



SAINT JAMES the FISHERMAN EPSICOPAL CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 16, 2020

ZOOM CONFERENCE

VESTRY MINUTES

PRESENT

**Father Farrell Graves
Ron Stephens, Sr. Warden
Tom Fernandez, Jr. Warden
Bill Chase
Nancy Dougherty
Gary Freeman
Heather Holbrook
Bob Lynott
Earl Miller
Anne Neely**

**Deacon Mike Ligon
Deacon Jean Miller
Sheila Jordan, Treasurer
Toni DeLuca, Vestry Clerk**

ABSENT

Ruth MacDonald, Treasurer

- 1. Call to Order, Father Farrell**
Nine members were present for the Vestry Zoom conference meeting. Vestry meeting was called to order at 4:00 by Father Farrell.
- 2. Opening Prayer, Nancy Dougherty**
Opening prayer was provided by Nancy Dougherty. Anne Neely volunteered to provide the opening prayer for the next Vestry meeting.
- 3. Recognition of Barbara and Dan Bartell by the Vestry, Ron Stephens**
The Vestry Sr. Warden, Ron Stephens, welcomed Barb and Dan to the Vestry meeting. Ron read a letter thanking them for all their good work that they have done for Saint James the Fisherman. Their work has greatly benefited and enriched Saint James. Barb and Dan will be greatly missed and will always have a special place in our hearts. The Vestry wishes them much happiness as they move on to the next phase of their lives. Ron presented them with a Certificate of Appreciation by the Vestry of Saint James the Fisherman. The Letter of Recognition and Certification of Appreciation are attached to the minutes.

Ron asked for remarks from other Vestry members.

Anne Neely thanked Barb for all her work for ECW and taking care of the flowers. She thanked both Barb and Dan and wished them well.

Gary Freeman personally thanked Barb and Dan for their help in the yard sale and Second Helpings. You both have done so much for the church. Gary wished them the very best in their new home.

Bill Chase thanked Dan for helping with the lobster sale, especially helping to separate the frozen lobster tails. Bill promises that if Dan comes back to help next year with the lobster sale, he will provide Dan with special frost bite gloves.

Deacon Jean thanked Barb and Dan for all they have done for the church. Barb and Dan have been involved in so many different directions: the Coat Closet, Neighbor to Neighbor, farm workers and the computers. Barb and Dan are much loved and will be greatly missed. Deacon Jean wished them peace and happiness.

Bob Lynott said that Stephanie is so sorry to not be able to hold a reception for them. Bob further said that he wants to thank them for their friendship and all their work on church committees and Board of Ministries. Bob said he will miss not being able to work in the kitchen with Dan, washing dishes and setting up the roll away tables.

Barb and Dan said that they will continue to be in contact with everyone and will miss Saint James the Fisherman. They will be back for visits. Barb and Dan thanked Father Farrell, the Deacons and the Vestry.

Father Farrell provided a prayer for the Bartells and wished them well on their new journey.

4. **Approval of August 19, 2020 Vestry Meeting Minutes.** Father Farrell Ron Stephens identified a correction on page three, 6A, bullet four of the minutes under Sr. Warden's Report. The minutes should read as, there are \$30,000 expenses available and not \$25,000. The Vestry Clerk will make the correction in the minutes and forward the corrected minutes to the Vestry.

Motion: Earl Miller made a motion to approve the August 19, 2020 minutes, which was unanimously approved by the Vestry.

5. **Rector's Report, Father Farrell**
Father Farrell will take vacation time from October 12th – October 18th. Deacon Jean said that she would do the October 18th Sunday service. Father Farrell will be meeting with the Sr. and Jr. Wardens on October 7th. Father Farrell will be participating at the Clergy Conference Monday through Wednesday, October 19, 20 and 21th. He is not sure where they will be meeting.

The DOK decided to implement a service project that would have the members of the DOK contact Saint James the Fisherman's parishioners. The purpose of the contact would be to inquire if the church members would like any special prayers or assistance. The DOK wants to assure the members that they are being thought of and looking forward to seeing them when Saint James is able to open. Father Farrell said it was the DOK idea to do this project. He suggests that in the future that one of the Clergy be contacted and informed of any projects.

