

THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN IN THE WILDERNESS

MINUTES OF THE VESTRY MEETING JULY 16, 2020

The July 'virtual' Vestry meeting (via *GotoMeeting*, an online platform for video conferencing) was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Fr. Josh Stephens, our Rector. Attending were: Senior Warden, Carol Rector, Junior Warden, Jerry Tanner, Elizabeth Christenbury, Cynthia Easterling, Terry Enslin, Marie Hyder, Shelley Schiro, Gibson Sims and Dick Zecher. Janet Johnson, Greg Newbold, and Michael Shannon were absent from this meeting.

I. Devotional

The opening devotional, which focused on a prayer for the world from *Illuminata: A return to Prayer*, by **Marianne Williamson**, as well as a prayer for the 'Human Race' from the *Book of Common Prayer*, was led by Shelley Schiro.

II. Approval of Minutes

Cynthia made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 11, 2020, Vestry Meeting; it was seconded by Elizabeth and was passed.

III. Finance Report - Carol Rector, Senior Warden

Carol introduced Tom Griswold, a parishioner at St. John in the Wilderness as a potential new Treasurer. She reported that Tom met with the Wardens, Fr. Josh, Tracie Lutz, and Jodie Sundeen, chair of the Finance Committee to learn more about the financial aspects, duties, and responsibilities of the role of Treasurer of our parish. After these meetings, Tom agreed to begin as the Treasurer of St. John of the Wilderness Episcopal Church in Flat Rock, North Carolina.

Carol, continuing with the June Financials, stated that spreadsheets containing the Balance Sheet as well as the Actuals are posted in Google Drive for Vestry Members. Trends suggest that a possible budget shortfall in Contributions and Memorials has the potential to create an overall budget deficit for the year.

IV: Discussion

Fr. Josh asked those present to provide feedback about recent telephone outreach to church members. Marie said everyone seemed to appreciate the calls and liked the online services. Others confirmed the church community was happy to receive calls and grateful for the opportunity to worship online. Parishioners who had attended services in the Tent of Meeting were impressed with the safety measures that had been implemented.

Fr. Josh discussed worship and other ministries that are currently available. Tent services including the Care Givers Group, Women's Bible Study, Bonhoeffer Study Group, and Wednesday's Evening Prayer are being held with approved safety measures. Looking ahead to the coming months, small tents in addition to the large one, will be used as necessary to provide shelter for the pianist, choir members, and additional guests.

V. Committee Reports

- On behalf of Young Families, Shelley reported that Diana Byrd had resigned and that Mary Anne Inglis will be coordinating events for the group. The Youth are continuing with Wednesday Compline online each week. In addition, the Youth recently worked at the Edneyville Food Bank as a hands-on project helping to pack food for families in need. Shelley also stated that produce from the vegetable garden has been taken to the local foodbank and Calvary Episcopal Church Foodbank. Multiple events for the Young Family Groups are being planned for the coming months.
- As a member of the sub-committee of the Vestry to review the Flat Rock Village's Bike Path Feasibility Study, Elizabeth submitted a report. The proposed plans for a walking/biking path could potentially involve property of St. John in the Wilderness. Although final plans have been received by the Flat Rock Village Council, the council did not advocate or reject the plans, but instead filed them and indicated that no further action will be taken.
- The Communications and Publicity Committee Report, submitted by Janet Johnson, indicated that online streaming of St John in the Wilderness services has continued to improve. Eduard Wiescholek is using new and improved high definition equipment that captures longer periods of video so the upload to YouTube is cleaner and quicker. Joey Popp finishes the production by editing, offering subtitles, and showing different camera angles during the service to include the pianist, choir, and other service features. A subtitle that appears during the YouTube final cut, "Offering Plate - www.stjohnflatrock.org/donate-now", links directly to our website page for ease of giving. When monitoring live Facebook, Joey includes this link during the offertory. In addition to Sunday worship, Morning and Evening Prayer services are being offered throughout the week. Other social media includes Twitter and Instagram, and the website. The committee will meet via Zoom to discuss upcoming events such as "Empty Bowls" and "The Bazaar at St. John in the Wilderness" events. Since the Bazaar has been postponed until May 2021, the ECW has shifted the focus to online sales by using the church's website to list items available for purchase.
- The Stewardship Committee Report was presented by Fr. Josh. In early July, Stewardship chair, David Christenbury, met with Fr. Josh to establish a plan for

executing our 2021 Stewardship Campaign: 'Preparing the Way'. The following timeline to guide the process was proposed:

- August 1 - *The Voice's* "From the Rector's Desk" will introduce 'Preparing the Way' to the congregation and will include a link to our Time and Talent Survey online.
- August 15 - Follow up email to the parish inviting participation.
- September 8 – Letters, brochures, and pledge cards mailed to the parish.
- September 13 - David will speak at all services about 'Preparing the Way'.
- September 14 - Video on 'Preparing the Way' online.
- October 18 - In-gathering of pledge cards at Sunday services.

VI: Junior Warden's Report, Jerry Tanner

Jerry reported that reroofing of the Administration building has been completed and that all roofing is new except for the two flat roofs between the Parish Hall and Education buildings. Jerry also stated that new doors for the office area are scheduled to be completed and installed in the next few weeks. The replacement of the exterior doors for the Administration and Education buildings has been deferred. In addition to re-roofing, the Hemlock treatment has been completed with future treatments scheduled for every other year. Further, Jerry is working with John Pace to investigate resurfacing our parking lots. Additional information about this project will be forthcoming

VII: Senior Warden's Report, Carol Rector

In her report, Carol noted that the church needs volunteers to fill positions formerly held by the Deyerle's. She is searching for someone to chair the Outreach Committee and someone to schedule ushers, especially for the 8:45 service. Carol also discussed the Nominating Committee for next year's Vestry class. With the Vestry's approval, she has asked Greg Newbold to chair that committee.

VIII: Rector's Report, Fr. Josh Stephens

In his report, Fr. Josh said that the past three Sundays in-person worship have been well attended, joyous occasions, in which everyone carefully followed safety protocols. He thanked the Vestry for helping with the reconvening. He has contacted many of the church's committees to encourage them to discern how their work is changing during this time and has spent extra time working with Young Families, Stewardship, the Baring Society, and a few of our small groups (Caregivers, Women's Bible Study, & Men's Bible Study),

In addition, Fr. Josh encouraged all vestry members to take some time to read *Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer as it's one of the most important works of Christian writing in the 20th century. Fr. Josh also stated that he is working with Ken Jones about the future of the Baring Society and will be sending out letters to members.

Further, Fr. Josh indicated that Dewitt has heard from our organ contractor that work should begin this month or in early August. The contractor mentioned that he will need housing for two workers for a few months while the work is being done so Dewitt is working on locating someone with space available.

Fr. Josh reported some potential changes in mid-week service. Although Morning Prayer has a sustained online audience of around 10 people, few are attending in-person, so we will shift to online only starting on July 27. With Evening Prayer, we occasionally have 8-10 people coming. I have discussed with the core group and we would like to try hosting it once per week, starting on July 29.

Fr. Josh stated that he will be on vacation from July 24-August 8. During this time, Deacon Sandy will officiate Morning Prayer at our Sunday services and E.R. Haire will offer a homily.

After the Lord's Prayer led by Fr. Josh, the meeting was adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Margaret A. Barker, Clerk