



ST. JAMES THE FISHERMAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH

JANUARY 11, 2025 @ 1:00 in BLISS HALL

VESTRY MINUTES

PRESENT

Father Farrell Graves  
Ellen Allison, Sr. Warden  
Tom Fernandez, Jr. Warden  
Jan Comfort  
Toni DeLuca, Clerk of the Vestry & Vestry Member  
Marianne DiSomma  
Kathleen McDonald  
Jesse McCrery  
RoseMary Stalter  
Chris Kensel

Deacon Jean Miller

ABSENT

Deacon Mike Ligon

1. Call to Order, Father Farrell  
Father Farrell called the meeting to order at 1:00 and nine Vestry members were present.
2. Opening Prayer, Toni DeLuca  
Toni provided the opening prayer and Marianne volunteered to provide the opening prayer for the next Vestry meeting in February.
3. Reflection, Father Farrell  
Father Farrell read a passage from the Gospel of Luke 3:15 – 17, 21 – 22 and discussed with the Vestry. Father Farrell asked if the Vestry would prefer the reflection be from the Sunday gospel. If we are meeting on a Saturday, the Vestry would prefer the Sunday gospel for the reflection.
4. Approval of December 19, 2024 Vestry Minutes, Father Farrell  
Father Farrell asked if there were any questions regarding the December 19, 2024 Vestry minutes. There were no questions.

*Motion: RoseMary Stalter made a motion to approve the December 19, 2024 Vestry minutes, which was unanimously approved by the Vestry Members.*

5. Rector's Report, Father Farrell

Father Farrell discussed with the Vestry ways to attract and reach more people. He referred to the book, "*Anatomy of a Revied Church*" by Thom S. Rainer. Father Farrell gave attendance number for the Christmas services from 2019, 2022, 2023 & 2024.

Year 2019, attendance 196

Year 2022, attendance 128

Year 2023, attendance 126

Year 2024, attendance 90

We need to look at why we are not attracting people to St. James the Fisherman. Father Farrell asked the vestry, "What do we need to work on?"

Vestry Comments:

- The front of the church, even though on the hill and overlooks the town, does not stand out.
- People are not sure where the entrance is – Powell Street or Main Street. Our address is Main Street.
- Signage needs to be more visible from the street.
- The front of the church, Main Street, is not welcoming. Rick Coltharp, parishioner and architect, drew up plans for the Main Street steps.
- We need better exterior lighting of the church. Rick Coltharp devised a lighting plan.

Father Farrell recently was told that the Episcopal Church of the East Carolina Diocese provides grant money for small Episcopal Churches. Marianne said she has written grants and volunteered to research the grant process. Toni, Jan and RoseMary volunteered to work with Marianne on the grant.

James Green will be ordained May 3<sup>rd</sup> as a Deacon. He is in training as a priest and is being mentored by Father Farrell. James gave the sermon at a Sunday service and was well received by parishioners.

6. Treasurer's Report

Ellen forwarded the treasurer report to the Vestry prior to the Vestry meeting for their review. The treasurer was not present for the meeting to discuss the reports.

7. New Business, Father Farrell & Ellen Allison

- Vestry Liaison Assignments

Communications: Marianne DiSomma, Jan Comfort

Jesse McCrery volunteered to help with Facebook

Grounds: Kathleen McDonald

Finance, Ways & Means/Stewardship: Toni DeLuca, Ellen Allison

Fresh Face Forward: Ellen Allison

Outreach Ministries: Toni DeLuca

Parish Life: RoseMary Stalter

Worship: Jesse McCrery

Graveyard: Chris Kensel

- Bookkeeper/Treasurer Status

Kit Goff and Deacon Mike are co- treasurers and Sharon Davis writes the church checks. Kathy Sanchez and Jerry Thrift were on the 2025 Budget Committee. The Budget Committee members were Kathy, Jerry and co-treasurers.

The Vestry requested more information regarding our financial and bookkeeper status. It was discussed at the last Vestry meeting in December, 2024, to hire a bookkeeper. Father Farrell will contact Deacon Mike for more information about the financial status and Ellen will contact Kit Goff, former Sr. Warden, about the bookkeeper status. It was suggested that a special Vestry meeting be convened to discuss church finances and the hiring of a bookkeeper. Jesse will make inquiries about bookkeepers. Kathleen asked Ellen to check with Kit Goff about separating the grounds and building budget in the budget. Ellen will follow up on this and get back to the Vestry

- Status of Fresh Face Forward (FFF)

FFF was discussed at length by the Vestry.

