

Request for Bid: John Wesley Community
Church Restoration Project

Section One: Project Overview

Introduction:

The Waterford Foundation, Inc.- a 501(c)3 historic preservation nonprofit organization in Waterford, Virginia- have received funding to complete the final phases of the long-term restoration of the John Wesley Community Church in the National Historic Landmark of Waterford. The John Wesley Community Church is a historic African American church built by and for the African American Methodist-Episcopal congregation of Waterford in 1891. The church congregation met in the building until 1968. The Waterford Foundation acquired the John Wesley Community Church in 1999, and completed the first restoration project in 2002.

Restoration projects have been completed at the John Wesley Community Church as funding has been available. The final phases of the restoration project includes finishing securing the exterior envelope, restoring the plaster in the sanctuary, and restablizing the sanctuary balcony.

Project Location, History, and Background

The John Wesley Community Church is located at 40125 Bond Street, Waterford VA. This is within the historic Village boundaries of Waterford and the National Historic Landmark of Waterford, VA. On the local level, the John Wesley Community Church is located within the Waterford Historic and Cultural Conservation District, regulated by Loudoun County government.

The National Historic Landmark of Waterford, VA is a 1,420 acre area located in western Loudoun County including the historic village of Waterford and surrounding farmland. The National Historic Landmark was established in 1970, and updated in 2023. The Waterford National Historic Landmark is established because of the intact and preserved 19th century rural industrial and farming village and surrounding viewshed, and is significant under criteria A and C of the National Register. The John Wesley Community Church is an integral property to the Waterford National Historic Landmark as a landmark of the African American community of Waterford. The Church is significant to the National Register under criterion C as a preserved example of a late 19th century/early 20th century African American church.

History of the John Wesley Community Church:

In 1888 the local trustees of the African American Methodist-Episcopal Church (now known as the John Wesley Community Church) purchased a hilly lot on Bond Street, the site of an old stable, to construct a church building for their growing congregation. Before then, members had met in the one room schoolhouse on Second Street- now known as the Second Street School.

Many members of the congregation were tradesmen- contractors, carpenters, stonemasons, and worked in construction around the region. As the story goes, men of the congregation would build the church at night and the women of the congregation would hold up lanterns for light and would sing gospel music. Oral histories note that much of the materials used were sourced locally. The John Wesley Community Church was dedicated in 1891- Civil War veteran and stonemason Ed Collins laid the cornerstone. The building is one of the only Gothic Revival structures in Waterford. It follows the construction styles of many other African American churches built in Loudoun at the time: one-story frame structures, gable roofs, and modest bell towers. It also has touches of Waterford influences, the basement and foundation built into the hill of the lot like many other structures in Waterford.

The population of the African American community of Waterford began to dwindle in the late half of the 20th century, as changes in technology and way of life made some of the leading industries in Waterford obsolete. People began to move out of the Village for other opportunities, especially as the Great Depression hit. The John Wesley Community Church closed in 1968, as the remaining congregation combined with another in Loudoun County.

In 1999, former members and descendants of the John Wesley Community Church partnered with the Waterford Foundation to preserve the church long term. The Waterford Foundation acquired the church, with the agreement that when the descendant group creates an organization able to preserve the church that it would be sold back.

History of the John Wesley Community Church Restoration

Since the 1960s, there has been no active congregation in the John Wesley Community Church, as the majority of the remaining congregation members moved out of Waterford to pursue other opportunities. With no active congregation, the church stood largely vacant and unused for most of the latter half of the 20th century, and there has been limited means to support the ongoing maintenance. Due to concerns about the long-term care of the structure, the descendants of the congregation entered into an agreement with the Waterford Foundation (WF) to take ownership of the church in 1999. It was clear from the beginning that the building would need large amounts of restoration and rehabilitation work to be able to best preserve it long-term. Work to stabilize the church was the first priority for the Waterford Foundation and descendants; which started in 2002 when WF received grant funding. In 2002, the masonry foundation was repointed and missing stones were replaced, and a concrete on-slab foundation was installed to better support the structure due to it being built into a slope. Initial work was also finished to stabilize and protect the steeple and belfry- the framing was repaired with new lumber that was chosen to match the original framing materials, and the eight-sided belfry roof was replaced with in-kind materials. To protect the building and the historic fabric better from the elements, the standing seam metal roof over the sanctuary was repaired and painted. Along with this, window jambs and sills in the basement were repaired as needed and new glass was installed to replace broken

