

The Vestry was called to order at 7:00 pm, once a quorum (2/3) was present.

**Attendance**

Nicholas Morris-Kliment (Rector)	X	Dusty Hecker (Warden)	X	Brian Mukherjee (Warden)	X	Vacant (Treasurer)	
Duncan Allen	X (zoom)	Jim Black	X (zoom)	Bob Begin	X	David Carnahan (Clerk)	
John Carr	X	Bob Keener	X (zoom)	Ingrid Melvin	X (zoom)	Ginny Yerardi	X
Annie Russell	X (zoom)	Alyssa Kence	X	Joe Sweeney		Christina O'Connell	X
Cecile Leroy							

**Opening Prayers** - Evening Prayer from the Book of Common Prayer was lead by Alyssa Kence.

**Nick's notes:**

Nick highlighted Stewardship and encouraged everyone to make their commitments for 2022.

There is a request for coffee hour hospitality for two dates in December, the 5th and 19th. Ginny, Christina, Brian volunteered to help.

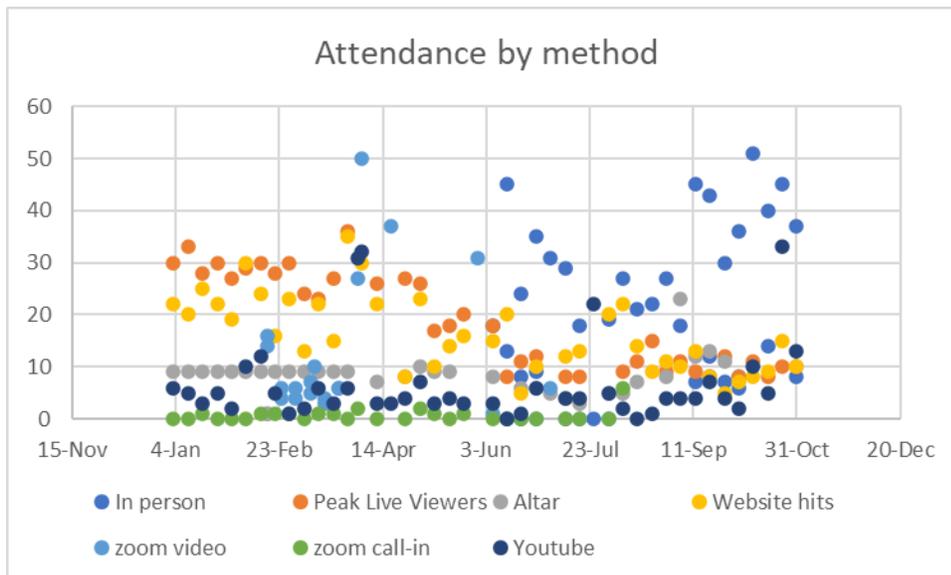
Vestry nominations for one clerk (1yr) one warden, two deanery representatives and 4 vestry members are sought for next year. Brian Mukherjee would like to see a female warden.

Leaving the Vestry are Bob Begin, Bob Keener, Ingrid Melvin, and Annie Russell. Brian Mukherjee is rotating off as Warden. David is ready to step aside as Clerk.

The Interfaith Clergy Association is looking for us to record some snippets for the Thanksgiving service.

Brian asked about a potential supply priest Brock Baker, who will come to present to us while Nick is away on sabbatical. Nick would be gone for three months beginning in May. There would be a June Vestry meeting, and then Nick would be returning in August.. Nick recognized that it has been a while since a Rector took a sabbatical here at this church, but it is an opportunity for both the church and Rector. The supply priest would finish up the program year of 2 services, then transition to the tradition one service at 9am.

**Attendance**



In person attendance has increased since September, while other modes have dropped to a steady level.

## Motions

Three motions were presented.