Father Farrell said that it has been quiet at Saint James and there have been no Covid related health issues with the church members. Saint James the Fisherman is a refuge for so many of the parishioners. Father Farrell and the Deacons continue to support our church families.

Bob Lynott said the Compline is very popular and the break outs on Sunday have been very successful. People are joining the Compline services from all over, not just Brunswick County.

Father Farrell asked if the Vestry had any questions for him. There were no questions and the meeting continued.

6. **Treasurers' Reports, Sheila Jordan and Ruth MacDonald**

Ruth was not present for the meeting and Sheila presented the treasurers' report to the Vestry. The treasurers' reports were forwarded to the Vestry members prior to the meeting for their review. The August financial documents and reports are attached to the minutes.

Treasurers' Report/Comments

Balance Sheet

- The treasurers submitted the paperwork on the PPP Loan Forgiveness and are still waiting to hear about the loan. Deacon Mike and Ron Stephens worked so diligently on getting the form completed and provided the bank with the backup documents as per their request.
- Raymond James had a gain of \$6,317.61 this month.
- The treasurers have not found a home for the \$20,000 from TD Ameritrade. They will contact Edward Jones, but don't think they will speak with them because the treasurers are not identified as the contact person.

Income and Expense Statement

- Account 4021 Current Pledges: Income from pledges is down about \$5,700. Overall, We are only \$2,000 behind, but income per week in August was down.
- Account 4155 Other Revenue: This is the state tax refund.
- The church only had salaries, maintenance and upkeep for the month of August.

Spread Sheet

Father Farrell asked Sheila to review the spread sheet with the Vestry.

Treasurer Comments/Spread Sheet

- Our financial standing is doing well and the overall income is not that bad.
- People have been very good at their pledges. Some send it in monthly, quarterly and many send their pledges at the end of the year.
- The treasurers wish more money was coming in, but we are doing okay.

Vestry Comments

- Gary Freeman said that September pledge money is always lower because of the summer.
- Ron Stephens noted when looking at the YTD actual income vs. expenses and eliminating the PPP income and choir robe expense, we are only down by \$361 on the budget.

Sheila asked for any questions. There were no questions asked by the Vestry.

Motion: Nancy Dougherty moved that the Treasurers' Report be entered into the minutes as presented, which was unanimously approved.

7. Wardens' Reports, Ron Stephens, Tom Fernandez

A. Junior Warden, Tom Fernandez

- Tom did a walkthrough of the interior and exterior of the church.
- The termite damage work was not completed.
- The window trims needs to be installed.
- There are lights to be hung.
- Tom took care of the gathering ridge ceiling mold.
- Tom will replace counter top with floor tile where the money is counted and spray the flags.
- Tom met with Ron about the "Wish/Want List"
- Tom tried to contact the painter, but have not received a response from him. The painting inside and outside needs to be completed.
- Ron will discuss the asphalt.

B. Senior Warden, Ron Stephens

- **2021 Budget.** Sheila and Ron met and worked on the church budget for 2021. They used the 2019 actual expenses to complete the 2021 fixed expense areas on next year's budget in order to have a better understanding of expenses while the facilities are in full operation. The assumption for budget purposes was the facilities would be back to normal use in January 2021. The "Wish/Want List" will be discussed later in the meeting. Using the "Wish List" information, Ron will be able to have a first draft for the 2021 budget ready for discussion by the October Vestry meeting. Any revisions will need to be completed and presented by the November Vestry meeting. It has to be completed by November 29, 2020. This will then be presented at the December Annual Saint James the Fisherman parish meeting.
- The PPP Loan Forgiveness Application was submitted to Live Oak Bank. The bank requested additional documents, which Sheila immediately provided. Ron has heard from the bank loan coordinator saying everything is set and our application has been forwarded to the SBA. The Small Business Administration (SBA) is the final step in the process. The SBA has 90 days to give us a decision on the forgiveness application. This will complicate our 2021 budget, if we have to repay the loan. However, Ron does not think this should be an issue.

