

St. John in the Wilderness

Parish Council Meeting Minutes - Thursday April 9, 2026

Present: Rev. Sherry De Jonge, Brian Bradford, Deb Walker, Peter Langille, Kathy Morris, Mike Moloney, Haley Walker, Brent Anderson, Sandra Fraser, Gwen McBean, Susan Halliday, Karen Wilson, Ingrid Schmid

Regrets: Aruna Anderson, Sandy Dawson, Brian Fogg

Scribe: Deb Walker

Opening – Rev. Sherry opened with a prayer.

Reviewed previous Minutes, (no corrections)

MOTION to accept by Susan seconded by Sandra PASSED by All.

Business arising from the minutes.

None.

Rector's Report

There will be a wedding here on Saturday, September 26, 2026, in the late morning – Courtney Beauchamp and Sean Brownburg. They are unsure of need or an organist. Courtney's family has historical connection with our church.

We had a marvelous Holy Week. Rev Sherry says she is recovering from all the activity/work. She will start up bible study this coming week. Kathy indicated feedback from the parish for the Holy Week services has been very good and thanked Sherry.

Sherry is pacing herself – which we need her to do. Sherry will be taking some time off in early May (Ottawa for the tulip festival and family). In addition, towards the end of July and early August she will be going to Ottawa to help with her new grandchild. And in early October she will take some time to visit friends.

Wardens' Report

Kathy attended her first Deanery meeting in March. Our Deanery covers from Walpole Island to Strathroy. The Ven. Amanda Longmoore spoke of the **Huron Farm ministry**; government funding is down from \$250,000 to \$160,00 this year so they are looking to raise funds. They also are looking for bicycles, and clothing for men and women. Migrant workers are

only allowed to leave the farm for 3 or 4 hours per week by law. Some farmers give them a whole day off, others only 3 or 4 hours – so even shopping for clothes can be a challenge. The Diocese also donates to this group. Kathy suggested we have Enrique come and speak to the parish, the Parish Council thought that a good idea.

We will do Worship in the Park again this year – June 28, 10 am at Canatara Park by the lake (per last year). Bishop Todd will attend and an offering will be taken up for The Bishop's Friends Fund which is a discretionary fund for the Bishop.

The Lambton Area Refugee Committee (LARC) continue in their effort to make progress to bring refugee families to Lambton from the Middle East.

Deanery elections occurred.

Saturday, April 21 from 9 am to noon there is a Safe Church course at Watford Trinity church – it is focussed on **suicide awareness and prevention** (\$25 to attend).

The Petrolia churches have gotten together and are promoting Christianity across their denominations – supporting each other. The hope is the events will draw people into churches.

Property Committee – Brian B.

The last of Ken Walker's memorial fund from 2022 was used in April to **strip and wax the tile floors** around the pews in the main church and the washrooms – they look pretty good!

With the help of many parishioners, a number of other items were donated over the last few years via this memorial fund to the glory of God and in loving memory of Ken. Some were:

- we had professionals **remove mould post-Covid** from our walls in the main church,
- we upgraded the **windows** high over the church door (replacing old plexiglass), in the sacristy and the south end of the hall,
- we had professionals **paint/refurbish the walls** of the church hall, washrooms, and rector's office,
- we installed a little **garden shed** to help parishioners engage with our lawn and garden,
- we **improved drainage north of the church** by having professionals connect the sump pump exit pipe from north of the hall to the catch basin east of the front porch. And then two years later Kyle and Haley further improved it by donating labour and funds in loving memory of Ken to have Lambton Excavation install Big-O pipe along the top of the same pipe and from the sanctuary and kitchen vents.
- we **improved vents under the church**,
- between mould removal, installation of dehumidifiers, and other water and temperature control - **the musty smell we were known for over the decades is gone**, this alone is wonderful,
- we also bought a **projector** useful for meetings and perhaps for watching a movie or two one day. Karl Schmid was kind and skilled enough to convert the Crocker kneeler to a

beautiful stand for the projector for use in church, and Brent and Mike installed an easy to use, but out of sight, screen in the sanctuary.

Ken said, back in early 2022, that he "wanted the place fixed up a little" with the funds. **Deb and clan thank everyone who contributed time, talent, labour, and funds** over the last few years, stretching out the use of the memorial fund - Ken would be singing you [praise](#) (click "praise" for a joyful snip-it from Ken & Brenden, 2019).

