

THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN IN THE WILDERNESS

MINUTES OF THE VESTRY MEETING SEPTEMBER 16, 2021

The September Vestry meeting was called to order at 5:00 p m by Fr. Josh Stephens, our Rector. Members attending were: Senior Warden, Jennifer Shelton, Junior Warden, Jerry Tanner, John Barker, Elizabeth Christenbury, Cynthia Easterling, E. R. Haire, Shelley Schiro, Gibson Sims, Lynn Wiescholek, and Dick Zecher. Terry Ensler and Marie Hyder were absent.

Devotional: The opening devotional was led by John Barker who read prayers for guidance for the Vestry meeting.

Approval of Minutes: Jerry made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 19 Vestry meeting; it was seconded by Gibson and was passed.

Rector's Report: Fr. Josh began with a discussion of the current Covid 19 data noting the increased levels of community transmission of COVID in Henderson County due to the Delta Variant which has been determined to be highly contagious. High numbers of new viruses coupled with breakthrough cases led to a discussion of safety protocols. As a result, a motion was made by Fr. Josh to extend the mask requirement at Sunday church services. Jennifer seconded the motion, and it was passed by the Vestry. In addition, masks are recommended at other church services with social distancing continuing to be practiced. Safety protocols and the masking requirement will be revisited at the October Vestry Meeting.

Fr Josh continued with a discussion of a Vocational Training Program being consider by the Free Clinic of Henderson County. The training program, which is the result of a new grant, will involve teaching a specified population the skills needed to be successful in the food service industry. A discussion of the feasibility of this program being held in our Parish Hall kitchen led to many questions and concerns including insurance, liability, and permits. The following issues were noted:

- Supplying program cookware
- Liability insurance (church and/or organization)
- Rental fees
- Deposits for any repairs/damages to equipment or facilities.
- Cleaning
- Health Department permits
- Commercial grade kitchen

The vestry agreed to proceed with preliminary planning pending additional information and clarification from Judy of the Free Clinic.

In closing, Fr. Josh announced that the Nominating Committee for the new class of Vestry members will include Jerry, Cynthia, and Shelley. He also recommended that the 2021 Annual Meeting be held December 5 during the Church Breakfast.

Senior Warden's Report – Jennifer reported that the Finance Committee is meeting to begin building the budget for 2022. Susan MacDonald will be the new chair of the Finance Committee, replacing Jodi Sundeen. Church by-laws state that the Finance Committee should be comprised of the Chair, the Treasurer, the Rector, 3 members of the Vestry, and 2 lay people of the church. As a result, there are two vacancies on the Committee, per the Vestry By-Laws – one for a member of the Vestry and one for a Lay member. Potential members of this committee must possess a strong skills-set related to finance and fund accounting.

Continuing, Jennifer expressed concern over the size of our congregation and the increasing need for pastoral care. If the church's mission is to continue taking care of our members, continuing outreach, and continuing to grow, additional clergy will be needed. Discussion ensued with members of the vestry expressing their overwhelming support. The Finance Committee will begin investigating the feasibility of hiring an assistant priest or curate.

In conclusion, Jennifer reported a need for a new paper folding machine for the office. She made a motion to approve up to \$3,000 to purchase a new machine; Gibson seconded the motion, and it was passed by the Vestry.

Junior Warden's Report – Jerry reported that repairs to the shed are beginning with workers expected next week. A new ceiling and floor, new shelving, and a remodeling of the outside of the building is planned. Jerry expressed his gratitude for Gibson who has been instrumental in coordinating this project. Previously designated gifts for repair of the Shed total \$11,070; the Vestry has approved up to \$25,000 for updates and repairs.

Jerry also discussed a flooring issue in the Parish House. The contractor, who has been notified, indicated a need for humidifier in the crawl space. In addition, flooring around the west perimeter will need to be repaired. Estimates will be sought for both items.

Continuing the discussion on the truck for Kevin, Jerry noted that purchasing a new one may be more affordable than a used one due to dealer incentives. Searching for a replacement is in progress.

Treasurer's Report - Discussing the 2021 Operating Income / Expenses and Forecast as well as the Balance Sheet, Tom reported that Income continues to exceed Expenses. The Forecast for the remainder of 2021 has been reviewed and adjusted by the Finance Committee. There were no exceptional Expenses of note this past month. Tom stated that all expense items are reviewed by the Treasurer and monitored by the Finance Committee.

Continuing with a discussion of the Balance Sheet and Funds, Tom stated that stock received as a donation in June, valued at \$21,165.75 was sold. Twenty thousand dollars was designated for payment of principal of the mortgage loan with the remainder going to General Operations. Negotiations with PNC for waiver of the 1% penalty for early payment of principal were successful, and payment was made in September. The loan balance is approximately \$61,000.

There has also been an additional anonymous gift of \$11,000 designated for payment of principal of the mortgage.

Financial Audit: The audit of our 2020 finances and processes continues with additional documents being provided to C&S. The Audit Report will be reviewed by the Audit Team and Financial Committee on October 14 and presented to the Vestry on October 21.

Finance Committee: At the meeting on September 9, work began on the 2022 General Operations Budget. Susan has reached out to committees/groups requesting information regarding their needs. Plans are to meet with various program and ministry leaders to receive their proposals for the Budget.

Fr. Josh made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report, John seconded that motion, and it was passed by the Vestry.

Committee Reports

E.R. reported on revising the Docent's Program which has been an important ministry of the church in past years. This program has been viewed as a way to extend the church's presence in the community. After meeting recently with a group interested in church history and this ministry, E.R. is currently working on re-envisioning and updating the program.

The Stewardship Committee report was presented by Elizabeth. Since the campaign started, over 20 pledges have been received to date. The Ministry Fair has been planned for October 3 followed by a breakfast. The in-gathering has been scheduled for October 10 @ 2-5 at Falling Creek Camp.

Following prayer led by Fr. Josh, the meeting was adjourned at 7:08p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Margaret Barker, Clerk of the Vestry