There is a proposed project at the rectory at 19 Homestead Park, and there is a need to fund an architect and engineer for this project. The kitchen is in need of refitting and there is a need to open up the back to increase the entertaining space and provide an extra bath. The property needs a new survey, as the last was in 1957 when it was built. A motion was made to fund that activity:

*The Vestry authorizes a draw of \$8,320 from the 'Four Points' Property Improvements Fund (80304) to be transferred to the church's checking account, and to be tracked as a separate 'Rectory Improvements' line item. Spending authority over this line item will lie with the Property Committee, with the understandings that: a) no expenses not associated with the planning of, or preparation for, improvements to the rectory will be charged to it, and b) no disbursements that would result in the balance of this line item falling below zero will be made. The Property and Finance Committees of Christ Church expect that this amount will cover preparation of preliminary architectural plans and associated surveying and base plan activity, with an adequate contingency. Motion passed*

Duncan, our Assistant Treasurer, offered two more motions, after reviewing the bylaws, which state that the Vestry needs to affirm the following:

1. *The Vestry affirms that until such time as a Treasurer is elected and takes office the Wardens are delegated to execute checks or other such instruments as are necessary and proper. Motion passed.*
2. *The Vestry affirms that until such time as a Treasurer is elected and takes office, or until his leaving the office of Assistant Treasurer, Duncan Allen as Assistant Treasurer is assigned to receive and disburse monies collected under authority of the Vestry. Motion passed.*

## Assesment

See Appendix B. Steve Matthews is a consultant working with faith groups. He works to get churches reinvolved with their communities. He interpreted the Church Vitality Assessment survey for us. It describes the perceived state of the church by those who took it. He asked the Vestry what surprises we had. Brian said that most answers fell into a moderate vitality level and asked if that was typical. Steve said no, there is typically more variability. He said that most responses were slightly above the mean, indicating that we are in fair health. The report has 'users' with 21 people responding. Everyone could take this, and have a forum to discuss the results. 95% of the folks that have taken this evaluation are Episcopalian. He noted that when there is a church in a rich area, where do we go for mission? Ingrid responded that we have mission work in town (Community Council), in Boston (Manna), and in Haiti (Lazille). He asked what does poverty look like in Needham? He found that it was troublesome getting to meet new Christians and engage in new interpersonal relationships. He is a fan of small initiatives, shorter than 90 days. We have a large cadre of young people (<36yo) nearby, but they do not join churches, but do volunteer. Inviting them to participate in the service life of the church may be useful. Dusty asked what kinds of projects engaged young families in similar towns? Steve responded that there are no perfect answers, but whatever we do should foster relationships. He presented two books that are good references:

1. Humble Inquiry: The Gentle Art of Asking Instead of Telling
2. Having Nothing, Possessing Everything: Finding Abundant Communities in Unexpected Places

He also wanted us to identify a vision that the church cannot accomplish alone, but who can we work with to achieve that goal? He also asked about our renters, how could we be their partners?

Date: November 16, 2021

Nick noted that our location does get a little foot traffic, but we do need new ways to grow. Ingrid remarked that 22 folks sounds like not enough to get a representative study, Nick responded that he sent it to folks that were engaged in the life of the church. It begs the question, however, what is the energy level of folks if they were selected at random?

Duncan said that many of the associations that we give to in the community concerns budget are in Needham, and we should occasionally attend their meetings to learn more about their work. Christina noted that the comment about millennials not joining was surprising to her, as she thought that Church School was the one area where she saw them actively interested in church life.

### **Retreat**

Traditionally we have a Vestry retreat, but with Covid 19, we have foregone that weekend. Instead, we are looking to hold a service project instead. We will accept ideas at the next meeting. Nick said that the traditional retreat was also important for goal setting, as well as relationship building; it was not an either or proposition.

### **Parking Lot/Other Business**

none

### **Prayer and Adjourn (9:00)**

### **Dates**

Sunday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, Annual Appeal Ingathering  
Sunday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, Advent Evensong 4pm  
Tuesday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, Vestry, 7pm  
An outdoor pageant will be organized for Christmas.

Minutes taken by David L. Carnahan, Clerk of the Vestry



November 16, 2021

### **Appendix A: Rector's report**

#### *Ministry with Children, Youth, and Family*

CCN senior high schoolers Katie Lysaght and Kathryn Mukherjee have gathered kids twice now and are homing in on some group activities. The Confirmation Class of eight has met once and got off to a very good start. You will be seeing them helping with worship shortly if you haven't already. Church School is aiming to regather in person in Epiphany, 2022. We are working on the details.

