

**Minutes of the
178th Annual Meeting
of Christ Church of the City of Detroit**

January 28, 2024
Ledyard Hall and Zoom

DRAFT

Opening: The Rev. Emily Williams Guffey called the meeting to order at 12:15 with the following Opening Prayer, accompanied by slides and photos from the year:

Holy and gracious God, may your Holy Spirit preside over us now in all our hopes, concerns, and deliberations for the mission and welfare of Christ Church Detroit.

We thank you for every blessing of this past year, especially for your steadfast presence and inspiration throughout changes and challenges.

We praise you for all of your servants who have labored and worshiped among us, especially for those who have departed this life since we last met together, including Salma Dib (January 28, 2023), Art Shahly (February 2), George Pamerleau (May 13), Marie Abdalla (July 27), Gayle Ash (October 30), Yvonne Rodgers (November 21), Christine Rogers (November 28), Elsie Peck (December 12), Jacqueline Gazoul (January 11, 2024), and those we now name.

Help us to dedicate ourselves to you and to your kingdom through our offerings of time, talent, and treasures.

Guide us in the choice of vestry members and delegates, and may they discharge their duties faithfully.

Together, may we go from strength to strength in the year before us.

All this and more we ask through your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Welcome: Senior Warden Ruth Boeder welcomed all those attending, whether in person or via Zoom, confirmed that a quorum was present, and asked for the confirmation of the proposed agenda. The agenda was duly moved, seconded, and approved. It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the 177th Annual Meeting, held January 29, 2023. Approved by a voice vote.

Reports from Committees: Rev. Emily noted that the usual “booklet” of committee reports will be distributed later. [The 2024 Annual Report was subsequently provided the following Sunday, February 4, 2024.] Boeder asked the congregation to read the **Wardens’ and Vestry report**, which was available as were the 2023 budget and actual 2023 financial results. The proposed 2024 budget was under review. Select other Committee reports were presented verbally, as follows.

Committee member Josephine Powell presented the **Outreach Report** in the absence of Chair Seth Lloyd, who was travelling. She highlighted three ongoing Outreach initiatives and the people who made them happen:

- Those working with the Afghan family, by getting them to doctor and dentist visits, and more;
- Volunteers at Gleaners;

- Our annual Advent diaper drive, led by Eileen MacDonald and Sally LePla, which once again surpassed its goal. The goal was 18,000, and we collected 19,015 diapers, plus 576 wipes and 35 cans of infant formula, equal to 2,415 baby bottles.

Powell then spoke of one new program, and two being considered:

- Packing bag lunches on Sundays, when other organizations do not provide food to those in need. We've done that monthly for the past few months, and in February will begin offering the lunches weekly. She urged congregants to please sign up to help, saying the program needs about 10 people each week to plan, shop, make sandwiches, pack the lunches, and pass them out.
- A subcommittee is looking into an afterschool music-instruction program for children. It is at the stage of looking at existing such programs to make sure we don't duplicate the work of another program.
- Cass Community Services has ended the rotating shelter program that Christ Church supported for decades, first by providing a temporary shelter for a week each year and then, during the pandemic, by providing food for those sheltered elsewhere. We have been in contact with Cass to see when or if the program might return, and how we might be of assistance as it looks for new ways to serve Detroit's homeless population.

Roger Maki-Schramm presented the **Buildings & Grounds Report**, prepared by Chair Terry Lloyd, who was absent due to travels. He listed and thanked the committee members, then listed the projects the committee took on during 2023. Here is a partial listing:

- Sibley House has many needs, so we had to prioritize them. It still needs a new two-story back porch, repairs to front porch, repairs to roof, and further work on the storm windows. Roger and Ed Maki-Schramm removed three of the most worrisome windows, took them out for repairs, and reinstalled them. Sibley also received a new furnace.
- The replacement of our sanctuary tiles isn't quite finished. After issues with our initial contractor, we are seeking bids with new contractors for work that will include removing some front pews to create more space – for ease of access around the piano and to improve the layout for concerts and such – and cutting out more spaces for wheelchairs.
- Many of our stained-glass windows need repairs. We are seeking bids.
- A new subcommittee was formed to tackle safety improvements. It is submitting a separate report.
- We did some work to address water seepage in the balcony where the bell choir plays.
- An energy audit is being sought.
- Our security cameras needed to be repaired. Desmond Jones and Barry Dickson fixed them.
- Our United States flag was frayed. The committee replaced it and the Episcopal flag with new ones, and added a Pride flag. Chuck Atwater arranged an honor guard of veterans to dedicate the new flags.
- The electronic sign in front was struck in a vehicle accident. It was taken out and repaired, but the new one didn't initially fit. Barry Dickson worked on it and got it turned on again.

There are several such examples of volunteers stepping up. With former Facilities Manager KaClarence Haynes' departure for a full-time job elsewhere, many tasks have been covered by volunteers and some spot contractors. Many thanks to those who helped. On that note, Boeder invited anyone interested to join the committee.

Finance Committee Chair Jane Forbes presented the **Financial Report**. Generally, she said, 2023 was quite a good year for CCD financially, though we face some challenges for 2024.

- We have been in the red for several years. The 2023 deficit of just under \$103,000 was considerably better than the gap of just under \$135,000 that had been budgeted. Once again, the shortfall was covered by drawing down our investments.

