

St. James' Annual Meeting Minutes
Sunday, January 26, 2020

Annual Meeting Agenda

1. Meeting called to order by Reverend Lori
2. Opening Prayer
3. Approval of 2019 Annual Meeting Minutes
4. Introduction of Vestry Members and new Senior Warden
5. Financial Reports, Lynn Locher, Treasurer
6. Endowment Report
7. Retiring Senior Warden's Address, Monique Manjarrez, given by Katie Porter, Junior Warden
8. Comments from the Floor
9. Acceptance of the 2019 Annual Report
10. Elections of Vestry and Deanery Members
 - a. Vestry Nominations
 - b. Election of Vestry members
 - c. Convention Delegate (Deanery) Nominations
 - d. Election of Convention Delegates
11. Hymn Singing while we prepare for worship

Lori Walton called the meeting to order and led the opening prayer.

Approval of 2019 Annual Meeting Minutes

- Motion was made to approve the January 27, 2019 annual meeting minutes as submitted. Moved by E.J. Hilliard, seconded by Greg Feeney. Motion approved.

Introduction of Vestry Members

- Lori introduced the vestry members who were present at the annual meeting: Sally Morgan, Sylvia Ma, Julie Guzior, John Kimber, Bob Doherty, and Katie Porter. Kimberly Patton, Monique Manjarrez, Laura Winter, and Josephine Amadi were absent.
- The retiring vestry members were Katie Porter, John Kimber, Josephine Amadi, and Kimberly Patton.
- Lori presented a gift to each of the retiring vestry members and thanked them for their service.

New Senior Warden

- Sylvia Ma is the new senior warden for 2020.

Financial Reports – Lynn Locher

- The financial activities of the church are not done just by Lynn Locher, the treasurer – there is a group of people that make it happen.
 - Counters – led by Jan Brandt and Gail Blalock. Jan and Gail enter the donations into software (Church Windows) that produces the pledge statements. Teams of two counters meet on Sunday or Monday to record donations received during the church service or by mail during the week. Additional counting is done after special services, such as Christmas. All donations are individually recorded and then added up, so that they can be entered in Church Windows and QuickBooks. The counters are

responsible for taking the funds to Heritage Bank, where St. James' banks.

- The counters are Jan Brandt, Gail Blalock, Mary Casas, Katie Cunningham, Avis Gonzales, Cathy Knotts, and Ruth Poole.
- Accounts payable is usually done by our administrative assistant. However, while our administrative assistant was on maternity leave, and when she later left for another position, Jan Brandt stepped in. Our new administrative assistant, Ron Cook, is now doing accounts payable.
- At the beginning of the new month, Alison Saichek reconciles all the accounts and produces a report for the vestry.
- At the end of the year our operating cash \$49,591.00. We are a not for profit organization.
- \$10,517.81 was moved into the building fund. Our building fund is now \$70,259.00.
- There is \$231,794.00 in special interest.
- Our pledge payments were 3.3% below what was promised by people who pledged. While that is not unusual for many parishes, it is unusual for St. James'. Usually, St. James' receives more in payments than what was actually pledged. However, St. James' was lucky that people who donated but not pledged made up that deficit.
- Overall, income as 100.7% of budget.
- Expenses were 7.5% below budget, in part because our administrative assistant was on maternity leave and then left, and Anna Horen left at the end of summer. Because of that, we were able to move the money into the building fund.
- Thanks to parishioner's donations towards special interest funds, we were able to contribute money and labor to build a house in Mexico, we paid tuition for two girls in high school in Kenya, and we contributed to SAVE, Abode Services, and Centerville Dining. Parishioners were also generous in providing school supplies in the fall.
- St. James' enters 2020 with a \$20,000 deficit. We hope that if at all possible people will be able to give more than they pledged and we will do our best to hold expenses down.

Endowment Report

- Cathy Knotts was unable to attend the meeting, so Lynn Locher read the Endowment report.

For over 150 years, St. James' has been an active presence in our Fremont community. In 2003, a group of forward-thinking parishioners shared a long-term vision of creating an Endowment to ensure that St. James' would continue to be a welcoming place for worship and service in our community long into the future. They began by first declaring their intention to include St. James' in their estate planning, and then followed up by donating funds or by including St. James' as a beneficiary of their wills, trusts, insurance policies, IRAs or other investments.