Thank you to David Brownfield, Sheila, Ruth and Deacon Mike for all their assistance in preparing the loan forgiveness application and for their invaluable assistance throughout this entire process.

- Living River Church has leased the bank property next door. Saint James was not notified by the owner of the property. Ron looked at the lease on the parking lots and found that the owner has the right to lease the property to another tenant and not notify Saint James. We will have to negotiate a new rental agreement with the new tenant. This is going to present Saint James with a challenge for the parking. Discussion of the situation will be presented later in the meeting under *New Business #8B, New Tenant in the Adjacent Bank Property*. The website for the Living River Church is www.mylivingriver.com.

- **The Saint James the Fisherman Audit has been completed and submitted to the Diocese by the designated deadline. Kenny Krawcheck and Greg Weber volunteered to do the audit for the church. Ron wants to thank Kenny and Greg for their work in preparing the audit.**

There are two audit items that need to be addressed:

- 1. There is a need to have two people to count the collected cash at all of the services. The two people must sign off on the deposits after each service. The two people can be readers or ushers, but this must be done after each service.**
- 2. The Annual 2019 budget was not approved by the Vestry prior to being submitted to the Saint James the Fisherman December Annual Church Meeting for the budget year 2019. This was noted in the Audit. However, it was noted that the 2020 budget was approved by the Vestry in advance of the annual meeting which indicated to the Auditors that the issue had been addressed.**

The Diocese allows two consecutive years of internal audits and then the following year must be an external audit. Next year we must conduct an external audit.

- **Access to the cemetery. Ron spoke with the Town of Shallotte and Brunswick County regarding the driveway access to the cemetery. The town and county gave approval for the church to do a conduit in the ditch and cover in order that the driveway access to the cemetery is restored. The church can do the conduit or the church can hire the city to do the job, if the church decides to proceed with the project.**
- **Vestry elections. Ron said that it is time for the Vestry to begin to think of representation and election for the Vestry for 2021. Nancy Dougherty and Bob Lynott will have completed their three years on the Vestry. Tom will rotate off after being appointed to fill two one year term vacancies. Ron has had some names submitted to him as possible candidates. If there are other suggestions from the Vestry, please forward them to Ron. He will be sending out applications to the entire parish, along with a letter which explains the vestry functions and process for election in mid-October. He further stated that candidates should submit their application by November 1st in order to share with the Parish. If the Parish is unable to meet as a group for the Annual Church Meeting, Ron suggested that the Vestry Election Ballots be emailed out and for parishioners who do not have email, the ballots to be formally mailed to them. The ballots can be sent to David Brownfield to be tallied. The final results can be shared with the church members at the Annual Church Meeting.**

Vestry Discussion/Comments regarding the Vestry Elections

- **Will there be soliciting of candidates to apply for the Vestry?**
- **People have to be nominated.**
- **Usually in the past, the Vestry members leaving were asked to be on the committee to solicit people to be on the Vestry.**

- Names could be sent to Ron Stephens or sent to David Brownfield. There was a concern about confidentiality.
- It was suggested that names and resumes be forwarded to Ron Stephens.
- Ron has heard from people who are interested in being on the Vestry.
- Ron will send out an email to the parish that if there is anyone interested in being on the Vestry that the person completes the application and attaches a picture.
- Heather suggested that a link be attached to the email stating the responsibilities of being a Vestry member.

As a point of reference, the Vestry Handbook lists the responsibilities of the Vestry

8. Continuing Business

A. Update – PPP Loan, Ron Stephens

Please refer to Sr. Warden's report, Item 7B, Bullet two. Additional comments from Ron regarding the PPP Loan.

- The PPP Loan may complicate the church 2021 budget.
- The PPP Loan Forgiveness application was submitted September 9, 2020. They will inform us by December 9, 2020 if approved.
- According to the loan documents, the first payment is due December 5, 2020. This also complicates the November 29th 2021 budget due date.
- Ron does not know who the contact person is at the Small Business Association. We worked directly with Live Oak Bank.