Other projects/items completed and observed later in March and early April include:

- **Our electrical upgrades were completed.** The plugs in the hall were positioned such that it is safer to plug in our coffee maker. We covered the bare light bulbs in the Sacristy and hallway between the Nave and Hall - thanks Brent for the donation of fixtures. We now have a dedicated plug/circuit for the dehumidifier (and Christmas tree) in the Nave. Thanks to Brian B for donating \$400 towards the \$763 overall bill for this!
- **The hands-free microphone system** from Canon Davis is working very well for us with the repair made by Mike Moloney and purchase of a hands-free headset microphone - a low cost (\$140) needed replacement to our crackling/failing hands-free lapel microphone. Our backup will be our old transmitter, receiver, and lapel microphone. Blessings and thanks to Canon Davis as they close.
- **The front door for the church has been ordered.** It will take about 8 weeks or so to be made and installed. Mike is heading up this project. Thanks to Gwen McBean and the ACW for donating the funds to the glory of God and in loving memory of Jim McBean and Brenda Clingersmith. Small loving memorial treasures from Gwen McBean and Bob Clingersmith are being included in the frame of the door.
- **The Polands had mulch laid in the memorial garden** in the east yard of the church. God bless Brent Poland and others remembered.
- **Deb cleaned up the gardens by the church porch** just before Easter.
- Lakeshore Lawn & Landscape Ltd **graded piles of stones from winter plowing in the parking lot. They also cleaned up our south swale.** The parking lot drained well after our big rain this week.
- **Our north yard drainage projects from previous years performed well** in the big rain this past week! The rain came down so hard that the backup sump pump kicked in to augment our main sump pump. The concrete floor beneath the hall by the sump pit remained dry - WHOO WHOO!
- **The beams under the hall's north wall continue to be damp** (not dripping but damp) during cold north winds - the Property Committee are looking at low-cost means to mitigate this such that we avoid the beam rot which caused us to sister/augment beams during the 2007 addition project. This will likely involve insulating the north wall of the storage room, bathrooms, hall, and kitchen.
- **Brian B fired up the mower in the shed in the north yard - it is working!** Brian sharpened the blade and changed the oil, the air filter is clean, the gas can is full of gas with stabilizer. **Please let Deb know if you will mow this year.**

It is time to clean the north gardens. We will be looking for a little help likely from parishioners.

Deb conducted an extensive survey of our keys for the church hall. We have had a robust key log since the lock was installed in 2007. Thanks to Mike Moloney for creating the log when he was a warden. Over the last few months, we looked at getting a digital lock with smart phone functionality; the cost was several thousand dollars. We agreed as a Parish Council on April 9 that we would not purchase a new lock/key system - our current lock and key system is robustly adequate. Parishioners with keys, please continue to return them to a warden, Deb, or our Secretary Heather when you no longer need them, so we may maintain our key log.

ACW Report – Leslie Grieve

The ACW met April 1st, alas there is no April Fools Prank included in this report, sorry.

- We are thrilled to host a luncheon this coming Sunday to honour Jim and Marie's 70th anniversary.
- The ACW has increased the amount we are gifting to the annual gathering of ACW in our diocese which funds a myriad of agencies and projects.
- Work is going on to have a new blue altar frontal for Advent, with the project funded through our group.
- We are pleased to be part of the new front door project in loving memory of Brenda Clingersmith.
- A vote was taken and the group will donate up to \$1000 to a project that the Property Committee takes on.

Treasurer's Report

As of March, we are about 3% under target for Givings and 1% below last years Givings. This would be difficult if we had a full-time Rector. So, we need to focus on increasing Givings a little.

Operating Expenses are on plan with apportionment still to be paid.

Brian Fogg filed our tax forms with the government.

MOTION to accept by Haley seconded by Kathy PASSED by All.

New Business

- **Safe Church:** Ingrid has sent the spreadsheet for people requiring police checks to the Diocese. The majority of people required to watch the Safe Church video have done so and Ingrid is following up with those who still need to view the video. Hall users have demonstrated they have a safety policy.
- **Parish List Update & Parish Photo Project:** Haley has made the Google form to send to parishioners to collect information and photos. Kathy will issue the Google form, perhaps engaging Heather as it should go from our church email account to avoid Cogeco accounts from blocking it as spam. Aim is to update the parish list, particularly phone numbers as these we have found to be out of date, and to get photos of parishioners for parishioners to be able to view and associate a name with a face.
- **Plant Sale:** Sandra Fraser will lead our annual plant sale. **It will be Saturday, May 23, from 8:30 am to noon** (the weekend after Victoria Weekend). Please pot your plants sooner rather than later (they look healthier if you pot a week or two in advance and water them).

Correspondence

None

Other Business

None

MOTION to adjourn by Ingrid.

Closing

We closed with The Grace.