This was the beginning of the St. James' Endowment Fund and the St. James' Shell Society (which is simply the group of people who stated their desire to support the St. James' Endowment). In addition to the original general endowment fund, additional funds were subsequently added for the St. James' Little Church and the Memorial Garden.

With support from those original visionaries and others who joined their ranks over the years, the Endowment Fund has grown from \$7,200 in 2004 to \$220,022.59 at the end of 2019. The bulk of the St. James' Endowment Fund is managed by State Street Global Advisors (which is part of the Episcopal Church Foundation Endowment Management Services). With favorable market conditions and upon request for specific activities, the Endowment Board can annually distribute part of the accrued interest back to the St. James', with the principal remaining in perpetuity.

The Endowment Board currently includes Mary Casas, Jino Joseph, John Butterfield, Ralph Locher, and St. James' Treasurer Lynn Locher who is an ex officio member of the Board. Cathy Knotts recently stepped down from the Endowment Board, and Craig Genter has agreed to be nominated to fill this vacancy.

Planning ahead to get your financial affairs in order and indicate your wishes, including providing for charities closest to your heart, can lead to greater peace of mind for yourself and for your family. With this in mind, please consider joining the St. James' Shell Society and including the St. James' Endowment Fund in your estate plans. If you may be interested or want to learn more about the Endowment Board, please contact any one of us for more information.

The Endowment Board voted to provide the vestry with a payment of \$6,489.90 when the vestry is ready with a capital improvement project or a new ministry. In the meantime, the board will hold the funds.

The Memorial Garden committee once again declined their payout.

The Little Church has exterior work to do and thus will accept their check for \$1,631.32.

- Sylvia Ma accepted the check for the Little Church fund.
- Last year the market tanked and we were unable to make any distribution from the Endowment Fund. So the committee was thrilled to see how well our investments have done this year and to be able to make this distribution.

Senior Warden's Address

- Monique Manjarrez was unable to attend the meeting, so Katie Porter, junior warden, read the address.

Good morning everyone. It's your Senior Warden, Monique Manjarrez, sharing a few words with you from 2300 miles away. At this very moment I am on the island of Roatan, which is one of the Bay Islands of Honduras. During my visit to Roatan, I feel blessed to be able to visit an extremely poor school on the island, as well as bringing them much needed school supplies. As a teacher this is meaningful to me, but as an Episcopalian, it feels like doing God's work.

Now, I'm going to switch gears with a funny story. I grew up attending a Catholic church my entire life before coming to St. James'. As you can understand, Senior Wardens are not something you would see in Catholic parishes. However, when I came to St. James', I heard the term Senior Warden for the first time. It was a few months before I finally learned what a Senior Warden really was, but I'm a little embarrassed to admit that I initially thought a Senior Warden was a senior citizen that was in charge of the church. I feel silly about that now, but when I told my family I was going to be the Senior Warden of my church for 2019, they too were confused and asked if that meant I roamed the halls with a big set of keys hooked to my belt. My mom said she envisioned a prison warden walking the halls at night checking doors. Joking aside, being a Senior Warden to St. James' has been far from comical. It has been a

wonderful experience that has allowed me to refine my leadership skills and connect with St. James more than I ever have before.

I am grateful for the times that I was able to learn more about St. James' and all the moving parts of our church. I feel blessed for the new friendships I gained from within the Vestry, as well as connecting with the various groups in our parish. And I am also grateful for the opportunities I was able to engage in difficult vestry discussions, because the honest truth is that we can sometimes learn more about ourselves and others when we challenge our thinking and truly listen to views that oppose our own.

It has been my pleasure to be your Senior Warden for 2019 and I wish the incoming Warden the very best in 2020. Lastly, I'd like to give a round of applause to our outgoing Vestry members. It has been my honor to work alongside each one of you. Thank you for your commitment to our church. And one last thank you to Lori for her guidance and leadership, and allowing me to partake in this experience

