



The Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist
Post Office Box 441 / 307 Federal Street
Milton, Delaware 19968



www.stjohnthebaptistmilton.org

Vestry Minutes for The Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist September 15, 2021 – Zoom Meeting

Present: Jill Malloy, Sharon Lamando, Fr. Tom White, Clara Escobar, Bel Gwiazdowski, Rob Konnyu, Scott Kresge, Jean Skocypec, and Ed Stout.

Absent: Tom Sombar.

Meeting was called to order by Senior Warden Jill Malloy at 6:00 pm.
Jill thanked Bel for assuming the duty as clerk for vestry.

Opening Prayer was given by Fr. Tom.

Acceptance of June Meeting Minutes:

A motion was made by Sharon to accept the June meeting minutes. Clara seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Treasurer's Report –

Ed reported that he sent out the packet of financial information ahead of time and asked if anyone had any questions. Ed explained some handwritten changes that he made on the M & T report due to outstanding expenses. Rob asked what each of the 5 accounts were for and Fr. Tom asked Ed to clarify each one. In the future, the purpose of each account will be notated on the report. The sidewalk has been paid.

Ed also included the statements for June & July on the Master Fund A account which are doing well.

We are still expecting a bill of \$7,000-\$7,500 for the upcoming audit which hopefully will be submitted to the Diocese by the end of September. There is talk of doing future audits in-house. According to the Canon, full audits are due every year.

2018 Audit - A response still has not been received to Jill's certified letter sent to the accountant in mid-August on top of the many other requests made by Fr. Tom and Ed. After much discussion, Jill asked Ed to call Tom Sombar to express our frustration over this accounting firm and their ignoring of our requests to return our documents. Jill, Sharon & Fr. Tom may pay a personal visit to the accountant.

Diocesan Acceptance - We have not made our contribution for this year due to the audit expenses and may not have a vote at this year's convention. A request has been received for our 2022 commitment.

We pledged \$9,000 this year and Ed recommends \$9,000 again for 2022. The commitment will be signed and returned.

Bel made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. Sharon seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Priest Comments-

Fr. Tom will be performing a baptism on October 3 during mass. A young couple from Milton, who have been live streaming with us, have requested that their daughter Emily be baptized. They currently are not members.

He will also be officiating at a wedding in October at the Convention Center in Dewey Beach. Although the couple are not members, they are from Milton. The bride's mother has come to Mass and introduced herself to Fr. Tom. It is Fr. Tom's hope that the above families will become involved in the activities at the church.

Fr. Tom also thanked Jill, Sharon and their teams for the wonderful luncheon following the memorial Mass for Bundy Simms.

Committee Reports

Property

Jean noticed that some shingles on the turret of the rental are falling off and need reinforcement along with some replacements. Sharon has one estimate of \$600 and is waiting for another one. She is asking the vestry to approve that the acceptance of the lowest bid.

Sharon has reached out to several handymen to do the posts and chain to block the parking lot, but they have been no-shows. Roland Simms has offered to do the posts, set them in concrete, and purchase any other materials needed. He will submit his expenses to Ed.

Tenant lease will be signed this month with a rental increase to \$1,400/month.

Safety/Risk Inspection - Sharon sent a summary of the Inspection Report prior to the meeting. She suggested a separate committee to address these issues. Scott reminded her that a committee was formed a few years ago to address these issues and that we have to be careful that any changes do not jeopardize our 'grandfather' status. Sharon was told that if we had a fire or other event that our lack of safety measures could jeopardize the insurance coverage. Fr. Tom thinks we should have a subcommittee to review these recommendations to see what we can reasonably do and report back to vestry. Fr. Tom said that we should go back to Steve Brillhart after we decide in good faith what we can and cannot do and the reasons for same and let him respond. Jill asked Scott to pull the minutes from the original committee. Scott reported that there is no wiggle room in the report. Each category is checked with either yes or no.

It was also recommended that a video inventory of the church contents be made and maintain a copy offsite for insurance purposes.

Jill later shared that Steve rated us excellent in most areas with some improvement needed. He recommended updated fire extinguishers and smoke detectors and that exit signs be reviewed.

Parish Administration

The lowest number we have had during the hybrid service, viewing and in person combined, is 50 and the most is 78 combined. The average in-person attendance since May 23 is 28 per Sunday and averaged combined is 61. Prior to covid, we were averaging 55-60 in person. The highest number in-house was during Bundy's memorial service, which was mostly friends and family, but since her daughter shared the service information on social media there is a combined number 105.

Scott complimented the job that Liz has been doing with the live streaming and she will now be training Susan Mattia on the system to help out and give Scott and Liz some more flexibility.

Outreach - Clara reported that an average of 20 bag lunches were distributed each week through the summer program. On the few brutally, hot days, none were distributed. We had a visit by a person from the state a Delaware who would like to discuss finding us a sponsor and relocating our distribution in an area closer to families in need. The committee will meet with the state rep to learn more and discuss further in January.

