

**The Church of the Cross Vestry Minutes
February 21, 2025**

Fr. Owens called the meeting to order at 12:30PM in the
Conference Room of the Chapel.

PRESENT: Fr. Owens, Michael Simon, Lee Watkins, Tom Durston, Joanne Byrd, Craig Pelley, Linda Laird, and Wayne Bowerman

ABSENT:

I: PRAYER AND DEVOTION: Tom Durston

Tom shared a Christmas Story in February. It was a story of love. We are reminded not to put our focus on worldly collections but on the more essential elements of our Christian life: faith, family, loves, forgiveness and thankfulness.

II. MINUTES: Linda Laird

The Vestry Minutes for January were electronically distributed. Michael made the motion to approve, Craig seconded and all approved.

III: FINANCES: Lee Watkins

Adoption of the operating budget for fiscal 2025:

The 2025 Church Budget is a targeted amount of \$3,000,000 and is in line with last year's budget. Lee and Fr. Owens discussed specific information that contributes to variations in total income and expenses. Lee made the motion to approve the 2025 budget, Michael seconded the motion and all approved.

Treasurer's Report for Month Ending January 31, 2025:

Revenue Discussions: Overall income and giving started the new year higher than budget.

January total monthly Income was \$336,974.97 to a budget of \$324,521.50.

Monthly Plate/Pledge Income was \$272,761.78 to a budget \$246,835.00.

January Plate/Pledge income variance is +\$25,926.78.

Income was lower than budgeted for Missions and Cross Counseling.

Total Income for the month was higher than budgeted at \$12,453.47.

Note: Total income includes Giving, Bequests, Missions, Faith Formation and Counseling Center revenue.

Total Funds held in accounts (CSB, Intra-Fi and Money Market) now stand at 2,269,570.45 (as of Jan 31). Interest from the IntraFi Account and Money Market was \$4208.11. This interest was transferred to the Jasper County Account which now stands at \$1,463,769.88.

Note: Interest Yields on the Intra-Fi account have dropped from 3.00% in Q1 2024 to 2.25% in January 2025.

Expenses Discussion: Overall, first month expenses were lower than budgeted.

Total expenses for the month were \$257,657.01 to a monthly budget of \$323,163.61.

The January budget variance is under \$65,506.60.

January attendance was slightly impacted by weather (snow) when compared to 2024 and Cross School's holiday schedule.

Church Attendance for January:

JANUAR Y	HIST 5:28	HIST 8AM	Hist Chap 10:00	CROSS POINT		CURR ENT MONT	YTD	MTD	YTD
				9:00	10:30	2025	2024	2024	
						5910	5,910	6,384	6,384
5th	109	91							
12th	113	74	273	149	481	450			
19th	135	70	283	178	454	450			
26th	119	59	264	150	421	700			
TOTAL	476	294	1071	649	1820	1600			

Streaming and Online:

YouTube views for January totaled 1379 down from a holiday/Advent high in December of 2751. The COTC Website views/visits averages were lower than December as the holidays ended. Views average 619. (December 'twenty-four views were 850). Also, people watch Sunday services on TCOTC website. That average is eighty-one views per week.

May the joy of His salvation be evident in all our words and deeds in this new year.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Lee Watkins, Vestry Treasurer**

Fr. Owens made the motion to approve the financial report. Michael seconded and all approved.

Linda presented the Missions Outreach Board Disbursement Report: February 17, 2025.

Net Working Capital:	\$57,440.76
February Set Aside Distributions:	\$20,833.00
February One Time Grant Approvals:	\$34,747.00
Total February Distributions if Approved:	\$55,580.00
Remaining Net Working Capital:	\$ 1,860.76

February Disbursements:

New Wineskins - Tuition support and travel expenses approved for six out of country missionary attendees approved in the amount of **\$15,000** for the triennial conference in September 2025.

Harvesters Russia - **\$15,000** approved toward the purchase of a replacement vehicle for the primary ministry partner in Far Eastern Russia.

Bluffton Community Kitchen - \$917 approved as an increase in monthly funding from \$833 monthly. The new annual total will be \$11,004.00. Net monthly difference is **\$84.00**, which is the additional amount not already accounted for in Appendix A.

CBCK - Renewal of funding at \$3000/month approved or \$36,000 annually. February disbursement is already accounted for in Appendix A.

- a. **UCCD Burundi** - Monthly funding increase approved from \$1500 to \$1650/month or a new annual total of \$19,800. Net monthly difference is **\$150.00**, which is the additional amount that is not already accounted for in Appendix A.
- b. **American Heritage Girls** - Funding request of **\$2013.00** approved to support costs for summer camp.
- c. **Centro De Alabanza Church, Beaufort, SC** - **\$1500.00** approved for art and school supplies and travel costs for a mission trip to Honduras.
- d. **TARIRO** - \$1000 toward expenses related to Fr. Nicolas and his upcoming travels in Zimbabwe.

