

St. James Vestry Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 21, 2025

5:45PM

Participants: Rector De Freeman, Parish Administrator Meghan Fancher, Senior Warden Margaret Cadden, Junior Warden Bruce Stone, Treasurer Amanda Montz, Dan Campbell, Tracy Corte, Jim Daniell, Bill Dowdle, Dee Gambill, Jennifer Lambert, Bettsie Norton, Ken Talbert, and Clerk of the Vestry Mary Mullins Redditt.

Special Guest: Chuck Coddling

Absent: Misty Whitehead, Cappi Sully

A quorum was present.

The meeting was opened by the Senior Warden at 5:49 pm.

Opening Prayer -

De opened us in prayer at 5:49 pm.

Recitation of the mission statement -

The vestry then recited together our mission statement:

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

Meditation – Dan Campbell

Dan offered a meditation from Sean Dietrich about worry and faith.

Construction Update – Chuck Coddling

Chuck provided an excerpt from his monthly report to Fr. De, Jim and Meghan and hit the highlights:

- Construction is still on track for occupancy for July 1, 2026.
- Two major near-term milestones: 1) completion of the temporary road to the parking meadow that will eventually become a driveway so the meadow can be used for overflow parking. 2) the erection of structural steel on October 22. In the meantime, contractor will be putting in slabs, etc.
- There is a detailed budget report, a rollup of which is included in our packet. Cost control is a big part of it.
- Have a budget for hard and soft costs. Also have a budget for committed costs by line item according to contract, or purchase order. Also have uncommitted costs that are out there, but yet to be committed. The committed and uncommitted costs together make up the overall project cost. They continually track savings or over-runs against the initial budget.
- There were \$160K savings this month against budget. The savings come through value engineering, such as finding lower costs for equipment or alternate ways of doing things. Had additions for various things totalling \$40 K against a cost savings of \$200K with net savings of \$160 K.
- Our contingency funding is \$250 K and haven't touched it yet.
- Have three change orders because of differing site conditions (based on inadequate records) that increased the original maximum price.
- The builder has passed on his savings to us, such as those for permitting and impact fees.
- Chuck wants to move the builder savings into a separate pot of money that will cover future change orders.
- They are currently wrestling with the City on the fire protection system. The City of Fairhope is insisting we go ahead and add sprinklers to the second floor of Green Hall and the attic. We WILL be making the building safer, and may decrease our insurance costs.

- Have one potential delay in the fabrication of the structural steel, but are feeling good about the process. Hope to start erection of structural steel in late October.
- Biggest risks we have are dealing with the differing site conditions. We are also tracking upcoming named storms. Have a process and protocol for the site if we are in the track of a named storm.
- De says the road to the meadow is going to have to come closer to the playground than originally anticipated meaning the fire pit and additional trees will have to come out.

Parking Lot Update & Opportunities – Ken Talbert

- *Some* parishioners are parking up at the middle school and taking the shuttle for the 10:30 service but we really need to encourage use of the vans, because when we hit the rainy season, the vans can drop people off right at the church doors. Otherwise, they will encounter poor conditions.
- Have use of some parishioners' golf carts, but may need to rent some from H&M. We need to get people in to the church as quickly as possible. Parishioners need to get to the middle school earlier. Want to ease the process so as to not impact attendance.
- Have six drivers for the van. Need 3-4 people to work the parking lots on Sundays. Suggested we have a sign-up for Rally Day this Sunday. Ken would like to recruit young men with young families.
- Appreciate the help of Jennifer and Chuck for all their work and ideas to improve the situation. Ken has been checking the construction and parking situation each Saturday in advance of Sunday services.

School Board Update – Cappi Sully

School Bylaws - review to be voted on in September & presented at Annual Meeting

- Cappi could not be in attendance tonight but De reported that she is heading up the paver fundraiser.
- There is a new set of bylaws. Vestry has a draft and should review over the next 30 days and come prepared to vote on them at the next meeting. The bylaws impact accreditation.
- The school is having a bit of an off-year with only 83 students. Had budgeted for attendance in the 90s. We need to be cognizant of this and not expect the school to bail the church out as much as they have in the past.
- Church needs to pull our boots up and increase our own stewardship and not rely on the school.
- One idea to boost attendance may be to open enrollment earlier than we have been.