Thank You's from Lori Walton

- To Jennifer Ravera, our music director. She is joy to work with, and is flexible and willing to try new things.
- To Jan Scrutton, our children and youth minister. She goes above and beyond over and over.
- To Bill Hale, our assisting priest.
- To Ron Cook, our parish administer
- To Dave Nelsen, for all that he does for the building and grounds around St. James'
- To Mike Scrutton, for his work on the computers, networks, and software
- To Janet Fischer, for her work on the St. James' website. Most new people who come to St. James' find out about our church through our website. Our website is well done – it is fresh, relevant, and up to date.
- To Ruth Poole, who helps with every funeral
- To the people who have volunteered in the office – Jan Brandt, Gail Blalock, Katie Cunningham, Sally Morgan, and Lauren Doherty, and those who have brought food to the receptions.
- To the people who have helped with the financial part of running the church – Jan Brandt, Gail Blalock, Alison Saichek, Lynn Locher, and all of the counters.
- To the Altar Guild, led by Katie Cunningham, who set our sacred space for Sunday services and other services.
- To the 6 am Bible study, which was a ministry at St. James' for 39 years.
- To Ralph Locher, who has retired from his work creating, publishing, and editing the Window newsletter, another long-standing ministry at St. James'. There is a commemorative issue of the Window to honor Ralph.
- Thank you also to the other past and present editors of the Window – Janet Fischer, Penny Trant, Katie Porter, Marilyn Rose, and Laura Winter.

Comments from the Floor

- Jan Brandt – thank you to Sylvia Ma and the Little Church committee and all the volunteers for their work on the Little Church.
- Bobbie Tomkinson – asked that the lettering on the slides be printed in black so they are easier to read.
- Scott Whitaker – Scott mentioned the possible purchasing of a new fence with our neighbors. He suggested that we do it right and get the best bid, not necessarily the cheapest bid.

- Jennifer Ravera – thank you to St. James’ for keeping her on as music director. Thank you to the choir for all their hard work. Thank you to Bud Pearson and Bruce Roberts for all their work after the keyboard disaster. Bruce Roberts went above and beyond researching and finding the new keyboard in record time.
- Gregg Feeney – as part of the men’s group he wanted to encourage people to come to the men’s group breakfast. He also wanted to encourage younger men to attend the men’s trip in August. The average age of the men’s trip is 63.
- John Butterfield – thanked Burtin Hart for serving as usher coordinator.
- John Kimber – thanked all the volunteers who worked on the Little Church. The vestry searched around for someone to do it, but Jim Cunningham said the work could be done with volunteers. Hundreds of hours of work was done, and thousands of dollars was saved by all the work of the volunteers.
- Jennifer Ravera – also thanked Alison Saichek for playing the flute.
- Dave Nelsen – The grounds take a lot of hard work, and many people volunteer their time to do the hard work on the grounds. Over \$1,000 was saved by volunteers taking the ivy off the fence.
- Jim McConnell – thanked the new lectors.
- Ruth Poole – special thanks to Lori for putting up with all of us.

Acceptance of the 2019 Annual Report

- The annual report is a record of what has happened at St. James’ in 2019.
- Thank you to Janet Fischer for compiling the annual report.
- Motion was made to accept the 2019 Annual Report as submitted. Moved by Jim McConnell, seconded by Ralph Locher. Motion approved.

Election of Vestry Members

- Vestry members are elected to serve on the vestry, our governing board, for a 3-year term.
- Meetings are once a month. This year the meetings will be held on the third Thursday of the month. This will allow the lead team (the rector, wardens, and treasurer) to get all the reports and documents together in time for the vestry meeting.
- The vestry is the visible leadership of the church. They make decisions on financial matters and some program matters.
- The St. James’ bylaws state that the vestry needs to have between 10 and 12 members.
- In 2019 there were 10 vestry members, and 4 are retiring, so at least 4 are needed.
- One position is a 2-year term that was vacated by Stephen Ferro when he moved. Bob Bynum has agreed to run for a 2-year term.
- The other 4 candidates have agreed to run for a 3-year term – Janet Fischer, Tim Fortescue, Mary Frances Leopold, and Jim McConnell.
- Motion was made to accept Bob Bynum, Janet Fischer, Tim Fortescue, Mary Frances Leopold, and Jim McConnell as vestry members for 2020 by acclamation. Moved by E.J. Hillard, seconded by Bruce Roberts. Motion approved.

Convention Delegate (Deanery) Nominations

- Our Deanery representatives are also our delegates to Convention. They attend Convention once a year, and attend 2 to 3 Deanery meetings a year.

- We have 5 delegates, and they each serve a 2-year term.
- Our 3 continuing Deanery representatives/delegates to convention are Scott Whitaker, Meg Amouroux, and John Amouroux.
- The people who are retiring, Jim McConnell and Ken Trant, have agreed to sign up for another 2 years.
- Our alternatives are Penny Trant and Elaine Miller.
- Motion was made to accept Ken Trant and Jim McConnell as our Deanery representatives/delegates to convention by acclamation. Moved by Janet Fischer, seconded by Meg Amouroux.

