



**SAINT JAMES THE FISHERMAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

**FEBRUARY 17, 2021**

**ZOMM CONFERENCE**

**VESTRY MEETING**

**PRESENT**

**Father Farrell Graves  
Ron Stephens, Senior Warden  
Bill Chase, Junior Warden  
Ruth Fernandez  
Gary Freeman  
Heather Holbrook  
Peter Tietjen  
Greg Weber**

**Deacon Mike Ligon  
Deacon Jean Miller  
Ruth MacDonald, Treasurer  
Toni DeLuca, Vestry Clerk**

**ABSENT**

**Sheila Jordan, Treasurer  
Earl Miller  
Anne Neely**

**Parishioner**

**Wayne Campbell**

- 1. Call to Order, Father Farrell Graves  
Seven Vestry members were present for the Vestry Zoom conference meeting and called to order by Father Farrell at 3:00.**
- 2. Opening Prayer, Gary Freeman  
Opening prayer was provided by Gary Freeman. Ruth Fernandez volunteered to provide the opening prayer for the next Vestry meeting.**
- 3. Parking, Father Farrell & Wayne Campbell  
Father Farrell requested of the Vestry members to agree to amend a change in the agenda order to accommodate Wayne Campbell, parishioner and architect, who is assisting with the work on the church parking situation.**

***Motion: Gregory Weber made a motion to amend the Vestry agenda order to allow Wayne Campbell to present to the Vestry information regarding the Saint James the Fisherman parking project, which was unanimously approved by the Vestry.***

**Ron Stephens, Senior Warden, introduced Wayne to the Vestry members. Wayne reported on the progress of the Saint James the Fisherman parking project.**

### Wayne Campbell's Report of Parking Lot Progress

Wayne reported that the engineer did an excellent job on the plans and the Shallotte mayor was very helpful in assisting the church in securing the town approval of the plans.

Wayne presented to the Vestry three bids for the parking lot: Carolina Creations at \$61,910, J. P. Russ at \$49,725 and New Hanover Paving at \$9,777.65. New Hanover Paving only does paving. Wayne tried to get another bid for the rough grading to coordinate with New Hanover Paving. He would recommend J. P. Russ because Wayne has had experience with them and liked their work. Wayne suggested that we wait to get more information and have another bid to make a good decision on which group to use. He further stated that the group in Southport will be able to provide him with more information in the next week. If Wayne does not hear from them, he will seek something else.

### Vestry Discussion

- Ron stated that New Hanover Paving had an original bid of \$24,000 and that the Vestry had only budgeted \$25,000. He agreed with Wayne that we need a company to partner with New Hanover Paving in order to have a competitive third bid. Ron and Bill have discussed the pipe and fill work now required by the city along with the current hot real estate market in the area have driven prices up on paving.
- Bill said that we have to go ahead with the project and to review how to pay for the project once we select a contractor. We might need an additional \$20,000.
- Father Farrell asked about the street easement and that the town could take it away. Should the front of the church be done first?
- Bill felt this was not a good idea to do the front of the church because the project is much more complicated and expensive. The front lawn is lower than the street level and there is the issue of the bank drainage.
- Wayne said that at an earlier time he had worked out a plan with J. P. Russ and the cost was about \$80,000.
- Ron said that the Powell Street is the least complicated and seems the better place to start our parking project.
- Bill said that the church is operating in good faith with the town in the exiting of the cars onto the street.
- Greg said we need to go forward now because of the rising cost.

It was the consensus of the Vestry that Wayne should gather more information and provide the information at the next Vestry meeting.

The Vestry thanked Wayne for his work, support and help in coordinating the parking project.

Ron brought up the issue that the cost of the engineer bill had exceeded the \$2,000 and would require approval of the Vestry before we can pay the bill. He also asked that the Vestry confirm that the Warden's may approve bills for up to \$2,000 without Vestry approval.

*Motion: Ron Stephens made a motion that the Vestry allows the Wardens to approve bills up to the limit of \$2,000, which was unanimously approved by the Vestry.*

*Motion: Bill Chase made the motion to approve payment of the engineer bill of \$2,062, which was unanimously approved by the Vestry.*

4. **Approval of January Minutes (Monthly and Retreat), Father Farrell**  
Father Farrell asked if there were any questions regarding the January 23, 2021 Vestry and Retreat minutes. There were no questions.

