

Grounds Report, Benjamin Davis

2019 was my first year as Vestry Grounds Liaison. Here is my annual report:

In January, heavy rainfall revealed a clog in our storm drain system which was purged by our plumber Mr. Rooter using a pressurized cleaning technique. A new drain system and light was added by our volunteer contractor Floyd Butler. Inspection and possibly pressurized cleanings will be needed annually moving forward.

Our volunteer lay weeding team met on two occasions in April, to help maintain the landscaping: weeds were removed, debris was removed, and the grounds were prepared for mulch. The outer perimeter is no longer being watered by our irrigation system. If any plants cannot cope with a lack of irrigation they will be removed after the root structure dies.

The interior perimeter was watered automatically starting in June and was disabled for the wet season. It will be reactivated soon to provide water twice a week in the early morning during the dry season.

New plantings were made, and a bucket brigade used to nurture them. The shelf with plants above our front door was maintained and monitored.

In the past year, several issues involving water leaks have been addressed, including a punctured pipe and a continuous leak feeding the cistern. The leak into the cistern was significant and the water bill should be noticeably lower in 2020.

The contract with Patagonia Landscaping was maintained throughout the year and was managed by Anne Sherwood. It will be reconsidered next year; possibly using a new team.

Anne Sherwood announced her retirement from shouldering the landscape management and has phased out her duties over the last six months. We will be working to find a new volunteer to replace Anne in the coming months. A more active engagement with our landscape contractor will be pursued and if an English-speaking foreman cannot be provided, I would like to hire a new contractor. Matt McCabe is one of the primary people interfacing with Patagonia and I would like to make sure our needs are met regularly and that we get our money's worth.

The grounds were mulched by a new vendor, Jet Mulch, in July. The layer of mulch, with a volume of 70 cubic yards, should last two years.

A Seabreeze Homeowner's Association neighbor, Jeanne Pifferini, initiated a collaborative replacement of a fifty-foot piece of fencing and retaining wall. Eventually Adam Grant of Grantscape completed the replacement with 50% of the cost being shouldered by St. John's. There are continuing problems along the fence line that are part of the Parish's responsibility. If approached, the same policy of a 50% share of cost must be maintained by law.

A new sexton lives on our grounds. His name is Matt McCabe and he acts on a volunteer basis. He will continue to provide much of the organizational issues surrounding buildings and grounds next year.

Leonard Foreman has been of great help this year. We numbered the interior perimeter irrigation boxes and made sure the sprinklers were inspected and maintained. Some of the landscaping was

suffering from dehydration because the irrigation was overgrown and not functioning properly. It needs to be monitored on an ongoing basis.

As a whole, the grounds budget was exceeded by about \$2,000 in 2019. I will work to stay within my allotted budget in 2020.

A preexisting promise to build bench sites among the St. John's grounds will be examined further in the incoming year and I expect to sequester three lunch bench sites or waiting areas amongst the grounds by summer. Naming rights have already been promised and a bit of fundraising should complete the project.

The Vestry's administrative structure has been changed on a trial basis. Grounds and Buildings are now under the direction of the Junior Warden, who serves on the Administration Team of the Vestry. I, Benjamin Davis, will be filling the Junior Warden's position and will work within this structure to help care for and organize our buildings and grounds.

On an ongoing basis, I will be attending twice monthly Architecture & Space Use Committee meetings, chaired by Jon Showalter, and on Tuesdays there will be a weekly Administration Team meeting.

In total, about 1,100 hours have been donated to grounds this year including Vestry retreat time and committee obligations not previously considered.

I will make an effort to be available at the 10:30 service and at any ongoing adult formation. I will wear a name badge, so I might be recognized and any concerns relayed. For those who do not know me, my name is Benjamin Britton Davis. I will wear a "Junior Warden" pin as additional identifying information.

I look forward to the coming year and hope to serve the St. John's community well.

Respectfully submitted,

Benjamin Davis