B. Parish Survey, Heather Holbrook

Heather reports that the survey information remains the same. There was one additional survey submitted after the due date, but this doesn't change the outcome of the data.

The Vestry discussed how to disseminate the results of the survey to the members of the Parish.

Comments about the Survey:

- Do we need to share with the Parish members?
- It was felt that the information needs to be shared and that the Vestry needs to be transparent with the parishioners.
- Maybe a summary could be sent to the parishioners.
- Ron said he already stated the survey would be shared with the parish in the newsletter, based upon the discussion from the August meeting when we agreed the survey should be shared.
- The Vestry should thank the parishioners for responding and summarize the highlights of the survey.
- The church members' comments were informative.
- It was suggested that the Vestry send a letter to the church members, but that Father Farrell draft the letter.

C. Internal Audit Review, Ron Stephens

See comments under Sr. Warden's report, 7B, Bullet #4.

9. New Business

A. Zoom Voting, Ron Stephens

Ron had forwarded to the Vestry members an email with the Zoom Voting Resolution for their review prior to the Vestry meeting.

Zoom Voting Resolution: *Whereas the Covid-19 Pandemic created the necessity to limit inside meetings to a maximum of ten people and, whereas the Vestry of Saint James the Fisherman has nine members, and whereas the Clergy and Treasurers of Saint James the Fisherman have a total of five members, therefore creating a total attendance of Vestry meetings to generally fourteen attendees plus any visitors; beginning in April 2020 in order to conduct the business of the Parish, Saint James the Fisherman Vestry, Clergy and Treasurers began holding Vestry meetings on-line via Zoom and hereby agree that all votes taken during an on line meeting of the Vestry are legitimate and binding.*

Motion: *Nancy Dougherty made a motion to approve the Zoom Voting Resolution, which was unanimously approved by the Vestry.*

Bill Chase noted this resolution does not cover voting via e-mail on new issues that have not been discussed. He felt we should not poll the Vestry for votes without prior discussion.

Father Farrell asked if anyone objects to voting on line. The Vestry was fine with voting on line.

B. New Tenant in Adjacent Bank Property

Ron reviewed with the Vestry members the challenges of not having a parking area for Saint James. The church has been paying the rent on the parking lot but not using it, as we have not been having inside services since the pandemic. The church needs parking spaces before the church resumes services. Ron said that the Living River Church has not contacted Saint James the Fisherman.

Ron made the following suggestions as possibilities for the parking situation for Saint James.

1. Upgrade the parking lot in front of the Coat Closet. To do this, the church will need a permit from the Town of Shallotte.
2. Utilize our property along Powell Street, which faces the back of the church, for additional parking spaces.
3. If you do the front parking (17 spaces) and the back of the church (27 spaces) would total 44 spaces.
4. Ron has spoken to a paving contractor regarding a bid for the work. The front would cost \$26,433 and the back would cost \$22,490 for a total of \$49,673. The Vestry would need to get additional bids if this is the course of action the church wants to take.

Father Farrell suggested asking the Town of Shallotte if they would be willing to cut back some of the greenery on Powell Street in order to have additional parking.

Another suggestion from Father Farrell, Ron and Tom was to contact the Living River Church and ask if they would be willing to share the parking lots. Ron thinks Living River Church has a Sunday service at 11:00. Their service time would impact our 10:00 service.

The loss of the parking led to an intensive discussion as to what to do to address the situation of Saint James not having a parking lot.

The following are some of the comments/questions from the Vestry.

- Will the Living River Church draw a lot of people?
- Should the Vestry speak to the Beautification Committee and maybe move the Saint James sign? Tom F. said that he has a price to move the sign. Could the cost of moving the sign be combined with the parking spaces?
- If Living River Church shares parking spaces with Saint James, we would still have an issue with parking as Living River Church grows its attendance.
- The church should not pay the rent on the parking lot for October, November and December to Mr. Roark. It cost Saint James \$400 a quarter for the rental of the parking lot.
- Should the Beautification Committee be informed of the situation? The \$30,000 allocation for the beautification of Saint James has been on hold because of the pandemic and now may be needed to offset costs for adding parking.

