

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church Vestry Meeting
August 19, 2025

Present: Beth Bailey, Leah Bailey, Craig Brent, Gary Dreier, Betsy Ellis, Ashley Hillis, Carol King, Alan Liby, Courtney Manrod, Fr. Bailey Norman, Ben Shassere, Julie Webber

Absent: Roger Johnson, Tyler Walker

Guests: PJ Alexander, Ryan Edmond

Call to Order: Fr. Norman

Fr. Norman called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Opening Devotional: Alan Liby

Mr. Liby shared a contemporary interpretation of the Rule of St. Benedict.

Approval of Agenda: Fr. Norman

The agenda was approved unanimously as submitted. (Manrod/B. Bailey)

An email vote between the July and August meetings approved funding for tree removal.

Purple Mouse Smart House (PMSH) Presentation: Beth Bailey/Ben Shassere

Two bids to replace physical keys with a key card system that allows better control of building access were submitted. PJ Alexander and Ryan Edmond of the PMSH were asked to attend the meeting to make a presentation and answer questions on their bid. Their tour of the building and discussions with Ms. Bailey and Mr. Shassere instructed their bid. The proposed ethernet-based system manufactured by Ubiquity allows management of the doors from anywhere in the building. It allows tailored access and hours of access to each key card holder depending on the need. This system allows upgrades without replacing equipment. The estimated time for installation which requires wiring the building is 1-2 weeks. Once the system is installed, key cards will be distributed to people who need access and have completed the Safe Church training. When the card holder no longer needs access or Safe Church training expires, the key card can be deactivated. The Vestry asked for a cost quote, which was not included in the bid, to deactivate the current locks so that physical keys will no longer work.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Rector's Report: Fr. Norman

With the Bishop's annual visit scheduled for Sunday, October 26, 2025, Inquirer's classes will start Wednesday, September 3, 2025. Kathy Chippendale will provide meals at 5:30 p.m., and class will be from 6-7 p.m.

Senior Warden's Report: Leah Bailey

When Larry Hopson came to work at 5:30 a.m. on Monday, the kitchen door was wide open.

Twenty months ago, the Vestry established Developmental goals. A brief review indicated that the progress has been very good on some and not so good on others.

Junior Warden's Report: Ben Shassere
Mr. Shassere had nothing additional to report.

FINANCIAL ACTIONS

Approval of the July Financial Report: Courtney Manrod

The July financial statement was re-baselined to include the results of the mid-year budget review. We are right on target for expenditure but below target for income. The traditional summer slump in income was seen this year. However, we are still ahead by \$54K for the year because of pre-paid pledges at the beginning of the year. The financial report was unanimously approved as submitted.

Mid-Year Financial Review: Courtney Manrod

Ms. Manrod made a Power-Point presentation of the review. In January the budget for 2025 was \$606K and was estimated to be \$540K at the July mid-year review. This reduction was due to the decision not to hire a parish administrator, the Sexton being out on sick leave for 4 months, and the pre-paid pledges. Temporary restricted funds were used to replenish the capital revolving fund.

There is a financial concern about medical health insurance for the staff. Currently the Diocese offers 3 options with different annual premiums which historically increase in cost each year. The Diocese policy for its staff is that the annual premium for the Church High Deductible Plan (CHDP) is paid in full for each full time staff member. If a member chooses one of the other 2 options, that individual is responsible for the cost difference above the CHDP. The current St. Stephen's policy allows each full time staff member to choose one of the 3 options offered by the Diocese with the church paying the full premium regardless of cost. This is an unsustainable liability. This issue must be addressed before October and before the hiring process of the Parish Administrator starts. Additional information on the 3 plans will be distributed via email before the next Vestry meeting.

Approval of Key Card Quotes: Ben Shassere

Ms. B. Bailey chose PJ over Fleenor, the other bidder, based on how the installation will be done, and discussions with Simon who thinks PJ's system is better and costs about the same as Fleenor. Based on the presentation and discussions with PJ tonight, the Vestry is considering adding to the scope of the project. The major additions are

- Add the kitchen door to the system,
- Rekey interior doors, and
- Rekey exterior locks for physical keys so they can be given to a limited number of people.

The funds will come from TR998. The implementation team will be Beth Bailey, Ben Shassere, and Simon Ballintoy. This item was tabled to get an updated quote for these 3 items plus a more detailed scope of work.