panes. French drains were also installed along the edge of the building to try and keep water away from the structure. Finally, a new landing and steps were installed at the front entrance to make the building easier to enter; and an HVAC system was installed in a first step to support the building's long term use. Work on the church stalled after these initial projects were completed due to lack of funds. In 2017, WF was able to finish installing flooring over the concrete on-slab foundation in the fellowship hall made of both salvaged and new wood. New interior stairs between the fellowship hall and sanctuary were also installed in 2017. In 2018, WF was able to dig a well on the property to support the two new bathrooms (one accessible) and a small kitchenette installed in the fellowship hall. These installations allowed for WF to be able to use the building for educational and community programming; including community meetings, talks, heritage craft classes, the Waterford Fair, and field trips. These latter projects were funded by grant funding and donations to WF's Lantern Light Fund to preserve the sites and stories of Waterford's African American heritage.

While the Waterford Foundation has been diligent in completing regular small maintenance projects in the church, it remains evident that many large scale capital infrastructure projects need to be completed and original materials need to be better protected. The building remains inaccessible to enter which limits the use of the building, and the exterior and interior envelopes remain partially unprotected. Progress in completing the restoration has been on hold for years due to large costs of the project. This has left the building, historic fabric, and original materials under threat of loss through deterioration. If funds are insufficient to complete the project, the project will be put on hold again leaving the historic fabric under more threat of deterioration.

A historic structures report created in 2019 by SmithGroup pro-bono confirms the need for a large-scale restoration and rehabilitation project to be completed. There are three main goals of the project: to secure the exterior and interior envelope, restore the sanctuary to its period of significance, and to finish work stabilizing the church and making it more usable long-term. The first goal would be reached with completing and repointing of the masonry foundation that needs to be redone after 2002, raising and repairing the stone retaining wall on the NE corner of the property, repairs and weather stripping applied to windows and doors on both levels and the bell tower. The second goal would be reached by removing the composite boards from the ceiling and altar wall that were installed to cover water damage, repairing the lath and installing the plaster that was originally present, repairing the plaster on the remaining walls, and repairing and resealing the original woodwork present in the pews, pulpit, balustrades, wainscoting, wood trim, and flooring to protect the historic material. The interior would also be painted to its original coloring and electrical fixtures would be rewired and more would be added. The third goal would be met by designing and adding accessible ramp entries on the north and south exterior entries connecting to the street, and finishing the stabilization work of the church by stabilizing the balcony structure.

The entire cost of the project has been estimated to be \$537,340, and the Foundation has received partial funding from the Virginia Black, Indigenous, People of Color Fund (VA BIPOC) of \$225,000. This funding has been highlighted to prioritize work and The Waterford Foundation is looking for further grant and donation money to fund the remaining work of the project. This final large-scale restoration work is broken up into phases aligned with priorities in funding and work. Description of these phases can be found in section two of this RFB.

Current Conditions of the John Wesley Community Church

The John Wesley Community Church is an integral property to the Waterford National Historic Landmark. It is owned and maintained by the Waterford Foundation, Inc., which is used as an education space for field trip programs and the Waterford Craft School. The building is also used for community meetings, and is highlighted each year in the yearly Waterford Fair. The John Wesley Community Church is under preservation easement by the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, managed by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

The building is in good condition. The sanctuary woodwork, pews, and floor is original to the building. The majority of the windows are original as well. On the exterior, the majority of the siding is original to the building. The flooring in the fellowship hall/basement is a mix of reclaimed and new flooring. As well in the fellowship hall, the bathrooms, kitchenette, water filter and heater, and HVAC were later additions to the building. On the exterior, there is a well and wellhead on the property.

