounds" in early October. We will share a printed historical update about the project on Rally Sunday. Payment for the steeple will need to be made between mid-September and early October.

—Gifts and Assets, Steeple. The $15,000 donation from the Figgie Foundation will be allocated to the steeple project. A thank-you letter from the vestry will be sent. A parishioner made a donation of 500 sealed silver coins [estimated value ~$34,000-$40,000. The vault for these types of valuables has been purchased and will be installed in the Sacristy. To date, we have raised about $60k of the needed steeple funds. Rick and Patti will estimate how much cash we need to pull over from the UBS account to make the steeple payments, this since the coin donation is non-cash at this time — and may take time to convert to cash if the Vestry elects to do so.

—Bug Deterrence. A soft yellow bug-resistant bulb will be installed at the front entrance of the church.

Treasurer's Report, Rick Hamilton

—Diocesan Assessment. The amount of $5,000 has been paid.

—Financials. Year-to-date income is negative with a typically expected summer dip. Expenses are on track, though plant, property, and equipment costs are greater than budget. Cash planning is needed so we can pay vendors.

—Investments. Investment income for next year is projected to be about $58,000 higher than the $26,000 initially expected, this due to strong market returns.

*We have approximately $525,000 in unrestricted investments at UBS. The main investment assets total about $3.7 million; these are expected to grow to about $4.2 million with the establishment of a new Fund C.

*New Funds. A new St. Christopher Fund C worth about $700,000 will be established this year, generating $25,000 to $30,000 in revenue annually. Use is restricted to expenses for our physical plant, property and equipment. The group also discussed the Ann Feller Fund, a $100,000 unrestricted fund.

—Income YTD. Outside of the steeple project and outreach, income is about $9k negative. Higher expenses are due to increased costs for property maintenance. Parish giving is fairly well on track. Rick will work w/Charlie Marston to determine the funding sources for these increases.

—Steeple Property, Plant and Equipment [PP&E] Costs. Rick shared the expected funding from St. Chris Fund C and its anticipated $25-$35K of annual income to support the church's PP&E maintenance.

—St. Chris Fund Payouts. He also noted that for 2026, payouts will be about $2K higher than projected.

Event Planning, Ron Lee

—Celebration of New Ministry, Reception. A reception with the Bishop will be held, possibly outdoors under a tent in the rectory backyard set up by Luis, or in the Guild Room as a weather backup. We will plan for 100 people. A cake will be ordered with the inscription "Blessed are We." Parking options at the Hunt Club are being explored.

—Rally Sunday, Sept. 13. Sandwiches from Costco and cake will be served.

—Clambake, Oct. 17. To date, Rich Radis has not responded. Catering seems to be the best option, with pre-paid reservations. Food costs are needed ASAP. ***AI: John Irwin will ask Nancy if she will coordinate this event.***

Items for Discussion/New Business/Follow Up

—Growth Committee. Brian, James and John will meet to coordinate events on Facebook other social media platforms. They should have an update for the September vestry meeting.

—Buckeye Trail, TrailFest. [In Southern Ohio]. Hayley presented an opportunity for a potential partnership with the *Buckeye Trail Association.* We could provide water for hikers during an April "Trail Day" — and become a business member. We will revisit this at our January Vestry meeting. The group aims to replicate the successful Fourth of July community engagement for the Christmas season, promoting services like Lessons and Carols and Christmas Eve on social media. James wondered how best to engage people around the holidays.

Upcoming Dates, Rev. Gabriel Lawrence

—Celebration of New Ministry, September 8, 6:00 p.m. The service will include a baptism.

—Vestry Meeting. We will meet on September 20.

Closing Prayer, Rev. Gabriel Lawrence

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