

St. John in the Wilderness

Parish Council Meeting Minutes - Thursday December 11, 2025

Present: Brian Bradford, Sandra Fraser, Brent Anderson, Deb Walker, Peter Langille, Susan Halliday, Brian Fogg, Mike Moloney, Ingrid Schmid, Kathy Morris

Regrets: Leslie Grieve, Brenden Fraser, Rev Sherry DeJonge, Sandy Dawson, Aruna Anderson,

Scribe: Deb Walker

Opening – Sandra Fraser led us in prayer.

Reviewed previous Minutes, (no corrections)

MOTION to accept by Brian B seconded by Kathy PASSED by All.

Business arising from the minutes. None.

Rector's Report (Sherry e-mailed this to us)

There is a possibility for a small wedding on February 7th, 2026. Further discussion is forthcoming. I do not know yet if they require music, etc.

The Advent 4 Lessons and Carols service is ready.

The Christmas Eve bulletins and the Christmas Day bulletin are almost done and ready to send to Heather by early next week.

Afton Park and Vision Care services are both next week (none on Boxing Day).

Bible Study will resume Thursday, 08 January 2026 -- 10.00 am at the Church Hall.

Wardens' Report

Excluding financial reports, 40 % of reports are in to Heather for **Vestry**. They are due in by Monday, December 15.

Huron Farmworkers – The Deanery is supporting a unique ministry for Huron farmworkers – they are supported spiritually and materially (see the Deanery minutes on the hall bulletin board). We will collect new and/or gently used men's warm clothing until the end of December and then the Deanery churches will drop off at Trinity Church for pick up. Peter to announce.

Property Committee – Brian B.

Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning Upgrade

We replaced our air-conditioning units and two of our three gas furnaces with heat pumps, for the entire building, an electric furnace for the church proper (for back-up of the heat pump in very cold weather), and a split heat pump with electric back-up heat for the Rector's office.

You can see this new heating infrastructure in the sacristy (new furnace), in the hall's furnace room (one furnace has been removed, we have more space and a plan for it), outside south of the sacristy and west of the building (old air conditioning units are gone, new heat pumps are in place) and on the walls (we have new thermostats).

In addition, you can perhaps hear the difference with the big return air vents over the church doorway leading to the hall being less noisy.

Thanks to Doug for his research and generosity. Thanks to Mike and Brent for overseeing and helping where needed with the installation by Handy Bros.

Charlene and Doug, keeping us warm and green for years to come

Thanks to Mike and Brent for the following work:

The cold air return vent above the church exit to the hallway was replaced. It had been removed for a few months as we tried to dampen sound from the old gas furnace in the Sacristy. The new heat pump/electric furnace generates less sound in this duct.

The toilet seats in our washrooms were replaced. As part of this the toilet in the west washroom was resealed to the floor and fastened with stainless screws (the old screws were not stainless and had rusted away since their installation in the 2006 addition project). The area under this toilet is in need of replacement at some point, this would include a new tile floor for the bathroom (late 2026 or 2027).

There was work done on both **front pews**; the front rest boards were loose at the floor (they tilted a little when leaned on). Brent fastened them to the floor with several big screws.

One of our **vinyl-covered kneelers** was taken apart to examine the state of the foam below the vinyl. The foam is in excellent shape (we could not do better if we got new foam). Brent may start to recover kneelers as a late winter/spring project (we have the new vinyl). He has completed one that is on the west side of the church about one-third way down from the front – the wine-coloured vinyl is beautiful in our setting.

We have two estimates for replacement of the rotten **front red church doors**. We will get one more estimate.

ACW Report (Reported by Sandra)

The ACW bake sale was a great success bringing in the community and raised \$1,486. The Lambton Anglican church women got together for lunch at John's Restaurant on December 3; about 40 women got together, had great company, left gifts for the Women's Interval Home and did a few crafts. A good time was had by all.

Treasurer's Report

Givings were slightly over goal for November. We are 3.4% below goal year-to-date. Expenses are below budget, primarily due to having an interim priest. We received a significant memorial donation from Doug Winch for a new HVAC system.

We have, per previous Parish Council minutes and as voted by Parish Council, exceeded our Vestry outreach budget by \$2000.

MOTION to accept by Brian B seconded by Brent PASSED by all.

2026 Proposed Budget:

Brian F. presented the proposed budget for 2026. We will maintain the 2025 givings goal but we need to hit this in 2026 – we are 3.4% below budgeted givings in 2025. Expenses will be up as we hope to have a full-time rector come on sometime in 2026. Apportionment rate is up 1.7% from 2025 – it now 25% of effective (much of) Operational Expenses. Our 2026 apportionment to the Diocese is \$25,909. Heating and cooling cost is up a little. Insurance is up about \$1,000 (11%) from what we will pay in 2025. Outreach is budgeted for \$1000 more than we gave in 2025 – part of this would be used for Huron Camp if we have families struggling financially to attend. We budgeted \$10,000 for capital to replace the rotting front red doors and \$3,000 for other miscellaneous items. Our operating revenue will exceed our operating expenses slightly – due to having an interim priest for part of the year and increased parishioner givings by 3.4%.

MOTION to forward this budget with our support to Vestry by Mike seconded by Ingrid PASSED by all.

New Business

We sold over \$14,000 in FundScrip in December and this brought \$510 to the parish; in addition, we had \$155 in the account prior to this. Thanks Sandra F. Sandra indicated again that it would be good if a volunteer took on marketing to our congregation use of FundScrip digitally throughout the year.

Correspondence

None

Other Business

Our new HVAC is struggling to hold the temperature in the church proper to 69 degrees, particularly in colder weather. We are working through this with Handy Bros.

I (Deb) let Council know that I am stepping down as warden as of Vestry. I have served for the 5-year term, and it has been a privilege. I have learned much about property maintenance, our wonderful eclectic clan of parish people, and the workings of church administration. I hope I have served the parish well. I have asked to be on Parish Council in 2026. Blessings and thanks.

Susan spoke about the December 19 Community Carol Sing at 7 pm. She read the insert Bob has written about the church outreach – it is lovely. She asks that we leave some empty pews for visitors. It will be an hour of carols to attract the public to St. John in the Wilderness. This is not a church service; attendees will be singing carols as Susan, our Organist, Choir Director Brenden, and the Lambton County Fiddlers all play. Sandra Lamoureux, our Envelope Secretary and a member of the Lambton County Fiddlers, will play her flute, there will be fiddles, a viola, an additional keyboard, a Celtic drum and all our voices from the pews. We will give information on our history and outreach with an aim to attract new members. It will be delightful. Eve Morgan has made a poster which Peter will post locally in stores etc and Haley will post on our Facebook page. Pass the word through social media and friends.

MOTION to adjourn by Ingrid.

Closing

Closed with The Grace.