Additional Comments

- Gregg Feeney suggested an open-air compost bin for just the grass clippings and leaves we collect. The compost could be used on the grounds. Gregg has offered to manage, and perhaps involve the Cub Scouts. Lori requested that Gregg present a written plan to the vestry.

Rector's Address – Lori Walton

This sermon serves as both the Annual Meeting Rector's Address and the Sermon for the combined service.

Cesar was in charge, no doubt. Wielding his power from a distance, sending his minions out to do his dirty work. Pilate pushing down on the people, squeezing them to a point of desperation. Herod the puppet king, corrupt as they come, an egomaniac threatened by any whiff of power that wasn't his to grab. The world was desperate, lost... almost. The air in Jerusalem was bad and so was the air in Nazareth. Like Jerusalem, Nazareth was a hard place, the people battered by being beaten down, trying to eek out a living as a farmer, or merchant, or blacksmith. The nearby town was Capernaum. A fishing village and trade route that saw a diversity of people passing through. Even there, for the Jewish people, darkness and death, the stink of poverty and the bloody fingers of trying to scratch your way out was normal, it had been happening for so long.

This is the scene Jesus walks into when he enters Capernaum, this desperation, this suffering. There is no easy road if he's going to accomplish his mission. He must walk the walk of suffering like the people he has come to save. He must walk the walk of self-sacrifice if he's to show others the way to salvation.

Jesus goes to Capernaum. The gospel says he "withdrew", but the more accurate translation is that he "fled". His cousin John was arrested and Jesus knew what that meant. No tolerance for rebel-rousers. No patience with anyone who is going to buck the system, question authority, make some noise, draw some attention. So Jesus flees.

But Jesus, he's not fleeing from something as much as he is fleeing towards somebody. He is not running away, he is running to. From the desert with the devil to the sea with Peter and Andrew, James and John. Four men, sand in their hair, salt in their nostrils, the smell of fish on their hands. Simple men, living lives of hardship, trying to make it work with the only thing they have going for them - a boat on the sea and a fishing net.

And here comes Jesus, irresistible. Irresistible because of what? Because of his fancy talk? He doesn't say anything eloquent. Because of his stunning looks? He looks like the rest of the men of the time, nothing special. Irresistible because for no other reason than he is the son of God. He is the Son of God. And when the Son of God,

when the Word made flesh, when the Incarnate Lord comes before you, crooks his finger and beckons you and says "follow me"... that is exactly what you do. You drop whatever you're holding, whatever has tied you to this corrupt and broken world, whatever has kept you from being totally and completely free, and you follow. Because deep in your soul, right here at your core, you want what Jesus is offering - freedom and love and peace and purpose.

James and John, Peter and Andrew, they drop those nets and they do just that. They follow Jesus. What a daring move. What courage. What hutzpah. This Jesus stuff wasn't for the faint of heart, not then and not now. When the first disciples made that life-altering and world-changing decision to follow Jesus, they were stepping out in a boldness they have never before known. They were taking a huge risk, leaving the familiar, stepping away from what they knew, moving into a bold and courageous paradigm that challenged them to be more than who they previously were, not on their own or by their own power, but through the power and call of Jesus Christ, through the companionship and connection to the Living God. I don't know if they really, fully, understood what they were signing up for, but it didn't matter. When Christ calls, you follow, what else are you going to do?

The disciples, these guys were bold. They had courage. They had gumption. And they had something even more. They had the beckoning hand of God calling them forward, giving them whatever it was they thought they might be lacking, giving them everything they needed to move forward into the world to change the world.

We, here at St. James', we have the beckoning hand of God as well, calling us into a new way of being, calling us to help Christ transform the world. This is my tenth annual meeting with you and in these years, we have accomplished a lot. We have welcomed new people and made our tent bigger and more impactful. We have strengthened our children's and youth ministry. We have developed our outreach program. We have built a house in Mexico so a family could have a roof over their heads and a place to call their own. We have made it possible for two girls to get an education in Kenya, giving them a way out of the poverty that has stricken their families. We have laughed together and cried together, we have celebrated the light and cursed the darkness together. And through it all, we have remained One Body in Christ Jesus. We have been strengthened and fortified by our love and dependence on Christ, and from this point forward, it will be Christ who leads and guides us just as he always has done.

We have accomplished a lot but God is not done with us yet. We still have much to do here at St. James' because this world that we live in, this beautiful and broken world that we live in, it is in despair and in desperate need for the healing touch of Christ.