About the Waterford Foundation and Project Managers

About the Waterford Foundation:

Founded in 1943, the Waterford Foundation is one of America's first community-based historic preservation organizations. The Foundation's mission is to preserve the historic buildings and open spaces of the National Historic Landmark of Waterford, Virginia, and, through education, to increase the public's knowledge of life and work in an early American rural community. The Waterford Foundation serves the public of all ages by preserving a nationally-significant early American village that witnessed the challenges faced by Americans as they struggled with the meaning and implementation of the ideals of democracy and a growing nation.

The Waterford Foundation serves the public through programs in historic preservation and education. Its preservation programs serve the public at large. The Foundation owns and maintains thirteen properties in the National Historic Landmark of Waterford- ten historic structures and three open spaces. Two of these properties are significant to Waterford's African American community and heritage: the Second Street School and the John Wesley Community Church. The Foundation also advocates for the National Historic Landmark on a local, state, and

national level. Foundation properties are open to the public during the annual Waterford Fair each fall and throughout the year via educational programs and public walking trails.

The Waterford Foundation's educational programs serve all ages and abilities. Field trip programs serve elementary, middle, and high school students, including the Second Street School Living History program serving 4th grade students since 1984, the Quest to Understand Reconstruction program serving middle and high school students, and the People of Waterford tour for high school students. Each of these programs allow today's students to learn more about the African-American members of the Waterford community through experiences in the John Wesley Community Church and/or the Second Street School. Additional history outreach to the public of all ages includes a speaker series on Waterford and Loudoun history and guided and self-guided walking tours.

About the Project Managers

Abigail Zurfluh, Waterford Foundation Historic Preservation Director

Abigail has been with the Waterford Foundation since August 2023. She has a Bachelor of Arts in historic preservation and geography from the University of Mary Washington. Abigail specializes in historic preservation planning and architectural history. Since joining the Waterford Foundation, Abigail has been involved with both the preservation and educational missions of the Foundation. For a large majority of 2024, Abigail led the communications of the Loudoun Transmission Line Alliance, where she and the Alliance advocated against the construction of a new 500 kv transmission line through Rural Loudoun and the Waterford National Historic Landmark. She is also the staff liaison and member of the Preservation Strategy Committee of the Foundation that advises on the preservation and conservation of Foundation owned properties in the Village. Recently, she was involved in the production of the Draft Alternative Uses Report by the Historic Properties and Land Use Subcommittee that looks into the adaptive reuse opportunities on Foundation owned properties.

For the John Wesley Community Church project, Abigail will be the first point of contact for contractors and the project manager and liaison on the Foundation side.

Stephanie C. Thompson- Waterford Foundation Executive Director

Stephanie C. Thompson has served as Executive Director of the Waterford Foundation since 2018 following 5 years of service on the Board of Directors. She earned B.S. and M.S. degrees and a PhD in Mechanical Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology, where her research focused on engineering design methodology. Stephanie served as the Waterford Foundation liaison to the Loudoun County Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure project team that managed the Waterford Mill Stabilization project (completed in 2023). She currently supervises the Historic Preservation Director, having previously managed the Foundation's preservation activities from 2020 to 2023 when the preservation staff role was

temporarily unstaffed. For the John Wesley Community Church Restoration Project, Stephanie will be responsible for financial management as well as providing advice and oversight to the Historic Preservation Director.

Section Two: Scope of Work and Project Phases

Required Work:

All restoration work completed in and on the John Wesley Community Church property have to follow the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Historic Restoration. This project includes work in both the exterior and interior envelopes. Design documents made by SmithGroup including engineering recommendations from TY Silman can be found in Appendix A.