Appendix A

Long Term Grant Commitments	
Anderson Sanchez Peru - End June 2025	\$ 2,250.00
Bluffton Soup Kitchen - End January 2025	\$ 833.00
Campus Outreach Ministry, Hoffman- End November 2025	\$ 500.00
CBC Kenya Monthly - January 2025	\$ 3,000.00
Cross Christian Counseling Center - End December 2025	\$ 300.00
COTC Faith Formation - End May 31 2025	\$ 1,250.00
CS Cross Schools Monthly - End May 21 2025	\$ 2,500.00
Harvesters Intl Congo Monthly Orphan care - End March 2025	\$ 3,350.00
HELP Madagascar - End January 2026	\$ 1,850.00
Hope Compassion Center - End October 2025	\$ 1,500.00
SAMS Missionary Griffin - End Jan 2026	\$ 1,500.00
UCCD Burundi - End Dec 2024	\$ 1,500.00
Young Life New Gen Program - End July 2025	\$ 500.00
Total February Set Aside Disbursements	\$ 20,833.00

Linda made the motion to approve February Disbursements, Craig seconded, and all approved.

IV: Other

- 1. **Update on Bennett Ellison’s Discernment Committee (Michael)**

Michael shared the account of our first meeting getting to know Bennett. He was engaged in conversations, sharing himself, his family, his education and how he chose the Anglican Church as his home. We also discussed different religions and Evangelism. Fr. Owens cleared up any misconceptions about how evangelism is in everything we do. Everything we do through our missions is evangelism. We will meet with Bennett on February 27 for our second discernment experience.

2. Update on Cross Schools (Wayne)

Dining Hall addition: The trees and shrubbery have been cleared. The storm drain lines have been rerouted. The nursery and S.S. rooms have been gutted, and the slab forms have been installed. Removal of the brick walls is ongoing. The plan for next week includes cutting the existing slab for the sewer drain lines for the new restrooms, removing the outer walls, and pouring the slab floor. Claims were filed for HVAC damage. Parts have been ordered and the systems are now running due to temporary in-house repairs / modifications. Replacement of parts is pending on delivery dates. The Front Fountain has issues: Neither of two pumps are operational. One pump has an apparent suction-side leak in the plumbing. One pump has suction-side blockage.

3. Report on Women's Retreat (Joanne)

Joanne shared the details of the **CCW Faithful is He Retreat** at Epworth by the Sea on St. Simons Island. It was an amazing success. Sixty plus women from the Church of the Cross (and maybe a few friends) came together for a special study to connect to our Lord and Savior. Our meeting room was beautifully prepared for us with ten round tables with 6 women at each one for group discussions. Stephanie Seefeldt led us in worship. Kat Robinson welcomed us all and guided us all the way. Rebecca Hamilton led our bible study and taught us how to get the most from scripture. Linda Laird shared her testimony, including how God had been with her in the challenging times throughout her 77 years. She is dedicated to his guidance for witnessing others. Joanne and Judy went to Starbucks for coffee and sat next to gentleman who just happened to be our very own Josh Lake. What a special blessing!

4. Status of Men's Ministry (Craig)

Craig attended the Dioceses Men's Conference in Ardent, North Carolina. The scripture focused on Jacob, Joseph, and his brothers. The participants were studying Jacob as a father, his favoritism of Joseph and the actions and relationships of the brothers. It was an excellent conference with men's discipleship. Craig is now hosting a Thursday night bible study at the Parrish Hall.

5. Update on the Columbarium

Progress is evident on the left side of the Chapel. The concrete is being poured on February 22 and completion is expected by Palm Sunday.

6. Nominations for election to Vestry

Two new Vestry members will be added soon. The standing Vestry members voted to approve both Laura Strange and Kevin Sevier to become active members of the Vestry. Tom Durston will be stepping down from the board in March.

7. Application for Jay Shook to replace Bob Olsen on the Missions Board

The MOB approved Jay Shook as a replacement for Bob Olson on the Mission Board. Vestry discussed the nomination for Jay Shook and all agreed he was an excellent choice for this appointment.

8. Overview of the Parish Annual Gathering on March 4, 2025

Fr. Owens distributed the information for the March 4, 2025, Annual Meeting at 7:00PM. We would like to see the Chapel filled for this event. Pancake supper will be available in the Cross Schools gym before the service.

9. Michael shared God's Goods building project update.

Phase 1: The new storage building will cost \$150,000 and needed permits are requested. Issues with the power lines underground are being addressed.

Phase 2: This phase will involve building a new Food Bank. This will allow God's Goods to expand into the old Food Bank area. Doug Barone will be supervising these projects.

V. Closing Prayers (Tom)

Next Meeting – March 21, 2025 – 12:30pm – Conference Room in The Chapel - Craig has the devotional and prayers.

[Meeting/Devotional schedule: April 25 – Wayne; May 23 – Lee;
June 27 – Joanne; July 18 - Michael]

Respectfully submitted.

Linda Laird, Vestry Clerk