There has been no interest from within the church or community to rent a table for the yard sale on Sept. 26. We will still have a bake table and will put out items left from the spring yard sale.

Other projects - Cookie Walk - December 11 to coincide with Milton Holly Days; sale of small floral arrangements the following Sunday for church only; Soup Sale in February; Chile and Chicken & Dumplings Sale in March (cooking will be done onsite at the church); Ladies Tea in May to replace spring yard sale. There is the possibility of having a bake table or food sale at the yard sale. The committee will meet after the fall sale.

Youth Ministry - The first Sunday attendance of one student was disappointing. Jill has reached out to some parents and learned that 2 students are attending elsewhere and another family hopes to resume soon. She would like to work with 2 older girls bringing them into worship with the intent of them being Acolytes next year.

Music/Worship - Scott has shared that he is enrolled in a 3 year, year round online program to become a certified Director of Music. He has 30 hours of work and practice alone with this course. Scott has spoken with Becca who will cantor once a month and hopes to begin small group and solo music with Scott's support. Jill suggested that weekly music be shared with Ed Startt (providing he is willing) in the event that Scott gets too busy one week or is not feeling well.

Old Business

The sidewalk and audit were covered above.

New Business

Nominating Committee - Sharon has completed her second 3 year term and will be leaving vestry. Jill is eligible for a second term and Rob, who was a mid-term replacement, is eligible for election to a first term. Clara, Jean & Bel will be the Nominating Committee. They will speak with Jill and Rob and will come up with a slate of candidates to present to vestry at the October meeting. Terms begin in December immediately following the Annual Meeting.

Stamp Club - Fr. Tom had a request from Paul McDonough for the Stamp Club to resume meeting at the church. After discussion, it was decided that it would not be fair to allow one group back to use the church and not the other groups who are no longer meeting here. Since there are church members in both the Stamp Club and Women's Club, it was decided that it isn't prudent to bring back one group and not the other. Jill will speak with Paul.

Refiring @ SJB - Fr. Tom sent out his ideas to re-ignite activities here at St. John. He shared many wonderful and doable ideas and goals. It is incumbent for us to let the parish know that we are 'back' after the covid disruption. Fr. Tom's recommendations for restarting Bible Study, reorganizing shepherding groups and returning to fellowship gatherings after Mass, to name a few, are important and positive steps to bringing people back into the church.

There was a very lengthy discussion over the topic of landscaping. Aside from Rob & Janeen, who have cared for and maintained the Memorial Garden, it appears that no one has come to weed or care for the plots that they adopted. The church grounds look unkempt and is not a welcoming site for those entering through the front doors. Fr. Tom would also like to see bushes replanted to replace the ones that were removed during the sidewalk repairs.

For now, a fall clean-up day is scheduled for Saturday, October 16 at 9 a.m. It is hoped that people will come out and work together in fellowship to help beautify the church. However, we remain in immediate need of a Landscape Chairperson so that landscape maintenance will be regularly organized. It was also noted that the idea of adopting plots of land for folk to care for at their leisure has not worked.

One of Fr. Tom's goals is for an intentional and well-planned Stewardship Drive. He has been doing this all along, but would like to see more people involved in the planning and programming. Offerings have continued to come in faithfully, but we could use some new ideas moving ahead. Scott shared that there are many programs available on the Diocesan website available for use with tools to make it successful. The church should have a Stewardship Committee.

The topic of volunteerism was also quite lengthy and lively. Scott commented that he has never seen a time when we could not get 2 volunteers to usher on a Sunday. Fr. Tom commented that with only an average of 28 people in church, the pool for volunteers is very limited. It seems that young families are hesitant about returning back to church, possibly since the vaccine is not yet available for children. In the meantime though, we need to let the parish know that we are back.

More discussion will follow at our next meeting.

Chamber of Commerce Email - It was decided not to participate in the pumpkin carving this year.

Invite, Welcome, Connect - Members from the Diocese Committee will be at worship on October 17 to talk about the program and will meet with the vestry following the service. All vestry members are requested to be present.

Convention - Fr. Tom, Scott and possibly Eric will be the delegates at the convention on November 20. Ed will serve as the alternate. Sharon will serve as the second alternate.

Correspondence - Jill shared a note of thanks from Rob Freeman for the fruit arrangement from vestry on the passing of his mom.

Property - revisit - Sharon made a motion that she be allowed to choose between the lower of the 2 bids to have the shingles repaired on the rental. Seconded by Scott. Approved by all.

At 8:37 p.m. a motion was made by Sharon to adjourn the meeting. Clara seconded the motion, and all were in agreement.

Next Vestry Meeting – Wednesday, October 20, 2021, 7:00 via zoom

Respectfully submitted by Bel Gwiazdowski, Clerk of the Vestry.