

# THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN IN THE WILDERNESS

## MINUTES OF THE VESTRY MEETING FEBRUARY 18, 2021

The February Virtual Vestry meeting (via *Zoom*) was called to order at 5:00 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, Janet Johnson, Shelley Schiro, Gibson Sims, Lynn Wiescholz, and Dick Zecher.

**Devotional:** The opening devotional related to the season of Lent was led by our Rector, Fr. Josh Stephens.

**Approval of Minutes:** Jerry made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 22 Vestry meeting; it was seconded by Shelley and was passed.

### **Rector's Report - Fr. Josh Stephens**

Fr. Josh discussed the recent Vestry Training Day during which Bishop Jose and Canon Augusta talked about setting priorities and goals around the mission of the church. In yearly planning, vestry members should think about what we are called to do; establish objectives that align activities and ministries; then build annual budgets to meet these goals and priorities.

After a review and discussion of 2021 goals developed during the January Retreat, Cynthia made a motion to approve the goals; it was seconded by Elizabeth and was passed. Fr. Josh pointed out that goals will be reviewed and adjusted, as needed.

Fr. Josh continued by discussing the Summer Scholars Program, an idea that was introduced during the Vestry Retreat in January. The Rev. Dr. William Brosend, a New Testament scholar from the University of the South, will be our 'scholar in residence' the month of July. During his time with us, Dr. Brosend will preach and teach Christian Formation classes each Sunday. After discussion by members of the Vestry, Gibson made a motion to finalize plans for the 2021 Summer Scholars Program, it was seconded by Marie and was passed.

Fr. Josh provided an update on the candidate search for a Parish Financial Assistant. After reviewing more than twenty applicants, the top four candidates were selected to be interviewed. At this point, two have been interviewed with two more scheduled for next week. He hopes to have the position filled within two weeks.

Preparation of the annual Parochial Report, which is due to the Diocese in two weeks, is well underway. The effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic related to membership and financial concerns have caused the report to be more involved this year.

One portion of the Parochial Report deals with Bishop Jose's emphasis on racial reconciliation as a priority. The Bishop has asked if the Vestry is committed to working toward racial justice. Discussion among members dealt with the need for clarification. Recognizing that the real work is difficult, the Vestry agreed that such work is warranted.

**Senior Warden Report:** Jennifer reported that the Outreach Committee met with Fr. Josh for status updates and will have monies to donate to those organizations that have current needs due to the pandemic. She thanked Tom Griswold, our treasurer, for his hard work and expertise in handling financial matters.

**Junior Warden's Report:** Jerry provided an update on the Parsonage lease. The new lease, which the renters have signed, includes a \$150.00 monthly increase. The lease will be renewed annually and provides no deduction for heating costs during winter month. In addition, Jerry reported that the repair on the organ with the renewed console requires new wiring in the basement. He is continuing to work with Kevin on locating an electrician.

### **Committee Reports**

**Pastoral Care** – In Terry's absence, Fr. Josh reported that members of this committee delivered Lenten and Ash Wednesday Bulletins to some members of the congregation who are unable to attend services. Ashes were also imposed.

**Holy Hikes** – Holy Hikes which began in August 2020, take place on the third Tuesday of each month. Cynthia, who serves as coordinator, discussed the need for affiliation with the National Episcopal Holy Hikes with an emphasis on liturgy. The affiliation fee will be paid through hiker contributions. SJIW's Insurance policy is required to cover the hikes. Father Josh indicated that the current policy should be sufficient to meet this requirement. Cynthia made a motion for this group to join the National Episcopal Holy Hikes, it was seconded by John and was passed.

**Treasurer's Report** - Tom Griswold reported that things were going well, and the Finance Committee continues to predict a balanced budget for 2021. He continues to coordinate with the Outreach Committee and hopes to move funds out soon based on the committee meeting.

Tom explained that the transition in our financial office has presented an opportunity to address certain issues and to reexamine processes and procedures that we have customarily followed. One process that we are seeking to eliminate is the handling of credit card information for donations – the preferred alternative is using Donorbox through our website.

In discussing the **2021 Operating Income / Expenses**, Tom reported that current pledges paid are well above the budget which will help manage our budget in the following months. Tom also reported that there were no significant changes to our **Balance Sheet or Funds** during the month of January. The balance on the loan from PNC for the new Parish Hall is currently approximately \$128,000, however \$40,000 will be paid on the loan on March 1. Jerry made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report; it was seconded by Janet and was passed.

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Margaret Barker, Clerk