I have put together a draft job description for a part-time, paid position to revive and support our offerings for kids aged K to 7th grade (or thereabouts). To get feedback, I have shared the draft with our teachers, as well as people at the Diocese who have access to potential applicants. There is much talk around the Church these days about sharing positions between/among parishes—which is to say, part-time jobs at two churches could be combined into one position to make something closer to a full-time position, which is more attractive. This may be a possibility with us. In terms of financing this job, I am examining the expected savings to be achieved from combining the music director and organist positions.

### *Worship*

Over 30 people of all ages came to the 3rd Annual Advent tree lighting, to enjoy some singing, some praying, some hot chocolate. We ushered in the season where we pay particular attention to our yearning for wholeness and healing, to the ways God calls us to live into our work loving our neighbor, and to remember afresh God's love for us in the coming again of Jesus. It was delightful.

### *Stewardship*

As of Friday November 12, we have received 22 EOGs totaling \$62,455 for 2022. Last year, we gratefully received the generosity of 110 households who turned in EOGs totaling \$339,910 for 2021. Vestry is encouraged to turn in their EOGs as soon as they can. It is great to be able to know that our entire leadership team has committed a portion of their financial blessing to support the mission of the parish. The ingathering and public end of the campaign is December 5th. Thank you for your generosity.

### *Sabbatical*

Following up on this topic from last month, I have begun meeting with a clergy coach to help me plan a sabbatical that will refresh both my ministry and the parish's sense of itself as ministers. I have also begun to convene a team from the parish to shape this time away as well. Some of the work we did in setting up a "responsibility grid" for the original sabbatical will still be useful. A sabbatical replacement priest is in the works.

### *Hospitality*

The Vestry has been invited to host coffee hour on December 5 (Ingathering Sunday) and December 19. Two or three people are needed to offer this extension of the Eucharistic table. Volunteers will need to connect with Debby Rempis at [dtr4430@gmail.com](mailto:dtr4430@gmail.com)

### *Elections*

Our Annual Meeting is February 6, 2022. We are looking for four successors to the Vestry class of 2022 (Bob Begin, Bob Keener, Ingrid Melvin, and Annie Russell—three-year terms) and one Warden (Brian Mukherjee- 2-year term), one Clerk (David Carnahan) as well as two Deanery (vacant) and Diocesan Convention delegates (current delegates are eligible for re-election). Outgoing members are encouraged to recruit their replacements but all of us are responsible for our self-government. In essence, outgoing members function as an Election Committee. With all deliberate speed, we aim to have nominees in place by December 6.

### *Discerning and Planning for the Future*

Thank you for filling out the Congregational Vitality Assessment, a data-driven instrument sponsored by Faith X and the Episcopal Church Foundation. The link to the initial narrative assessment is in the email that brought you this report, the agenda, etc. Steve Matthews <https://faithx.net/what-is-the-faithx-project/our-team/steve-matthews/> will lead us through an initial interpretation of this report. In addition to what is presented in the brief bio above, he has worked with our Cathedral in shaping their mission strategy. He will give us some ideas as to how we might act to discern where God is calling us to go next.

In this Sunday's Gospel (Mark 13.1-8, for November 14, 2021) Jesus tells his disciples, who are marveling at the glory of the Jerusalem Temple, that "all will be thrown down." On the one hand this feels daunting and a bit discouraging, if applied to our situation in the contemporary church. The mid- 20th

century edifice of mainline institutional Christianity is crumbling in the 21st century. We are feeling the effects here at Christ Church.

But then Jesus goes on to say that “this is but the beginning of the birth pangs.” I have no first-hand experience of giving birth other than to watch my children be born. It sure looked painful. My wife was in labor for 30 hours for our first child...talk about birth pangs. And our previous lives came tumbling down, sometimes grievously so.

And yet...! Amazing, messy, powerful, joyful, transformative, new life came into being and continues to. We are called in the same direction here at Christ Church. We are all helpers in this birthing process, with the Holy Spirit as the midwife. We pray for the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen us as we labor alongside of her. It is challenging and important work. Thank you for joining in this holy and life-giving process. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, she is a new creature: old things are passing away; behold, all things are becoming new. (2 Corinthians 5.17)

I am grateful to be your Rector.