But we cannot attend to this world if we don't step out in faith. We cannot do it with our nets caught up in our hands, our security blankets wrapped tightly around our shoulders. We can only do it, the work Christ is calling us to do, as a community of faithful believers and followers, if we set down our nets, freeing ourselves from the fear of change and difference, breaking the chains of the old way so that something new might be borne, taking that bold and brazen step of following Jesus Christ, no matter what the price. No matter what the cost.

We may worry that the impact of this boldness may be discomfort, that following this Christ might cost us something we aren't ready to give up, and that may be the case. But I submit that the cost of NOT following Jesus Christ when he beckons is more costly than following him would be. What person would rather play it safe, hang on to their safety net, only to find a mediocre and banal life, than to set down that binding net, the thing that has trapped them in place, being free to be fully human, fully alive?

What person would rather sit in comfort and be numb and half-dead rather than trusting in a God that will nourish and care for us if and when we pay attention to the needs and suffering others? Christ has beckoned us to be bold, to live bigger than we're living, to step further into his realm of glory and grace, to embrace his world whole-heartedly with arms outstretched and hearts filled with love.

We here at St. James', we have a lot of work to do, as do all Christians. At his concert last week, John McCutcheon said his wife had gone back to work and perhaps this was the year he was meant to slow down. And then he realized what year it was, and decided that this year, of all years, was NOT the year to slow down. It is not the year for us to slow down either. In fact, this is the year for us to speed up, to do more, to step out, to be bold like Peter and Andrew and James and John. This is the year to stand up and proclaim from the highest mountain and the low laid valleys that there is a power greater than any human power, a power that has the strength to right all of the wrong that has been done, to redeem all of the good that has been damaged, to have mercy on all that needs forgiving, to cleanse us of the corruption, the defilement, the stain that has been put upon humanity through sin and darkness.

The only solution to the place we now find ourselves in, this place of darkness and despair, the only solution is the light of Jesus Christ, made real in our lives, beckoning us to have faith, to trust, to be more, to follow. Like the fishermen in Capernaum, we, too, have a purpose that is tied to Jesus, and that purpose is to make Christ known through our own lives and actions.

So what does 2020 hold for us? I don't yet know. It is the Spirit who will reveal it to us if we listen, if we pay attention. What I do know is that we, St. James', we are meant to be a church that is known for boldness. For stepping out and proclaiming that there is a force in this world so powerful, so magnetic, so transforming, that it does and will overcome any obstacle before us. I want us to be the church that is not afraid of a challenge, not afraid to set down our nets, not afraid to be different, not afraid to claim our place as followers of Jesus Christ, not for our own sake but for the sake of the world.

What will it take? It will take courage. It will take commitment. It will take patience, with change and with each other. It will take financial resources. It will take a hands on, in the trenches, an "I care enough to spend my time doing it" attitude.

I don't know what will be revealed this upcoming year. I don't know what bold thing we might do but I trust the Holy Spirit in her guiding wisdom to reveal it to us. Maybe it will look like changing that unused land out there by Thornton into something useful for those in need. Maybe it will look like using our parking lot as a safe place for people living in their cars. Maybe it will look like a creative way to make a financial impact for those who are sinking to the bottom. Whatever it might be, we must do it together. We cannot do it individually, we cannot do it with just a few, we cannot do it if we don't have wide-spread buy-in, we cannot do it without each of you. And that means that here, on Sunday mornings, we are more than just a club gathered to sing some music and say some prayers and be done. Here on Sunday mornings, we are instead a community of change-makers, of believers in the power of God, a community of those who intend on and will settle for nothing less than making a difference.

The bishop of Atlanta, Rob Wright, says "In Atlanta, we don't do religious entertaining." Well, in Fremont, we don't either. What this means is that yes, you do come here to get filled. But for what purpose? Not for the purpose of self-satisfaction or self-gratification or self-fulfillment. But for the purpose of service. For the purpose of learning how to set down your nets, to drop all that is blocking you from taking that

bold and courageous step of surrendering everything to God, of giving your life over to Jesus Christ, lock stock and barrel, fully and completely, and following his way.

That is church. We are church. We exist for the Glory of God, and that Glory is brilliant and bold. The question for us to ask is, how will we live up to it?

Amen.

The slideshow of the events of 2019 was presented at the end of the worship service.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Hart
Clerk of the Vestry