

THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN IN THE WILDERNESS

MINUTES OF THE VESTRY MEETING APRIL 15, 2021

The April Vestry meeting was called to order at 5:04 pm by Fr. Josh Stephens, our Rector. Members attending were: Senior Warden Jennifer Shelton, Junior Warden, Jerry Tanner, John Barker, Elizabeth Christenbury, Cynthia Easterling, Terry Enslin, Marie Hyder, Shelley Schiro, Lynn Wiescholek, and Dick Zecher. Janet Johnson was absent.

Devotional: The opening devotional, focusing on prayers from the *Celtic Prayer Book*, was led by Jerry Tanner.

Approval of Minutes: Jennifer made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 18 Vestry meeting; it was seconded by Elizabeth and was passed.

Rector's Report: Fr. Josh began by reviewing goals from the Vestry Retreat in January. He discussed the feasibility of upgrading the audio/visual system; Jerry will get estimates for a new complete system. Fr. Josh also discussed expanding our Outreach Program by soliciting volunteers for service opportunities with the various ministries that we support. Another goal concerning Buildings and Grounds that continues to be a priority is the purchase of a truck for the Sexton and rebuilding the shed. Estimates are being sought for both.

Fr. Josh continued by discussing staff salary increases. John made a motion to provide a 3% merit raise for 3 staff members and a 50 cents per hour increase for Stacy and Eric. Shelley seconded the motion, and it was passed. Dick proposed that the raise be retroactive to January 1 for staff members, except for Stacy who was hired after that date. Elizabeth seconded the motion, and it was passed.

Fr. Josh announced Bishop Jose's visit on May 16 which will include a confirmation service at 8:45 followed by a reception in the Parish Hall. At the 11:00 service, Bishop Jose will lead the Installation of the New Rector. Vestry members and some members of the Discernment Committee along with Deacon Sandy and other lay members of the parish will participate in the service.

Upcoming events including a June Challenge and the Feast of St. John Celebration with the village of Flat Rock are in the planning stages. More information will be provided at a later date.

Senior Warden's Report - Jennifer commented on how beautiful and meaningful the multiple services were during Holy Week and Easter. She extended her gratitude to Fr. Josh and Dewitt and the choir for all their efforts.

Junior Warden's Report - Jerry reported that he is moving forward with several special projects by continuing research and getting estimates. He will provide more information in May.

Committee Reports

Reporting for Pastoral Care, Terry provided an update on Easter visits. The committee delivered Easter lilies, along with hand-written notes, to everyone on the list. In the near future, the committee is hopeful that visits to retirement villages will be allowed.

The Young Families Report: Shelley extended her appreciation to everyone who assisted with Easter festivities and the egg hunt. Mary Shelton and Mary Ann Inglis did an interview with WLOS that aired prior to Easter. (See article and video: <https://wlos.com/news/local/families-take-part-in-annual-easter-egg-hunt-back-on-after-1-year-hiatus>). Shelley also announced the restarting of Sunday School for youth who will be meeting in person and outside again starting on April 18th at 10:00 a.m. between the two morning services.

The youth will continue their outreach to Edneyville Community Food Pantry on Thursday nights by restocking their shelves. During summer months, they plan to help during distribution day as well. As last year, the youth are planning to contribute to the Migrant Program by collecting items to donate to migrant families. In addition, they are planning the Giving Garden.

Shelley announced the Creation Care Camp/Wild Wonder that will be held at the church the week of June 14th - 18th from 9:00 to 12:00. All youth from K-4 to 5th grade are welcome to attend; any older youth may volunteer to help as junior counselors. She expressed her thanks to Mary Ann Inglis for all of her efforts.

Music Ministry: To express gratitude for Dewitt Tipton, Vestry/Choir Members Cynthia Easterling and Elizabeth Christenbury presented the following proclamation from the Choir for the Vestry's consideration:

Whereas Organist and Director of Music Dewitt Tipton performed beyond the call of duty in providing musical offerings under various COVID lockdown conditions by

- Performing in the church at streaming services, in limited parish attendance services and at funerals
- Playing multiple services under the Tent of Meeting in various hot and cold weather conditions
- Playing services in church driveway
- Performing at over 13 services on Christmas Week and multiple Holy Week services to allow parishioners opportunity to worship in limited congregational capacity
- Taking personal risk while playing for months before receiving a vaccine

Whereas Dewitt Tipton offered extraordinary support to the choir during COVID Lockdown by

- Routinely calling each choir member to check on how they were handling lockdown
- Emailing communications to encourage the choir
- Choosing appropriate music that could be sung by one to two members of the choir in lieu of congregational singing

- Ensuring choir members practiced and performed while complying with COVID Protection guidelines
- Providing choir members with delicious food between services
- Sincerely expressing care and concern about each choir member and their families

Whereas Dewitt Tipton organized and performed in a SJIW Friends of Music Online Concert by

- Creating a safe environment to perform under COVID restrictions
- Recruiting excellent local professional performers
- Displaying his great skills as a pianist
- Presenting a musical offering that met SJIW high standards
- Contributing to parish moral and cohesion

Whereas Dewitt Tipton coordinated a complete refurbishment and upgrade of the church organ by

- Updating the anonymous donors on the stewardship of their gift
- Managing the many technical and esthetic decisions that required constant communication with the vendors
- Coordinating with the Junior Warden to ensure upgrades to the church's wiring and other construction needs
- Meeting deadlines during COVID delays
- Welcoming us all with beautiful Easter Music in the inaugural performance of the newly renovated organ

A motion to honor Dewitt for his dedication and service was made by Cynthia; seconded by Elizabeth and passed by the Vestry. The Vestry expressed deep appreciation for Dewitt's extraordinary services to the parish of St John in the Wilderness during the 2020-2021 COVID crisis.

Treasurer's Report- Tom reported on the 2021 Operating Income / Expenses and Forecast as well as the Balance Sheet. Income continues to exceed Expenses at the present time and Tom projects a small surplus at the end of this year if current trends continue. As for Capital and Operating Reserves, Tom also provided a 1st Quarter Outreach Status. Based on his analysis, our Operating Reserve plus Checking Account balance at the end of March is at 10.6 months of expenses (less Reserve contributions). Our Capital Reserve at the end of 2020 was at 1.49 times our 5-year average of Capital Expenses (less the New Parish Hall cost). A proposed policy and guidelines for Operating and Capital Reserves have been presented to the Finance Committee for consideration. Additional information will be forthcoming.

In addition, Tom mentioned that reports for all ministries have been standardized. These new reports, which will include related Fund Activity and Operating Account Expenses, will be prepared and distributed on the Monday following the Finance Committee's regularly scheduled meeting.

Following Tom's discussion, John made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report; it was seconded by Jerry and was passed by the Vestry.

After a closing prayer led by Fr. Josh, the March Vestry Meeting was adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Margaret Barker, Clerk of the Vestry