Faithfully and respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick" followed by a cross symbol (+).

The Rev. Nick Morris-Kliment

November 16, 2021

Appendix B Assessment results

Section	Score	Users
<b>I. VISION, MISSION, AND DISCERNMENT</b> Well done. Based on your score, it appears that your congregation has made progress toward a clear identity of who you are, where you want to go, and how you want to get there. To become more vital, define core values you can effectively communicate and determine 3-5 God-sized goals with benchmarks and assigned next steps.	Moderate Vitality: 2.23/4	93
<b>II. LAY ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT</b> Based on your score, your congregation appears to have done a decent job of empowering laity to live more fully into their faith commitments. In order to become more vital, consider identifying and equipping a team made up mostly of lay leaders who are charged with recruiting and equipping people to serve in ways that make their hearts sing, matching them with their passion, skill set, and talents. Create and publish a list of all the potential ways one might serve in the congregation and prepare written ministry (job) descriptions for every role, and engage your lay people in refining or even expanding that list informed by what they feel God is calling them to do. Evaluate the ways through which decisions are made with an eye toward greater involvement of lay leaders in decision making, and consider what kinds of decisions currently made by clergy and staff that might be transferred to lay leaders.	Moderate Vitality: 2.3/4	86
<b>III: CONTEXT AWARENESS AND INCLUSION</b> Based on your score, your congregation is likely aware of its responsibility to engage your surrounding community, but has yet to form broad and deep relationships with a sufficient number of people who live there. Broadening and deepening your relationship with your community is your greatest opportunity moving forward. In order to become more vital, ensure that your clergy and lay leaders are taking the time to be seen and known in the community. Empower and encourage all congregation members to be ambassadors to the community, making connections and growing relationships with people and community organizations. Continue being a welcoming place for all, and consider ways you might become even more diverse in ways that reflect the full diversity of your surrounding community.	Moderate Vitality: 2.18/4	85
<b>IV: CHANGE READINESS</b> Based on your score, your congregation appears to have significant hope for the future but still needs work in creating an environment where change is actively welcomed, expected, and embraced. To help become vital, ensure your leaders are practicing calm and presenting a confident presence when change is needed (or suggested). If you haven't already, start experimenting by letting some old things go and starting new, innovative initiatives. Make sure your congregation's communications help people understand why change is being made, how they might be impacted by it, and how embracing it might be valuable to them. Let people know that what you are doing is an experiment that they will be fully participating in rather than a change that is being forced upon them. Ground all communication with grace and compassion and be prepared to offer the kind of pastoral response that will be needed following significant (and sometimes even minor) change.	Moderate Vitality: 2.4/4	84
<b>V. DEALING WITH DIFFERENCES</b>	Moderate Vitality: 2.32/4	82

Based on your score, your congregation appears to understand that conflict and dealing with differences is a natural part of being part of a community. However, chances are that you may have certain dynamics that make it difficult to name or transform any hurt feelings members may cause one another. Odds are your congregation could benefit from developing written ground rules through which norms are named and all members are held to a higher standard of addressing and transforming conflict when it arises. Leaders should ensure they are not perpetuating gossip or permitting bullying to go unaddressed.

**VI. SPIRITUAL LIFE AND WORSHIP** **Moderate Vitality: 2.76/4** **80**

Based on your score, it appears you are doing a decent job engaging your congregation in worship and spiritual development. In order to increase your vitality, consider ways your congregation might engage lay people in planning and leading worship, so those ministries are not just up to the clergy. Consider ways your worship might become more engaging for all ages, even your youngest children and people unfamiliar with your ways of worshipping. Ensure all your meetings don't just open in prayer, but consider adding a short study of your sacred scripture or devotional time.

