

St. James Vestry Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 29, 2025
5:45 pm

Participating: Rev. De Freeman, Rev. Amanda Doshier, Parish Administrator Meghan Kasuba, Sr. Warden Margaret Cadden, Jr. Warden Bruce Stone, Dan Campbell, Tracy Corte, Jim Daniell, Bill Dowdle, Dee Gambill, Jennifer Lambert, Amanda Montz, Bettsie Norton, Cappi Sully, Ken Talbert, Misty Whitehead, and Clerk of the Vestry Mary Mullins Redditt.

Absent: None

Opening Prayer

Mother Amanda opened us in prayer at 5:47 pm.

Recitation of the mission statement

The vestry then recited together the mission statement:

We are a community anchored in Christ, seeking God, sharing His love, and serving others.

Meditation—Dee Gambill

- Dee offered a meditation on the importance of patience.
- Dan Campbell asked for a substitute for next month's meditation as he will be recovering from surgery. Margaret and De said one of them could fill in.

Preparation for Construction—Field Trip—De Freeman

- De took the vestry members on a "field trip" of the property and showed them the changes we can expect due to construction that will start in May/June.
- De described how the main parking area will be shut down when construction starts. The lower parking area will remain open, but the far end of it near the new construction entrance will be needed for construction.
- Standing in front of the main church entrance, De described how some trees and shrubs to the northwest will need to be removed to create a new temporary drop-off at the entrance.
- The City of Fairhope has told us our existing entrances to the church will not be impacted by roundabout construction.
- We will likely need ushers to be assertive about directing parishioners to the new parking on Sunday morning.
- Walking to the south side of the church property, De said we will need to move the shed to the end of the parking meadow as well as the Pod Storage Unit. The field where the shed sits now will be leveled.
- Near the entrance to the school, a small live oak and several Japanese Magnolias will need to be moved somewhere else on the property. These were dedicated and are small enough to move and save.
- We should expect disruptions for about a year but will eventually regain our parking.
- Vestry members said that church bus or golf cart shuttling about the new parking areas may need to be further researched. We should also try to encourage parishioners to car pool and to try different services.
- De encouraged all vestry members to talk with parishioners about the temporary disruptions to create understanding.

Sr. Warden Updates—Margaret Cadden

Building Timeline

- Margaret gave a report on the building timeline.

- The architect is finishing drawings and should have them to the civil engineer May 1 for permitting.
- May 13-15 we will know the final not-to-exceed costs. We will be able to review them the next day.
- We hope to have owner financing complete by May 22, with signed contracts right after that.
- We should have a groundbreaking in June with the Bishop and lots of fanfare. Jeanie Smith has offered to host a big celebration.

Executive Discussions

The Executive Committee was convened in a special meeting between Vestry meetings to make some timely decisions on two matters:

- We were given a piece of property in North Hills as a donation to the Capital Campaign and the Executive Committee agreed to have it listed with Ashurst-Niemeyer for \$212K. Parishioner Judy Niemeyer will personally only take 1% and the total commission will be no more than 3%. This was the best deal offered to us by a number of parishioners in real estate.
- We also looked at the bids on the construction loan from three institutions that had been gathered by Jim Ketchum. Of the three, Citizens Bank and SmartBank were further considered. The Executive Committee voted to go with SmartBank, since we will not have a lien on the loan and will save additionally on interest.

Growing Faithfully Grant Update – Dee Gambill

- Dee said the Development Committee has prepared eight requests to different foundations and granting organizations.
- Some are required online, but the Committee is also sending hardcopies. A pamphlet has been prepared that will be attached to the hardcopy. Dee sent it around for the vestry to review.
- All eight have different schedules for notification.
- The Committee has tailored applications to focus more on church or school depending on the granting organization's focus.

Parish Update—De Freeman

- De made a report on attendance for Easter and Holy Week:
Palm Sunday: 390
Easter Sunday:
7:30 - 70
8:30 - 312
10:30 - 665
Easter Vigil: 94
April Average: 541 (includes Easter)
January--332 Average Sunday Attendance (ASA)
February-- 380 ASA
March--333 ASA
April-- 541 ASA (includes Holy Week)
Annual ASA is 393
- De is going on a family trip next week, followed by a mandatory clergy retreat, so he will be gone several Sundays in a row. De has been asked to talk at the retreat about leading a church through the pandemic.

Financial Update Discussion & Decisions – Amanda Montz

- Amanda Montz gave the *February Financial Report for March 2025*
- We received \$207,541 for the month from church and school which was above budget (\$182,750).
- Expenses for the month of \$177,503 for church and school were under budget (\$209,409).
- This gave us a net operating total of \$56,697 for the month.

- The *Growing Faithfully Balance Sheet* remains strong.
- Our beginning balance as of January 31, 2025, was \$1,834,686.
- We had additional contributions of \$160,442 in February and March, as well as interest income of \$12,121 for a combined income of \$172,563.
- We had expenses during that same period of \$133,271.
- Our ending balance as of March 31, 2025, was \$1,873,979.
- Merrill Lynch funds are earning between 3% and 5%.
- Please note there is a misprint on "Total Liabilities" on the Combined Balance Sheet for March 2025.
- ***Dee Gambill made a motion to approve the financials, Misty Whitehead seconded and all approved.***

Vote to Approve March Minutes

- There were no changes to the March meeting minutes.
- ***Jim Daniell made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, Dan Campbell seconded and all approved.***

Reminders: Next Vestry Meeting, Thursday, May 22

Other

Bettsie has sent an email inviting the vestry to a social at her home on Friday, May 9, 6 pm. Please rsvp if you have not already and feel free to bring something and enjoy being together.

Closing Prayer

Mother Amanda offered a closing prayer at 6:49 pm.

Submitted respectfully by Clerk of the Vestry Mary Mullins Redditt.