Exterior Envelope:

Accessible Entry on South Fellowship Hall Entry (on page A5.1)

- A decomposed granite pathway will provide improved exterior access to the fellowship hall. A new concrete landing at the doorway will provide improved access.
 - Accessible landing/turning space in front of door made of brick with supporting rebar
 - Decomposed granite pathway from Liggett Street to landing
- The existing door and existing wood windows near the entry remain.
- Minimal grading and potential gravel grids to be put in place to keep gravel in place

Accessible Entry on North/ Sanctuary Entry (A5.2-3)

- Take out existing landing and rebuild landing made with concrete clad with brick, stairs facing Bond Street
- A ramp will be constructed to improve accessibility into the north entry of the sanctuary.
 - Ramp made of concrete clad with brick to match landing from Liggett Street
 - Black metal railing along retaining wall and stairs

Stone Retaining Wall (AD2.0, A5.2)

- Take down stone retaining wall, but keep original stones intact
- Repoint stone retaining wall with lime mortar

Window and Trim Repairs (A2.0, A2.1)

- Identified windows on plans need to have panes and sashes fixed
- Identified trim needs to be repaired, specifically the casemate windows on the south wall

- Window trim on the exterior needs to be painted the same shade of green as it is now, window trim inside remains unpainted

Exterior Painting

- The exterior wood siding, including repairs, needs to be repainted. The siding is to remain the same shade of white, and the window and door trim is to remain the same shade of green.

Interior Envelope

The interior envelope focuses heavily in the sanctuary space of the John Wesley Community Church. The sanctuary contains original woodwork with the floors, permanently installed pews, altar, and wainscoting that need to be protected during the restoration process.

Balcony Stabilization (A3.0)

- The posts supporting the balcony do not align with the heavy timber posts in the fellowship hall/basement below. The posts sit directly on the floorboards and are toe-nailed to the floorboards. These toe-nails are visible from below. Structural support will be improved by installing additional wood joists directly below existing posts to properly support the balcony above.
- More information about engineering recommendations can be found on A3.0.

Plaster Restoration (AD3.1, AD8.1, A2.1, A3.1, A8.1)

- The water damaged and deteriorated composite boards from the sanctuary ceiling and south wall will be replaced with plaster to replicate the historic finish. The existing plaster at the north, east, and west interior walls of the sanctuary will be patched, repaired, and repainted.
 - Removal of composite boards on ceiling and south/altar wall
 - Repair remaining lath and any issues found under the composite boards
 - Install plaster on ceiling and south/altar wall, and repair plaster on remaining walls
 - Color match remaining plaster on the ceiling to paint the ceiling that color after plaster install
 - Paint remaining plaster to match color found previously on walls.

Vestibule Repairs

- Repairs to entry door and weather stripping
- Repairs to windows: install sash cords, sash locks, and weather stripping
- Repairs to woodwork, wainscoting, and flooring

Sanctuary Woodwork (AD2.1)

- The existing woodwork needs to be protected during restoration project
- The existing wood floor and pews will be cleaned and prepared for refinishing, to include the pulpit, vestibule, balcony, and balcony stairs.
- Sanctuary woodwork will be refinished with tung oil to protect the historic wood and not with a wood stain that changes the colors of the wood

Electrical Fixtures (A8.1):

- The historic chandelier will be maintained as a focal point within the sanctuary. The historic chandelier will not be equipped with lamps.
- However, the existing pendant lights will be replaced to provide a uniform aesthetic and improved lighting. The style of the new fixtures will be deferential to the Victorian aesthetic of the historic chandelier.

Project Phases

This final stage of the John Wesley Community Church Restoration project will be broken into three stages due to funding and granting priorities. These stages are defined by work below:

Phase One: 2025-2026

This phase completes the work funded and prioritized by the Virginia Black, Indigenous, People of Color Fund (VA BIPOC Fund) from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. This phase of the project focuses on securing the exterior envelope, and balcony stabilization. The work included in phase one is as follows:

- Repair and raising of the stone retaining wall at NE corner
- Accessible ramp and entry modifications at the north entry
- Accessible entry modifications at the south entry
- Balcony structural stabilization
- Window repairs to the basement, sanctuary, and bell tower
- Vestibule repairs
- Exterior Painting

This scope of work is estimated to be \$225,000.