Earl Miller suggested that maybe this is the time to consider buying property to move Saint James the Fisherman because we are landlocked at our current location. This led to more discussions about selling our current facilities and building at another location.

The following are some of the comments/questions about relocating and building.

- What about the cemetery and the graves? How do we contact the families?
- Saint James is landlocked and we need to think long term. The parking is short term and will not address issues of space and safety.
- Should the Vestry survey the church members? Would the church members be interested in moving the church and relocate?
- The two issues are the parking and should the church build and relocate? Parking has been an issue for Saint James for twenty years.
- Lower interest rates until 2023.
- Some parishioners might not be happy to relocate. The Vestry needs to inform the parishioners. If asked about what the church is doing about the situation, tell the parishioners that the Vestry is exploring all options?
- Is it possible that someone might donate land to Saint James?
- The Vestry needs to be proactive in making a decision about the loss of the parking lot and/or rebuilding Saint James. We must think long term.
- If the church decides to rebuild Saint James, would the Living River Church be interested in purchasing the Saint James building?
- The range of properties in the Shallotte area range from \$350,000 to \$900,000 and from five to eight acres. There is a lot of property around Shallotte.

Father Farrell suggested a plan of action: *contact the Living River Church; contact the Diocese Legal Department; quietly gather information about availability of land to build; continue to place on hold the beautification money.*

The Vestry made a decision and plan of action regarding the purchasing of property to build.

Plan of Action

- 1. Earl Miller and Bill Chase to explore the possibilities of availability of properties in the Shallotte area.**
- 2. At this stage do not involve the architects.**
- 3. Father Farrell to contact the Diocese Legal Department.**
- 4. Ron Stephens or Father Farrell to contact the Living River Church to explore shared parking.**

C. Church Opening, Father Farrell

As you are all well aware, Governor Cooper has loosened the restrictions on the size of indoor, non-worship meetings. This means that the church can now have indoor gatherings of twenty- five or fewer people.

Prior to the Vestry meeting, Father Farrell had emailed the Vestry members his comments on the opening of Saint James the Fisherman. He wanted to give the Vestry an opportunity to formulate their thoughts in advance of the meeting. Father Farrell will listen carefully to everyone's opinion before making a decision. He asked that the Vestry consider the following as they pray and discern.

The following is Father Farrell's comments from the email forwarded to Vestry prior to the meeting.

- 1. There has been one outdoor Morning Prayer and one indoor meeting of more than ten people since the beginning of Covid-19. Father Farrell led the Morning Prayer and observed that people were not taking physical distancing seriously. They arranged their chairs inches apart, removed their masks and stood side by side for photos, and otherwise violated what I consider to be prudent behavior. I was not at the indoor meeting, but afterwards received a concerned email about the lack of caution there, as well. When in High Point, I observed similar behavior in my parent's old neighborhood. People think that, because they love and trust someone, they are safe from infection. The virus knows nothing of love and trust. This behavior places leaders in the unfortunate position of scolds. Who would be responsible for maintaining standards of physical distancing services, as I cannot be both monitor and prayerful leader of a worship service.**
- 2. I share others' concerns that there will soon be a post-vacation increase followed by another increase once winter arrives. Will the governor back off or continue to open things up when he next addresses the issue on October 2nd? Do we want to risk starting and stopping something?**
- 3. Our parishioners are surely all over the spectrum on the issue of Covid. Some think it is a critical public health problem; others think that it is greatly exaggerated. I have not heard from anyone at Saint James who thinks that it is a hoax, but know from my colleagues that there are people in other Episcopal Churches who do not believe that Covid is real. Whatever decision we make, we will offend some. We cannot please everyone and must instead seek to do what is the most judicious, prudent, and godly under the circumstances.**

Continued comments from Father Farrell

4. As you know, my elderly parents now live with me, and I myself am not a teenager. Out of caution, I do not go to the gym or the hair salon. I hope that people will take my family's well being into consideration.