Vestry Comments:

- The FFF budget is separate from the siding budget.
- Lighting: Rick Coltharp made a lighting plan for the exterior of the church. In order to put the lights into place, a permit is required from the town. Father Farrell will speak to Bill Chase about the status of the permits and will also speak to Rick about the lighting plan.
- A chairperson is needed for FFF. It was suggested that FFF should come under the direction of the Vestry.
- It was suggested that an usher should be at the Powell Street and Main Street doors to greet people when they enter for Sunday services. Bill Chase, usher coordinator, will need to be apprised of this so that he can inform the ushers.
- Move the sign to the pergola so that it is more visible . It will need to be better secured and Tom will look into this.
- Jan will put together the history of FFF and place in the church newsletter and bulletin.
- Have a dedicated prayer for FFF in the Prayer of the People. Father Farrell and Deacon Jean will work on the prayer.
- Rededication of the church upon completion of the church siding. It should be a celebration of the congregation and the community. The dedication plans will be discussed at a later date.

- Development of Lobster Festival Committee

The Vestry voted to table for the next meeting

- Foyer Group Continuation

The Vestry voted to table for the next meeting.

- 2025 Vestry Meeting Dates and Time

The Vestry agreed to meet the second Saturday of the month at 1:00 in Bliss Hall. The next Vestry meeting date will be Saturday, February 8<sup>th</sup>.

- St. James Office Computer

At the beginning of each year, the church email address seems to have an issue. Our system and computer are antiquated and have significant technical problems that needs to be addressed. The Vestry discussed the need to purchase a new computer. Three suggestions of companies were given by Toni, Jan and Jesse: Total Computers (located in Shallotte), PC Dude and Computer Gurus. Jesse will investigate the three company, inquire the cost of purchasing a new computer and report back to the Vestry.

Father Farrell asked the Vestry, if they were in agreement, to do a vote by email. It was a unanimous "Yes".

#### 8. Old Business, Father Farrell & Ellen Allison

- Saturday & Sunday Services

Beginning March 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, there will be a Saturday service at 5:30 and a Sunday service at 9:00. Jan will place a notice in the Beacon News.

Many of the parishioners are aware of the change to the one service on Sunday.

- Vestry Social Gathering

A social gathering will be at Toni's home on Friday, February 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 and all are invited. To be further discussed at the February Vestry meeting.

- Nursery

There are not enough volunteers to have a nursery. It was suggested that maybe once a month do a children's message during a Sunday service. Another suggestion: hire a person, in addition to a designated church member, to work in the nursery. Ellen will investigate the hiring of someone from a day care center or a student. The person would have to be vetted.

- Payroll Services

This was discussed at the last Vestry meeting in December, 2024. Ellen will follow up with Kit Goff.

#### 9. Wardens' Reports

- Sr. Warden, Ellen Allison

Ellen does not have anything to report at this time.

- Jr. Warden, Tom Fernandez

To date, we have had seven bids. We dismissed five of the bids as not viable. The last bid was from Aubrey – Faatz. They were very thorough and gave us a bid of \$225,000 and with extras, \$270,000.

The bid from Dale Brooks was \$111,000. Tom recommends this siding company. The company had good reviews and Tom has invited the owner to the next Vestry meeting to present his siding plans. Marianne has had experience in reviewing contracts and volunteered to review the contract. Tom will get the contract to her.

## 10. Liaisons' Reports

- Deacons' Reports

Deacon Mike was not available for the meeting

Deacon Jean reported that the Coat Closet has given out 488 coats.

- Grounds, Kathleen McDonald

Kathleen reported that the Grounds Committee did not have a clean-up day in December. Several of the grounds committee members have been maintaining the grounds and cleaning the courtyard. Please thank Toni Scott-Berenson, Jerry Thrift, Bob Rozzi and Dan McDonald for all their hard work and diligence in maintaining the grounds.

The 2025 clean-up schedule is attached to the minutes. The annual clean-up day will be prior to Easter. Rick Allison, Bob Rozzi and Dan McDonald volunteered to mow the Main Street yard with Kit Goff as the backup. The mower has had a maintenance over haul. Kathleen will be setting up the 2025 mowing schedule beginning in March. She is looking for volunteers.

- Communications, Jan Comfort

Jan does not have anything to report at this time.

- Finance, Ways and Means, Toni DeLuca

Stewardship has received two more 2025 pledges and were forwarded to Kit Goff to be documented in REALM.

- Outreach Ministries

There is no report at this time.

- Parish Life, RoseMary Stalter

A Newcomers Welcome was suggested for February 22<sup>nd</sup>. Vestry is scheduled for coffee hour on March 9<sup>th</sup>.

- Worship

There is no report at this time.

- Graveyard

There is no report at this time.

11. Public Comments

There was no one in attendance.

12. Closing Prayer & Adjournment, Father Farrell

Father Farrell provided the closing prayer and meeting was adjourned at 3:18.

*Motion: Jesse McCrery made a motion to adjourn the Vestry meeting at 3:18, which was unanimously approved by the Vestry Members.*

Next Vestry Meeting, February 8, 2025 at 1:00 in Bliss Hall.

Antonia (Toni) DeLuca  
Clerk of the Vestry  
Date

Ellen Allison  
Sr. Warden  
Date