

THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN IN THE WILDERNESS

MINUTES OF THE VESTRY MEETING MARCH 18, 2021

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

Devotional: The opening devotional, focusing on St. Patrick and his contributions to Anglican tradition, was led by Cynthia.

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

Rector's Report: Fr. Josh began by reviewing goals for 2021 from the Vestry Retreat. The discussion centered around repaying the debt on the Parish Hall, replacing Kevin's truck, replacing doors to the administrative building, and renovating the storage shed. Paying the PNC loan (approximately \$130,000) would not only save interest being currently paid but would also enable funds held to be reinvested with greater rates of return. After discussion, it was decided that the vestry would consider the situation further and vote at the April meeting.

Fr. Josh then discussed the establishment of a Rector's Special Projects Fund distinct from the Rector's Discretionary Account. The Discretionary Fund, which has special canonical status in the Episcopal Church, is an account for rectors to help those in need. The purpose of the Special Projects Fund is to support projects that would benefit the parish by encouraging existing ministries, establishing new ministries, and engaging with the surrounding community.

The Rector will collaborate and consult with relevant committees and heads of ministries in using these funds. Like all funds and accounts, the Special Projects Fund, which is funded by special donations, will be audited and reviewed by vestry and treasurer. A motion to establish and endorse the Rector's Special Project Fund was made by Lynn, it was seconded by Gibson and was passed by the vestry.

Plans for Holy Week and Easter, published in the March edition of *The Voice*, were reviewed. While practicing safety protocols and social distancing due to COVID, additional services have been added including an outside service. An all-

night Vigil on Maundy Thursday has also been added to the Holy Week worship opportunities.

Fr. Josh reminded all Vestry members of the required Safe Church Training that can be completed online through the Diocesan website. He also thanked Dewitt Tipton for his coordination and participation in the *Friends of Music Virtual Concert* held in late February. This concert is available on YouTube and the church's website.

Senior Warden's Report - Jennifer discussed meeting with the Outreach Committee on February 23 regarding the disbursement of funds. In the January vestry meeting, there was a clear intent on the part of the vestry to allocate outreach funds that were carried over from the previous year quickly because of the community needs which exist due to COVID-19. Approximately \$20,000 was given to community agencies.

Jennifer also discussed reconvening concerns due to Covid. As we want to keep everyone safe, we will continue to answer questions and follow all recommended procedures including wearing masks and maintaining social distance.

In Jerry's absence, Fr. Josh provided the **Junior Warden's Report**. He reported that our tenants agreed to the rent increase and expressed their gratitude to the church. He also reported that the Church Organ Project is near completion.

Committee Reports

Holy Hikes - Cynthia Easterling reported that after contacting Holy Hikes, a nonprofit ministry of All Saints Episcopal Church in California, she has obtained a Holy Hikes Chapter Affiliation Agreement to be signed by the Rector. She asked the Vestry to review the contractual agreement with the national affiliation. Marie agreed to contact Church Insurance of Vermont to determine if a standard form or waiver disclaimer is required before each hike.

Pastoral Care - Terry Enslin discussed Ash Wednesday activities that members of the committee completed. She reported that there are changes in visitation policies at some of the local care facilities including Lake Point Landing which will impact future visits.

Treasurer's Report – In discussing the 2021 Operating Income/Expenses, Tom reported that the church's income continues to exceed expenses. The Forecast for the remainder of 2021 continues to show a small surplus.

Balance Sheet and Funds show a current balance of the loan from PNC for the new Parish Hall at \$126,888.22. Negotiations with PNC will be initiated during March for payment of the principal without the early payment penalty of 1%.

Income of \$20,428.36 received from the Sheffer Trust was placed in the Outreach Fund. An additional \$20,000 was budgeted this year from our General Operations funds. Among capital needs anticipated this year is replacement of the truck used by our Sexton.

In addition, Tom reported that while donations by credit card can continue to be made through the website using Donorbox, the church will no longer retain donors' credit card information. He also stated that an application for establishment of a Defined Contribution Pension Plan, which would benefit our new Financial Assistant and other lay employees, has been submitted to the Church Pension Group.

A motion was made by John to accept the Treasurer's Report, it was seconded by Jennifer and was passed by the Vestry.

After a closing prayer led by Fr. Josh, the March Vestry Meeting was adjourned at 6:43p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Margaret Barker, Clerk of the Vestry