5. If we do have indoor services, we will have to decide how many services to have (it seems unlikely that we need three), at what time to schedule them, and whether to continue having an online presence. If we have an on line presence, we either continue having a Morning Prayer service online (this would require two different bulletins to be produced, one Morning Prayer, one Eucharist), or we could broadcast the Eucharist live. We need to consider whether it is more meaningful to watch others take communion or to participate in an Interactive Morning Prayer.

Comments from the Vestry regarding opening Saint James the Fisherman

- We need to err on the side of safety. It would be awful if something happened to a member of the church.
- Father Farrell said that the churches do not have to follow the Governor's guidelines, but the diocese is following the guidelines.
- Ron S. said that at the Warden's meeting discussion, communion is a concern.
- Saint Paul Episcopal Church in Wilmington: Do not know what they are doing?
- The Roman Catholic Church is doing modified services.
- Sea Side Methodist Church is running practice drills on what a service would look like. They are looking at all things and moving cautiously indoors.
- Father Farrell said that we could review Dan Bartell's plan for accommodating people at services.
- Three Vestry members said it is a good idea to wait before we begin indoor services.
- The Vestry needs to thoroughly communicate to the parishioners and apprise them of the situation.

It was decided to send a letter to the parishioners of Saint James. Father Farrell said he would write the letter and review the letter with the Vestry prior to sending.

D. Mailbox, Father Farrell

Saint James the Fisherman has a P.O. Box costing about \$80 a year. It would be simpler to have a permanent mailbox costing about \$260. David Brownfield spends four hours going back and forth to the Post Office to pick up the mail. It would save the church money and make better use of David's time.

Motion: Ron Stephens made a motion to purchase a mailbox for Saint James the Fisherman, which was unanimously approved by the Vestry.

Father Farrell discussed that the church is in need of a cleaning. The cleaning service has not cleaned Saint James since the pandemic began. David Brownfield offered to clean. Father Farrell proposed that we give David an additional four hours at \$15 an hour. This would increase David's hours to twenty-nine hours which is within the hours allotted to him. He is currently at twenty-five hours. This will add to his job description and will need to be amended.

Motion: Earl Miller made a motion to increase David Brownfield, Administrative Assistant, additional four hours, which was unanimously approved by the Vestry.

E. Needs/Wants for 2021 Budget Discussion, Ron Stephens

Ron had emailed the Vestry a spreadsheet of the Saint James the Fisherman Church needs and wants for their review. The spreadsheet is attached to the Vestry minutes.

Ron asked the Vestry to review and check the needs and wants in the columns and rank them. Included on the list are the reasons and the costs for each item. The Vestry members can add anything else that they think should be on the list.

The Vestry will review the list and discuss at the next Vestry meeting.

10. Deacon's and Liaison's Reports (as needed)

Father Farrell asked if anyone had any comments or reports.

A. Deacon's Reports, Deacon Jean Deacon Mike

Deacon Jean is moving the coats from the storage bins to the Coat Closet. Tom F. offered the use of his truck to transport the coats.

Deacon Jean has contacted thirty people on the parish list. We are blessed that no one has the covid virus.

B. Program Liaison's Report, Bill Chase

No report

C. Worship Liaison's Report, Nancy Dougherty

No report

D. Outreach Liaison's Report, Gary Freeman

No Report

E. Communication Liaison's Report, Heather Holbrook, Anne Neely

No report

F. Stewardship Liaison's Report, Bob Lynott

Bob will have the report ready by the end of October. Father Farrell told Bob that he has a challenging year.

G. Endowment Liaison's Report, Deacon Mike

No report.

11. **Adjournment and Closing Prayer, Father Farrell**

Father Farrell provided a closing prayer and the meeting was adjourned at 6:00.

Motion: Bill Chase made a motion to adjourn the Vestry meeting, which was unanimously approved by the Vestry.

Next Vestry Meeting will be Wednesday, October 21, 2020 at 4:00 at Bliss Hall



Toni DeLuca, Vestry Clerk

Date

10/27/2020



Ron Stephens, Sr. Warden

Date

10/29/20