

THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN IN THE WILDERNESS

MINUTES OF THE VESTRY MEETING AUGUST 19, 2021

The August Vestry meeting was called to order at 5:04 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 Terry Enslen, Marie Hyder, Shelley Schiro, Gibson Sims, Lynn Wiescholek, and Dick Zecher. E. R. Haire was absent.

Devotional: The opening devotional was led by Elizabeth Christenbury who read a passage from Bishop Curry's book, *Love is the Way*. She closed with a prayer.

Approval of Minutes: Jerry made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 17 Vestry meeting; it was seconded by John and was passed.

Rector's Report: Fr. Josh began with a discussion of guiding the parish through the latest COVID spike. Bishop Jose has indicated that Rectors and parishes should make decision

Looking at current data, Fr. Josh discussed the higher levels of community transmission of COVID in Henderson County with approximately 70 new cases per day. Part of the reason for increase has been due to Delta Variant which has been determined to be highly contagious. Although nearly 50% of the population has been fully vaccinated, hospitalizations in the area have increased with ICUs being full. Area hospitals are also experiencing staffing shortages.

After a discussion of safety protocols, a motion was made by Jennifer to require masks at Sunday church services; in addition, masks are recommended at other church services with social distancing being practiced. Dick seconded the motion, and it was passed by the Vestry. This mandate will be revisited at the September Vestry Meeting.

Senior Warden's Report – Jennifer expressed her appreciation for Fr. William Brosend during the Summer Scholar-in-Resident Program. She also mentioned the possibility of adopting a new Outreach opportunity with a local group which will be explored and discussed with the Outreach Committee.

Junior Warden's Report – Jerry began his report by discussing a proposal from Paul Justus Construction for repairs to the storage shed. When Jerry presented the proposal to the Finance Committee, they agreed to allocate \$25,000 for the project. Jerry made a motion to proceed with the repairs and upgrades to the Storage Building; it was seconded by Jennifer and was passed.

Gibson and Jerry also mentioned a proposal for removing and rebuilding fencing at the Kitchen door in the Wilderness Room and to build fencing around electrical boxes at the parking lot on the south side of Rutledge.

Jerry discussed the church's truck that is going to be bought to replace the current one. Jennifer made a motion to authorize up to 25K for the purchase. Marie seconded the motion, and it was approved by the vestry. Designated gifts for replacement of the truck (used primarily by our Sexton, Kevin Hunt) total \$13,740.

Treasurer's Report

Discussing the 2021 Operating Income / Expenses and Forecast as well as the Balance Sheet, Tom reported that Income continues to exceed our Expenses. Two large non-pledge contributions for General Operations were received in July.

Total Expenses in excess of the Budget are Supply Clergy Pay due largely to our Summer Scholar program, Lay Pension Expenses, and Parish Life related to Fr. Josh's ordination and name tags. All expense items have been reviewed by the Treasurer and monitored by the Finance Committee. The Forecast for the remainder of 2021 was reviewed and adjusted by the Finance Committee. A surplus of \$62,906 is currently forecast for the year.

- Balance Sheet and Funds: In June, a stock gift valued at \$21,165.75 was received for payment against the principal of the loan from PNC for the new Parish Hall. It will be included in the End Balance of the Mortgage Debt Sinking Fund. Negotiations with PNC are in progress for waiver of the 1% penalty for early payment of principal. After this payment, the balance will be approximately \$61,000.
- Outreach: An Outreach Report through July 2021 shows Outreach Disbursements of \$59,629. This sum is favorable to our total Outreach in 2020 of \$82,368. The Outreach Committee is scheduled to meet August 19.
- Financial Audit: The audit of our 2020 finances and processes is underway. Serving on the audit team are John Bell, Vance Bettis, and Gary German. Corliss & Solomon is conducting the audit. An Initial Audit meeting was held with Slater Solomon on July 21. A substantial volume of documents has been provided to C&S, and additional requests are expected this week.
- SJIW Financial Procedures Manual: The Manual has been updated, reorganized and reformatted. Substantive changes are few and include addition of procedures for electronic payment of bills and elimination of November Donor Statements.
- Pensions and Benefits: A thorough review of Clergy and Staff Pensions and Benefits has been completed. Dewitt Tipton has been added to the Lay Defined Contribution Pension Plan, and both he and Stacy Knapp are now participating in the Employer Base at 5% of salary (mandatory) and the Employer Matching contribution at 4%. Leslie Stott and Kevin Hunt continue to participate in the Lay Defined Benefit Plan at 9% of salary. Health Care Insurance and Life Insurance have also been reviewed.
- Endowment: The Endowment Trustees and the Historic Churchyard Trustees met on July 26 and reviewed portfolio performance. The Trustees are engaged in a benchmarking exercise with the endowments of other churches to learn how their endowments are managed and what practices and materials they use to encourage gifts.

John made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report. It was seconded by Shelley and was passed by the Vestry.

Committee Reports

The Communication Committee report was presented by Lynn. She listed the following events that have been promoted by the committee:

- The Feast of St. John: Celebrating Flat Rock held on June 27th.
- The committee helped promote the Summer Scholar Program featuring The Rev. Dr. William “Bill” Brosend. News releases were written and sent out in June.
- Through news releases the committee promoted the Friends of Music “Accent on Youth III” concert which featured Alexander Harrelson, Tenor. The concert was held in the Wilderness Room on August 1st.

In addition, the committee has created a form, *Upcoming Event Information*, which is to be used by church organizations as they seek event coverage/news releases through the Communications and Publicity Committee. This will help the committee understand specific event details as news releases are prepared. The form will be available to complete online through the church website or in hard copy in the church office.

Following prayer led by Fr. Josh, the meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Margaret Barker, Clerk of the Vestry