NEW BUSINESS

Stewardship Campaign: Alan Liby

Fr. Norman asked 5 people to lead the stewardship campaign with the promise for support to help them. No lead has been identified. He wants someone who will work closely with him, is very intentional about leading the campaign, and will stress the importance of pledging, especially among new members. He doesn't want to lose the momentum for all the good things that are going on. He needs someone now.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

New Mission Statement: Fr. Norman

Fr. Norman pared the 5 potential mission statements presented at the last Vestry meeting down to 2.

1. Be a community that welcomes all to love God, one another, and the world.
2. Where God is seen, love is felt, and lives are changed.

The Vestry voted to accept #1.

Closure of the road: Leah Bailey

Tabled

Guidelines for TR998: Leah Bailey

The guidelines amendment was unanimously accepted. (Manrod/Hillis)

Recent Purchases from TR998: Leah Bailey

Mrs. L Bailey will take the lead to inform the families whose memorial funds were used to purchase the exterior and interior signage, and the large TV in the Parish Hall.

Grounds Keeping: Roger Johnson

Fr. Norman gave the report in Mr. Johnson's absence. Mr. Johnson is working on a bid proposal for mowing and weed removal. A large dead tree was removed, its stump will be ground, and everything hauled away for \$3650 using TR998 funds.

Sunday Vestry Reps.: Ashley Hillis/Julie Webber

A question was asked concerning outreach to college-aged students. Positive feedback was received on the monthly breakfast between the Sunday services.

Memorial Garden status: Fr. Norman

Jim Rousey wants to resign as garden chair. Mr. Dreier is the Vestry rep for the Memorial Garden. There is a search for a new contractor to maintain the Memorial Garden. He has a lead on a couple of possibilities to do weeding.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Vestry

Building and Grounds: Roger Johnson

No report.

By-Laws and Policies: Courtney Manrod

No report

Christian Education: Ashley Hillis

Sunday School starts in September.

Communication: Julie Webber

Work continues on the website. Another direct mailing is planned around the holidays. The Christmas parade is being promoted.

Emergency Preparedness: Ben Shassere

No report.

Evangelism Team: Tyler Walker (Beth Bailey gave the report in Tyler's absence)

The first monthly breakfast for the early service was August 8. Vestry has agreed to do breakfast in December. Other committees will be asked to take a month. There will be a Newcomer's luncheon after 10:30 service on September 14. Daughters of the King provided \$300 for lunch. Short videos are being done focused on what St Stephens means to me. Kids can participate. Stephens will participate in the Halloween event and parade in Bissel Park on October 24 from 5-8 pm. Other October events are "Retreat On Two Feet" at Melton Lake and sign up for Foyer groups. "Claws for a Cause" is scheduled for November 8. St. Stephens will have a float in the Oak Ridge Christmas parade with hot chocolate afterwards on December 13.

Finance: Courtney Manrod

An annual financial review is being considered using an internal audit process developed at St. Andrews, Maryville. The committee is looking at who will do it and what time period to cover.

Gifts and Memorials: Beth Bailey

No report.

Hospitality Area: Beth Bailey

The area needs new covers for electric outlets and a table. Pictures have to be hung up.

Liturgics: Ben Shassere

No report.

Memorial Garden: Gary Dreier

No report.

Outreach: Gary Dreier

No report.

Parish Life: Leah Bailey

PJ's and Pancakes on July 26 was well received, however, it was decided that it was way too HOT to light the fire pit and cook s'mores! They have been saved for a cooler day this fall!

This month, we had our Annual Blessing of the Backpacks with a lunchbox themed reception afterwards. We look forward to our Parish Potluck Breakfast on the 24th. August 31 marks the end of Lemonade in the Grove.

On September 7, we will celebrate Grandparents 'Day with a visit from Lolli and Bobo's Ice Cream Truck. Our September Parish Potluck on the 28th will be Luau-themed with Parish Life providing pineapple ribs.

Pastoral Care: Carol King

New AED pads for children and adults were purchased.

Personnel: Craig Brent

No report.

Technology/IT: Julie Webber

No report.

The meeting closed with the Lord's prayer at 9:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy Ellis
Secretary

Next Vestry meeting is September 16, 2025, at 6:30pm