Phase Two: 2026-2027

The second phase of the restoration project focuses on preserving the sanctuary interior. The work included in phase two is as follows:

- Plaster Restoration on altar wall and ceiling; repairs to remaining plaster
- Sanctuary woodwork refinishing- including pews, balustrade, altar, and floors.
- Electrical fixtures
- Painting of the interior

This scope is estimated to be \$151,500. To fund this phase, the Foundation has applied for grants with the National Trust for Historic Preservation; and will continue to apply for grants from organizations like the National Trust, the Virginia Museum of History and Culture, and the Virts Miller Foundation.

Optional Work Not Included in Project Phases

Two parts of work in the final stage of the John Wesley Community Church are not included in the above two phases because there is no current plan for funding. These are landscaping and installing permanent interpretive material about the history of the church.

Landscaping includes laying grass seed in the yard where construction vehicles park during the restoration project, and native or historically accurate annual flowers around both entries. This will also include replanting of the memorial tree in the yard if it needs to be removed during the restoration process.

The second optional work is installing interpretive materials about the church history in the John Wesley Community Church. These would be museum size and style panels that could be moved or interchanged throughout the year. Moveable display material would also be sourced. This is part of a larger project for the Foundation to be able to operate the John Wesley Community Church as a museum and education space.

The first priority of this work is landscaping work to be completed after the exterior is completed if it does not interrupt phase two.

Section Three: Timeline and Process

Timeline for Phase One

The funds available for Phase One (focusing on the exterior) from the Virginia BIPOC Fund must be used by the end of 2026. During this time, the sanctuary and fellowship hall can be available for storage and prep space. Parking space is available in the Church yard, on Liggett Street, and the Bond Street Tanyard can be made available upon request.

Timeline for Public Programming in the Church

Waterford Fair (1st Weekend of October Yearly)

The John Wesley Community Church must be made available for the annual Waterford Fair held in October. Due to the 81st Fair in 2025, the church must be made available, and work not to be completed in between Wednesday September 17th and Friday October 10th.

For the 82nd Fair in 2026, the church must be made available and work not to be completed in between Wednesday September 16th and Friday October 9th.

2026 Craft School Season

During their season, the Waterford Craft School hosts monthly classes where visiting master artisans teach students about traditional craft (examples being floor cloths, basket weaving, stained glass, and spoon carving). The Craft School periodically uses the John Wesley Community Church fellowship hall/basement for class space. During Craft School weekends, the John Wesley Community Church fellowship hall must be made available. The sanctuary is not needed for the craft school. The 2026 Craft School season is as follows:

- February 21 and 22, 2026
- March 14 and 15, 2026
- April 18 and 19, 2026
- May 16 and 17, 2026
- June 13 and 14, 2026

If the Craft School class is moved or cancelled, you will be notified as soon as possible.

Waterford Trail Run (Saturday May 9, 2026)

The Waterford Trail Run will be using the front lawn of the John Wesley Community Church and the Bond Street Tanyard. The interior of the John Wesley Community Church does not need to be cleared for the Trail Run.

Timeline for Phase Two

The Waterford Foundation has not received funding for Phase Two of the John Wesley Community Church Restoration. During the remainder of 2025 and early 2026, the Waterford Foundation will apply for grant funding from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Virginia Museum of History and Culture, and other grant funders. More information about the timeline for phase two will be provided as information is known.

Process for Choosing a Contractor

Per financial policies, the Waterford Foundation must receive at least three contractor bids. The chosen contractor would be approved and voted on by the Waterford Foundation Board of Directors. The RFB is released for bidding on Friday, August 1st, with a deadline for submission of Monday, September 1st. Afterwards, a team of Waterford Foundation staff and representatives will meet to choose a contractor bid. Contractors will be informed of the choice by mid-September (September 17).

Work can start at the John Wesley Community Church on Tuesday, October 21st.