*Motion: Ruth Fernandez made a motion to approve the January 23, 2021 Vestry minutes, which was unanimously approved by the Vestry.*

*Motion: Greg Weber made a motion to approve the January 23, 2021 Vestry Retreat minutes, which was unanimously approved by the Vestry.*

5. **Rector's Report, Father Farrell**  
**Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina Convention, February 13, 2021**

- The convention went smoothly and was conducted on Zoom. Bishop Skirving spoke on reflections and how the diocese will be going forward. There was no great controversy and possibly looking on how to utilize Zoom for future conventions.
- Father Farrell was nominated and voted by the Convention to serve on the Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina Disciplinary Board. This is a three year position.

#### **Orthopedic Equipment Closet**

David Brownfield, Administrative Assistant, brought to Father Farrell's attention the issue of the orthopedic closet and the need to reorganize the closet. There are many crutches in the closet and it is wheelchairs that are needed. We need to reorganize the equipment and determine what do we need, have and what needs to be discarded. Deacon Jean said that she would discuss with the co-chair Tommie Christianbury.

Saint James the Fisherman is the only church with an orthopedic lending closet. Deacon Jean said that this can be part of the Outreach Ministries. It was suggested that maybe placing an article in the Beacon Newspaper for donations would be successful in getting equipment. Also, Deacon Jean can call people to see if there is any equipment available. There should be a limit of three months for having the equipment.

Heather and Deacon Jean will work together on the project of finding equipment and donations. Heather will contact the Beacon Newspaper to place a request for equipment donations.

#### **In Person Services**

Father Farrell said that there are parishioners who would like to meet for inside church services. They miss not being in church for the Eucharistic Services. The range of parishioners attending for inside services has been between 17 – 22 and 14 – 19. Father Farrell asked for comments from the Vestry. This led to an extensive discussion by the Vestry members.

#### **Comments:**

- Several Vestry members said that they would prefer to attend inside services and that they missed not being in church for the services.
- Do we know how many people have received the two vaccines? It is very difficult to know how many have had the vaccines.
- Is it possible to open up the services to people who have had the vaccines? This is again difficult to determine the number of people who had the vaccines. Ron urged caution on this

topic because we would not want anyone to feel ostracized because they were unable to currently get a vaccine.

- Can we have a Morning Prayer and Eucharistic Services on Sundays? Father Farrell said that this is difficult because you need two different bulletins. He also stated that we need to be good stewards of time during this pandemic.
- It was Father Farrell's decision to have Morning Prayer and not inside service at this time of the pandemic and not Bishop Skirving's decision. He felt that the Morning Prayer Service engaged more people than the filmed Eucharist's services.
- Should we look at the number of parishioners who are homebound verses people who are able to attend in person Eucharist's services?
- Some parishioners feel that they don't get anything out of the Morning Prayer Services and they feel more welcomed at the in person Eucharist's services.
- Would it help to put in the bulletin and ask the parishioners to contact the Administrative Assistant if they had the vaccines? Father Farrell did not think this would be a good idea as it would place a great deal of burden on the Administrative Assistant.
- Gary Freeman said that medically we should not be back in person at the services until people have received the two vaccines. It is not safe until we have a larger percentage of people vaccinated.
- Peter suggested that a video or broadcast of the service so that parishioners at home and inside service parishioners would be able to attend both services. We might need to invest in this since it seems that the pandemic will be lasting for awhile.
- Father Farrell said that this might be challenging coordinating at the altar and the zooming in and out. We need someone who knows how to do this.
- Heather Holbrook knows a consultant who might be able to help us with how to do the broadcasting of the services. Heather and Peter will explore the possibility of doing this and report back to the Vestry with the information.

### Church Audit

There are five diocesan contractors who are recommended to do the church audit. Father Farrell would like suggestions on which one to choose to be the auditor. One of the suggested contractors is a former parishioner. It was decided to use one of the other auditors. Father Farrell will forward the list of names to Greg. Greg will investigate the names and report back to the Vestry.

Ron asked if the auditor is paid mileage and did their time start when they leave home or when they arrive at the church. Greg said that they are not on the clock until they arrive at the church and we do pay mileage to and from the church.

### Room Organization

Father Farrell reported on the reorganizing of the rooms. The copy machine has been moved to the room without the windows. The Music Director's office and chapel will be moved. Bins have been placed in the hallway outside the office to accommodate the church groups' i.e. DOK, ECW etc. The current chapel will be used by the choir and their robes will be stored in this room. The nursery and Sunday school rooms will be combined into one room. The room with a window will be used as a meeting room. The kitchen area will need to be reorganized.