Stewardship – De Freeman

- De has put together a stewardship campaign.
- Will start stewardship September 28 with the Harvest Festival and English Tea. Parishioners should receive an invitation Sept. 7-12.
- Focusing on time, talent and treasure.
- Will repeat the invitation in the Anchor Lines.
- Sept. 28 feature a special sermon. October will include parishioner testimonies. Harvest Sunday will be the day we collect our pledge cards on October 19. This is a 4-5 week time frame.
- Would like to put together a Generosity Team so we are talking about stewardship the year through and not just during a few weeks each year. Will be more impactful if parishioner and vestry members, school families are involved.
- How are we doing on attendance? Average Sunday Attendance to date is 358.

Jan-332

Feb-380

March-333

April-541 (Easter)

May-327

June-324

July-295

August (to date)--340

July was VERY low, but overall attendance is up in 2025 over 2024.

Financial Update Discussion & Decisions– Amanda Montz

August financial report

- July was a tough month (as it always is due to low summer attendance)
- Had \$107 K income for the church and \$47 K income for the school.
- We were under budget in total income (church and school) for the month by \$66 K and the year by \$23 K.
- We were over budget in total expenses by \$15 K but still under budget for the year by \$55 K.
- We have \$2.9 million in cash accounts with most of that temporarily restricted.
- Have sold a little more than ½ the tickets to the Chanticleer concert already. Expecting a lot of last-minute purchases.

Growing Faithfully balance sheet

- Our July 31 ending balance in our capital campaign was \$2,285, 508. However, we have some large bills coming due, so this will change by next month's report.
- The staff sent letters out to parishioners who have pledged that the first year of the campaign is up and it is time for their Year Two contributions.
- Dee reports we have also received some Foundation income. \$25 K from the Bedsole Foundation. (Will go back to them next year.) \$50 K from the Crampton Trust. There is a commitment from the Arts & Craft Foundation for \$40 K. Still have three Foundation grants being considered in the fall. After first of the year, will go back to a number of them again.

Bruce made a motion to approve the financial report, Ken seconded and all approved.

Discussion and vote to approve new HVAC in Chapel - Bruce Stone

- Bruce says we need a new air conditioner for the Chapel.
- Have an estimate from Swinson. This is who we have been working with almost exclusively and they have continuously had the most competitive prices.
- Have been trying to determine whether we need to purchase a 10- ton or 5-ton unit and have decided a 5-ton is sufficient. The 10-ton unit is \$21,300 and the 5-ton unit is \$11,739.
- ***Bruce made a motion to approve the 5-ton amount, Dan seconded and all approved.***

Vote to approve June Minutes

Bettsie made a motion to approve the June meeting minutes, Dan seconded and all approved.

Review of Off-Cycle Business - Mary Mullins Redditt

- On August 5, Father De notified the Executive Committee via email of some large ACH transactions that would take place during that week. Though purchase authorization is not required of the

Executive Committee nor vestry, Father De wanted to ensure the transactions were noted and recorded in the vestry meeting minutes out of respect for transparency. Bills handled:

- 1) Chanticleer Concert: 50% downpayment of \$9,750.00 with funds withdrawn from the St. James Concert Series Endowment;
- 2) Edgewood Partners (builder's risk insurance): \$46,725.00 with funds withdrawn from the Capital Campaign fund; and
- 3) SmartBank (construction loan origination fees and interest): \$9,826.28 with funds withdrawn from the Capital Campaign fund.

- Additionally, vestry members approved some off-cycle business of a time-sensitive nature by request via email on 7/2/2025:

FIRST: Motion to approve the following to sign checks as requested by the bank: De Freeman, Dee Gambill, Margaret Cadden, and Bruce Stone.

Ken Talbert made a motion to approve the above persons to sign checks, and Bettsie Norton seconded.

Voting yea:

1. Dan Campbell
2. Jim Daniell
3. Ken Talbert
4. Cappi Sully
5. Bettsie Norton
6. Misty Whitehead
7. Tracy Corte
8. Bruce Stone
9. Bill Dowdle
10. Dee Gambill

Voting nay:

None

The motion passes.

SECOND: Motion to approve the endorsement of Ellen Huckabay's candidacy

Misty Whitehead made a motion to approve the endorsement of Ellen Huckabay's candidacy and Bruce Stone seconded.

Voting yea:

1. Cappi Sully
2. Ken Talbert
3. Jim Daniell
4. Bill Dowdle
5. Jennifer Lambert

6. Bettsie Norton
7. Dee Gambill
8. Dan Cambell
9. Tracy Corte

Voting nay:

None

The motion passes.

Reminders: **Rally Day** is this Sunday, August 24 between all of the services!
Next Vestry Meeting is Thursday September 18, 2025

Closing Prayer

De closed us in prayer at 6:43 pm.

Minutes submitted respectfully by Clerk of the Vestry Mary Mullins Redditt