**VII. FORMATION, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING** **Moderate Vitality: 2.28/4** **76**

Well done. Based on your score, it appears that your congregation has already been wrestling earnestly with the question: What is our congregation proactively doing to encourage our members to grow in their spiritual lives and commitment? In order to increase your vitality, ensure your clergy and lay leaders preach, teach, and demonstrate the importance of prayer and engaging with sacred scripture engagement at home. Develop a system through which all members may discern their spiritual gifts and explore ways of serving that make their hearts sing. Develop a clear scope, goals, and sequence for children and youth so the church is teaching them what it wants their kids to know, feel, and do by the time they graduate high school. Consider ways your congregation might equip and walk alongside parents as they endeavor to raise their children in the faith, and ways your congregation can support adults in exploring how to integrate those principles into all areas of their life and work. Reimagine your existing rites of passage so they become branding and transformative moments in the life of those experiencing them.

**VIII. OUTREACH** **Moderate Vitality: 2.62/4** **75**

Good job! Based on your score, your congregation appears to be attempting to make a real difference in your community. Chances are, you congregation values service and has made some strides to answer the call to serve those in need. In order to increase your vitality, evaluate the ways your congregation might integrate service and outreach components with worship, formation, fellowship, and every other part of your regular programming. Instead of creating new programs, try partnering with a local organization that is already making a difference in the neighborhoods around you.

**IX. LEADERSHIP & ORGANIZATION** **Moderate Vitality: 2.41/4** **74**

Healthy lay/clergy teams are at the very heart of all vital congregations, and based on your score, your congregation doing relatively well in this area. Relationships are likely fairly strong, so consider evaluating the process by which decisions are made. Ensure lay leadership is celebrated and actively incorporated in developing and implementing the congregation's mission and vision. If you haven't already, establish an annual leadership retreat that includes clergy, program staff, and key leadership to vision cast, troubleshoot, and reaffirm core values and norms (with a consultant, if necessary). Consider the overall cultural health of your team dynamics, identifying ways to instill fun, humor, playfulness, and creativity in the ways you do ministry together.

**X. STEWARDSHIP** **Moderate Vitality: 2.24/4** **74**

The good news for you is that your church has done a decent job raising money to tend to its annual operating budget. However, there is still some significant room for improvement. Thriving

congregations practice stewardship year-round, make a constant connection between stewardship and discipleship, and practice mission-based and/or zero-based budgeting. To shift your congregation's culture in this direction, recruit or recharge a stewardship committee to research what good stewardship entails and how you can incorporate it into what you currently do. Make sure your approach to stewardship is not just about money but rather about time, talent, caring for God's creation, and more.

**XI. INTERNAL SUSTAINABILITY**

**Low Internal Sustainability: 2.06/4**

**74**

Perhaps you already know this, but according to your score, your congregation appears to lack sufficient internal resources to be sustainable. This may be because your congregation is aging, your people are financially challenged, there are too few people to sustain the operations of your current facility, or all of the above. This also may be because the congregation's lack of critical mass to fully engage in the work of God in your congregation and your community is causing your people to become discouraged and their passion to dwindle. Your congregation would benefit from considering ways to partner with your judicatory and/or other neighboring congregations to pool your human and financial resources. Ask yourselves how you're being called to bless others and whether or not a building and grounds is necessary to do that work. You may want to consider leveraging your building and property to being needed services into the neighborhood or using outside the box approached like community bonds to raise capital. If you do have an endowment, make the goal and develop a plan to draw no more than 4 percent in any year and only for extraordinary maintenance expenses, and if at all possible, avoid using any endowment funds for normal operating and ministry expenses. The bottom line is this: Do the hard and emotionally risky work necessary to understand the current reality of your congregation and how God might be calling you to reimagine what it might become.

**XII. EXTERNAL SUSTAINABILITY**

**Moderate External Sustainability: 2.32/4**

**73**

According to your score, your congregation's External Sustainability is Moderate. This means that the neighborhoods you serve have sufficiently high population and income, and sufficiently low competition to sustain Moderate Vitality in a typical congregation. In order to continue to stay vital in its environment, your congregation's main challenges will be to remain in active collaboration (and avoid competition) with same/similar-denomination congregations in its area, and engage them in jointly exploring the various population segments that comprise the community that all of you are engaged in serving. Remember, ministry is not a zero-sum game and the communities you serve are not a monolith but a tapestry of neighborhoods and peoples.