- The 2024 budget, though, has an unacceptably large deficit, and we will be working on that. The deficit arises in part because a lower amount has been pledged for 2024. If anyone still plans to make a pledge, Forbes said, please turn it in.
- She also noted the increased revenue from Candlelight Concerts: those produced about \$9,000 in revenue in 2023, and we are budgeting for \$30,000 in revenue from those in 2024.
- One area of concern is the lack of net revenue (minus property taxes) from our parking lot. Payment for lot use collapsed during the pandemic, and even now, fewer people are working downtown than before. On the other hand, there were some bright spots: We saw some revenue from the Grand Prix related to the use of our parking lot and that we gain from parking for the Candlelight Concerts.
- We discovered in 2023 that we had inadvertently underpaid some staff benefits in 2022. Sorting that out was difficult. But working with both the diocese and the national church, these items were eventually cleaned up.
- We face some big increases in expenses, notably a big hike in insurance premiums. That is true nationwide, in part due to an increase in natural disasters and in the cost of repairs after those natural disasters.
- We should receive a review of our financial statements this week, Forbes said, and a full audit of our 2021 and 2022 statements, probably in the second quarter.
- Another plus was that our investments with the diocesan-managed Growth and Income Fund did very well this year, providing strong dividends. The gains meant that our investments rose nearly \$50,000, despite our withdrawals during the year. We have three true endowments in the legal sense of the term. These are permanently established funds, with restrictions on how much we can use each year. We also have unrestricted funds (not officially part of the “endowment”), which generally were the result of bequests. Those funds have been extremely important to Christ Church, as that money has been used to cover our deficits. But our investments won’t last many more years if these levels of deficits, and withdrawals, continue. That’s one of several concerns the committee needs to address.

The church has invested some funds received for the Capital Campaign in certificates of deposit, in order to generate returns on those funds until such time as we need to spend the money. There are ways we’ll look to save costs in 2024, often by tapping volunteers. Forbes closed her presentation by asking the congregation to please be willing to help. She then opened the discussion for Q&A.

Q. Don’t we have a restricted fund for stained glass?

A. Yes. Margaret Hammond established that fund. Up to now, we’ve mostly been reinvesting that income, so the total is up to about \$160K. It’s the sort of fund that some years we spend very little or almost nothing, but when we do spend it, we spend large amounts.

Rev. Emily paused to recognize those, including Desmond Jones and newly hired Parish Administrator Kim Monts, who were helping on the technical side, thus making this hybrid in-person/Zoom meeting possible.

Rev. Emily then offered her **Recognition of Vestry**, singling out each member individually, and thanking them for the unique gifts they brought to Vestry and the contributions they had made. Listed by the year in which they will rotate off from Vestry, they included the following.

2026: *Paul Abdullah, Assistant Treasurer; Mary Brown, Junior Warden for pastoral care; Mary Herring, Secretary; and Hope Hoffman.*

2025: *Claire Brown; David Jackson; Caroline Widak; and Stephanie Wren, former Secretary—resigned when she moved on to another congregation.*

2024: *Ruth Boeder, Senior Warden; John Leney, Senior Warden Emeritus; Anthony Mitchell; and Josephine Powell.*

In addition, Rev. Emily offered special recognition to: Howard Matthew, who continued as Treasurer even after rotating off Vestry; Jane Forbes, Finance chair and treasurer of the Capital Campaign; Terry Lloyd, Buildings and Grounds chair; Seth Lloyd, Outreach chair and, with Lisa Jones, co-chair of the Capital Campaign.

For the **Election of New Vestry Members**, Ruth Boeder introduced a slate of candidates comprised of *Sonia Charron-Jones, Jennifer Collard, Bobbi Gaspar, and Jim Treece* for the class of 2027, and *Taylor Matthew* to complete an unexpired term in the class of 2025. A motion was made and duly seconded (by Megan Norris) to elect those candidates as a group. Approved.

For the **Election of Delegates to Diocesan Convention**, Rev. Emily said that *Ruth Boeder, Anthony Mitchell, Jim Treece, and Paul Abdullah* as an alternate had agreed to serve. It was duly moved, seconded, and approved to name those individuals as Christ Church Detroit's delegates.

Boeder then entertained **Other Business and Questions**. Josephine Powell said, "I feel remiss for not holding up those who've working on the lunch-bag program," and asked those who have helped to stand and be recognized. They received a round of applause.

A parishioner asked if there was any update on the proposed I-375 construction. Boeder replied, "Sort of yes, sort of no." She has been attending those meetings. There were lots of comments from the broader community regarding how wide the boulevard is to be. Many felt that, because its planned width is based on a pre-pandemic traffic study, it is wider than necessary, which will make it difficult for pedestrians to cross. MDOT has conducted another study, to see what post-pandemic traffic volumes look like. Results of that study are due soon. Separately, some Christ Church folks had a meeting with MDOT about how this project might affect us. They currently plan to begin construction at the waterfront and move towards Eastern Market, so that we will be one of the first areas to be impacted. They hope to start construction after Grand Prix 2025. Specifically, we are worried about the great North window being damaged by vibrations during construction. We are trying to plan for that. Hope Hoffman is leading a group looking at this, including looking for grants to protect our stained-glass windows. (*Crain's Detroit Business* reported that Kresge made a grant to the Downtown Detroit Partnership for I-375 planning.) If you are interested, please contact Hope.

Parishioner Marguerite Carlton said that she was on Zoom for the start of the meeting, and the sound was perfect. She expressed her thanks to the technical folks.

Parishioner Kevin Maher called for a round of applause for "our beloved rector." Rev. Emily received an enthusiastic standing ovation.

Boeder asked for a motion to adjourn. So moved, seconded, and approved. Rev. Emily led the congregation in the following **Closing Prayer & Dismissal** at 1:20.

*Almighty and ever-living God, Source of all wisdom and understanding,
be present with those who take counsel for the renewal and mission of your Church.
Teach us in all things to seek first your honor and glory.
Guide us to perceive what is right, and grant us both the courage to pursue it
and the grace to accomplish it; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Treece