### Father Farrell's Vacation Request

The clergy are discouraged from saving up the federal holidays and using them all at one time. Father Farrell asked the Vestry to allow him to use his President's day vacation time for after Easter. The Vestry agreed to Father Farrell's request.

6. **Treasurer's Report, Ruth MacDonald and Sheila Jordan**  
Sheila was not present for the Vestry meeting and Ruth presented their report. The reports were forwarded to the Vestry prior to the meeting for their review. The January 2021 financial documents and reports are attached to the minutes.

### Balance Sheet

A CD was rolled into savings this month along with the interest. The remaining two CDs at TD Ameritrade will roll out in February. The treasurer asked if the Vestry wants to leave it there for 1-3 years. Interest rates are at .05 to .1 based on number of years invested. We will need to pay a premium to secure (102 vs. 100). If left in TD Ameritrade, they will draw interest at the same rate as BB&T.

Vestry said to leave where it is until it is needed.

### Income and Expense Statement Income

- 4021 (Pledges) Giving in January is excellent, but it does include some annual gifts and some quarterly gifts. Hopefully this will balance out by the end of the first quarter.
- 4027 (Plate Collections) Exceeded monthly amount budgeted.
- 4260 (Music) This income was from the insurance company to pay for the organ repair in 2020. The check for payment (6463) is \$1,000 more due to our deductible of \$1,000.
- 4292 (Reserves) This was the amount of money needed to make the budget balance.

### Expenses

- 5413 (Website Support) This is a new line name and covers Norton antivirus payment and Burns Web Design.
- Jobs to be completed in 2021 are coded as 5711, 5712 and 5713. The other job is under 7027 (fixing the pergola).
- The maintenance contingency fund (6551) was reduced to \$833 this month.
- 5665 (Waste Disposal) was paid in full for the year.

The treasurers completed the parish report for 2020 using the numbers that were captured off the REALM Program. It does require some work to get the numbers requested. The outreach is only from what was collected in the system and expensed in the system. It does include the Food Cards for the DOK since that money went through our account.

The treasurers sent out the W2 and 1099 forms before the deadline. The annual contribution statements were mailed to parishioners on January 29, 2021.

Ruth M. asked if there were any questions. Ron asked about line item 5016 (Rector's Salary). Lines 5260(Rector's Housing) and 5092(Rector's Utilities) were budgeted into the Rector's Salary Line. Can the appropriate money be moved to Lines 5260 and 5092? Ruth said this can be done and can be discussed on Monday when they meet.

Gary asked about the PPP Loan. Did Earl provide the treasurers with the information about the guidelines for the loan? Ron said the PPP loan report is coming up later in the agenda.

*Motion: Peter Tietjen moved that the Treasurer's Report be entered into the minutes as presented, which was unanimously approved by the Vestry members.*

**7. Wardens' Reports**

**A. Junior Warden's Report, Bill Chase**

Bill presented to the Vestry what has been done for the church building.

- Sandpiper did their annual building maintenance service.
- Shed work completed: lights needed to be replaced; the cupboards are filled with papers dating back to 2000. We need to decide what to keep and not keep. Do we need to keep old pledge cards?

Does anyone have any questions? There were no questions from the Vestry.

**B. Senior Warden's Report, Ron Stephens**

- Ron reported the treasurers had completed the research requested by Earl (which was also required by the Small Business Administration) in order to qualify for a second PPP Loan. The treasurers found we did experience a twenty-five percent (25%) drop in giving in two quarters of 2020. We qualify for a second loan if we experienced one quarter with a twenty-five percent (25%) decrease. With that information available, the second PPP Loan has been completed and forwarded to the Live Oak Bank. The Bank has requested more information from us. The treasurers and Ron will meet on Monday to prepare more information for the loan office. Ron thanked Deacon Mike, Sheila and Ruth for their work on the project.
- The Vestry's contact information has been forwarded to the diocese.
- Parochial Report is due March 1<sup>st</sup> and the request for an external auditor is due to the diocese by February 28, 2021.

Ron asked if there were any questions from the Vestry.

Peter asked what method does the church have for on line pledge payment or is it done only by check. Does Saint James use Venmo or PayPal? Ron said that there is no on line capacity for pledge payment. This has been discussed previously by the Vestry and at that time it was felt the fees associated with on-line contributions did not justify the expense.

Heather was asked if she knew if REALM has a payment section. She was not sure and would have to explore this of REALM.

Ron will discuss the REALM options with the treasurers when he meets with them on Monday. Gary suggested that maybe this is something for us to think about for the future, especially during these times when parishioners are not in church and will get back to the Vestry.

**8. Continuing Business**

**A. Membership Directory, Heather Holbrook**

Heather said that REALM does great things and we currently have 243 names in REALM. She is still reviewing what REALM is capable of doing and will get back to the Vestry.

**B. Parking, Ron Stephens**

This was discussed previously under item Parking with Wayne Campbell.

9. **New Business**

A. **Parochial Report, Father Farrell**

The Vestry needs to review and sign off on the Parochial Report by February 28<sup>th</sup>. The Racial Justice and Reconciliation section of the report must be reviewed by the Vestry: *Our congregation is actively addressing and working toward racial justice and reconciliation (Yes or No). Working toward racial justice and reconciliation is a priority for our congregation. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree). On the 2020 Parochial Report the answer by the Vestry was No and Neutral. It was decided to maintain for the parochial report for 2021.*

*Motion: Greg Weber made a motion to approve the 2021 Parochial Report, which was unanimously approved by the Vestry.*

B. **Endowment Fund, Earl Miller, Bill Chase, Deacon Mike Ligon**

Deacon Mike reported that the endowment fund continues to do nicely.

Bill had a question about using the endowment income for outreach purposes. The by-laws allow earnings to be used for outreach and budgetary needs while leaving a cushion of \$5,000 above the principal balance to protect the principal in case the market went down. The current balance is over \$176,197.87, at an increase of \$20,000 from last year. The current principal is at \$144,000. The Vestry is allowed (by-laws) to adjust percentages of distribution between outreach and budgetary needs. This has been done in the past when we used the endowment fund to pay for new AC units and a riding mower.

Bill is proposing that we look at drawing \$20,000 or \$30,000 from the endowment fund to be used for church needs. Maybe some of the money can go towards the parking project.

Father Farrell said that suspending the usual division of dividends requires a 2/3 vote of the Vestry and the by-laws should be redone to make them more understandable.

Ron said that there is no allowance in the current endowment fund by-laws for fund growth other than direct contributions. This seems odd.

Bill said that we should consider rewriting the by-laws and present them to the parishioners for approval at the Annual Church Meeting in December 2021.

Deacon Mike said that he would work with Bill on developing a draft for new by-laws and to be presented to the Vestry.

Ron said that we need to consider including the endowment by-laws as a section of the parish by-laws.

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

There are no reports from Communications, Stewardship, Endowment or Safe Church Administrator Liaisons.

A. **Deacon Jean**

Deacon Jean reminded everyone that the Save Your Quarters ends on February 28<sup>th</sup>.

**B. Deacon Mike.**

Deacon Mike has been in contact with the Director of Brunswick County about vaccines. Brunswick is only getting about 12,000 vaccines a week and the county is advising people to go to other counties for their vaccines.

**C. Program Liaison, Peter Tietjen**

Peter will contact Bill to discuss Programs.

**D. Worship Liaison, Ruth Fernandez**

Ruth F. has been in contact with Nancy Dougherty and the Altar Guild. Ruth F. has swept the altar and cleaned up for Lent. Father Farrell said it is easier to be able to be in contact with one person and not several people.

**E. Outreach Liaison, Greg Weber**

Gary interjected that he has reached out to people in Ocean Ridge after the tornado. He has contacted everyone except for the Sanchez family and Earl. No parishioners were injured in the storm. Father Farrell has spoken to the Sanchez family and they are good. Gary was unable to contact Earl and Libby Miller, but did speak to their daughter. The daughter said that her parents do not answer their cell phone but they are okay. She will call Gary and let her parents know that Gary has contacted her. Gary has subsequently been in touch and the Millers are fine, but sustained damage on their home. No help is needed at this time.

Father Farrell said that no parishioners were injured in the storm.

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

Father Farrell closed the meeting at 4:35 PM with a prayer.

Ron made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:35, which was unanimously approved by the Vestry members.

**Next Vestry Meeting will be March 17, 2021 at 3:00.**

**Antonia DeLuca**  
**Vestry Clerk**  
**Date:**

**Ron Stephens**  
**Senior Warden**  
**Date:**