

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Vestry Meeting

March 18, 2025

Present: Fr. Norman, Beth Bailey, Leah Bailey, Craig Brent, Roger Johnson, Carol King, Alan Liby, Courtney Manrod, Ben Shassere, Tyler Walker, Julie Webber

Absent: Cleon Hartman, Ashley Hillis

Call to Order: Fr. Norman

Fr. Norman called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Opening Devotional: Beth Bailey

Ms. Bailey gave each member a copy of the prayer "The cross in my pocket" and a tiny cross to put in a pocket. She read the prayer to the Vestry.

Approval of Agenda: Fr. Norman

Fr. Norman asked that item IV (Approval of the Agenda) be moved to item II on the agenda. Approved unanimously (Brent/B. Bailey).

NEW BUSINESS

Vestry Election: Fr. Norman

Ray Evans resigned from the Vestry. Fr. Norman recruited Roger Johnson to replace Mr. Evans. Roger will serve through 2025. Approved unanimously (L Bailey/Manrod)

Endorsement of Candidacy: Fr. Norman

Adam Ballintoy was recommended by the Diocesan Standing Committee for candidacy. The Vestry affirms this approval by printing their names on a form that is signed by the Vestry Secretary and sent to the Diocese. Each member present printed their name on the form. Those members absent from the meeting will come by the church to add their names after which the form will be returned to the Diocese.

Adoption of Safe Church Policies: Judith Delaney

Mrs. Delaney is the liaison to the Diocese for these policies. Each year the Vestry is asked to uphold these policies by signing a document to that effect. The policies are on the Diocesan website. Agreed unanimously (Johnson/Walker)

Health Equity Portal Access by R. Durfee: Leah Bailey

Motion to allow this access was unanimously approved. (Brent/B. Bailey)

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Rector's Report: Fr. Norman

Ashely Hillis's house sustained significant damage during the storm on Saturday night. Her family and pets are all OK.

Emily Doane will join the Diocesan staff as the new Canon for Mission and Lay Ministry. She will remain a member of the parish but be absent some Sundays doing diocesan business. Courtney Manrod is in the second cohort of Lay Preacher training in the Diocese. She has been released to preach and will give the sermon on April 27.

Fr. Norman wants to have a 6 month "informal" annual meeting to update and engage the parish sometime in May. He has to talk with the Wardens about this.

Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) have asked Fr. Norman to speak at their April meeting. PFLAG, led by Larry Diboye, is a group of people trying to find ways to support each other. The secular group tries to meet in churches because many have been ostracized by their church. Other churches in town have hosted their meetings. He will inform the parish prior to the meeting. If the Vestry hears any negative comments from the parishioners, he wants to know.

Senior Warden's Report: Leah Bailey

All slots for "Vestry of the Month" have been filled. This event, which occurs on the second Sunday of the month is an opportunity for a Vestry member to talk with parishioners between the services and after the 10:30 service. All input received by the Vestry member is given to the Wardens to inform the agenda for the next Vestry meeting.

After the 10:30 service on March 23, a meeting for all committee chairs and Vestry representatives will be held. The purpose is to promote intra-church communication. Each committee should keep track of its own budget. If you need help understanding the financial report, contact Rachel Durfey.

New faces and old faces that have been absent for some time are showing up in church. If you see someone missing, contact the person and tell them you have missed them.

There was a significant plumbing issue with grease in the drain coming off the kitchen. A check list will be developed for the kitchen with “do’s and don’ts” included.

Junior Warden’s Report: Ben Shassere

Priority List For 2025: There is a draft of the list in your packet and an electronic copy will be placed in Microsoft 360 Share Drive. The Gifts and Memorials policy states that it has a wish list. Other groups in the church may add items to the list. The Priority List will be divided into three types of “priorities” — G&M Wish List, Financial (requires funds), Let’s go do (requires people). This will be an item on the April agenda.

FINANCIAL ACTIONS

Approval of the February Financial Report: Courtney Manrod

Ms. Manrod presented the February 2025 statement. Pledge receipts are \$175K or 32% of the \$552 total pledged. Expenditures are \$85K or 14% of the budgeted total, giving us a year-to-date surplus of \$90K.

The committee discussed how to handle the Temporarily Restricted sub-account, BS300, Boy Scout Savings, but delayed resolution until next month.

The Finance Committee voted to accept the financial statement. The Finance Committee requests Vestry approval of the February financial statement. Unanimously approved.

Procurement and installation of lights: Courtney Manrod

Cleon Hartman (Building & Grounds) has proposed a replacement for the malfunctioning light in the rear parking lot, estimated cost \$200. He is asking for committee recommendation as to the source of funding. The committee suggests that this should come from the B&G General Fund account.

Procurement and installation of water filling station on the first floor: Courtney Manrod

Mr. Hartman also proposes a “water filling station” to replace the malfunctioning water fountain on the first floor, near the office wing, cost \$1,800. The committee recommends seeking funds from Gifts & Memorials. The G&M chair has approved the use of G&M funds for this purchase. 8 yes votes, 2 no votes. Motion passed. (B. Bailey/Liby)

Addition of a budget line for Hospitality: Courtney Manrod

Hospitality has requested a General Fund line item of \$50/month to cover hospitality costs, which have been coming from the hospitality crew’s personal funds. The committee voted to recommend that vestry add this line item to our budget. For CY 2025, \$50 will be

allocated for each of the remaining months of the year. This item will be added as a line item to the 2026 budget. (B. Bailey/Johnson) Unanimously approved.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Financial Game plan for 2025: Courtney Manrod

Ms. Manrod presented the plan put together by the Finance Committee. The plan is included in Attachment 1.

Interior/Exterior Wayfaring signage: Leah Bailey

The interior signage is being refreshed by Nancy Carow. Work is continuing on a plan for the exterior signage.

Developmental Goals: Fr. Norman

The first goal is the development of a mission statement which Fr. Norman wants to do this year. A good mission statement raises questions, can be memorized easily and reflects the identity of who we are as a parish.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Vestry

Evangelism Team: Tyler Walker

A “fun run” in Bissell Park is scheduled for March 29 at 8am. St Stephen’s is a sponsor and volunteers are needed. A “Back to school block party” and a SWAG shop for the church are being planned. There is an “Invite, Welcome, Connect” workshop planned at Ascension on May 31. Anyone interested in attending should contact Fr. Norman.

Building and Grounds: Roger Johnson

The HVAC system will be turned from heat to cool in the next few weeks. The HVAC maintenance contractor predicts that the compressors will not last through the summer. A meeting will be scheduled with Volunteer Mechanical for proposals on what the options are to address this issue.

By-Laws and Procedures: Courtney Manrod

No report.

Christian Education: Ashley Hillis

There was no report.

Communication: Julie Webber

The full report is in Attachment 2.

Emergency Preparedness: Ben Shassere

There was no report.

Finance: Courtney Manrod

Status of Action Item:

Reviewed the work and status of the counters, including actions in process to update the training for counters.

Note that the difficulties with Regions Bank reported last month have been resolved. He discussed issues with changing banks and related issues with our internal controls and policies which have not been updated to reflect current online banking practices.

Looking for someone to lead insurance review.

Reviewing options with regard to structure and conduct of annual financial review/audit.

Compiling an outline with examples of financial information to share on a routine basis

Gifts and Memorials: Beth Bailey

The committee has not met. Fr. Norman is closing in on identifying a new chair.

Hospitality Area: Beth Bailey

There was no report.

Liturgics: Ben Shassere

The committee has not met yet.

Memorial Garden: Cleon Hartman was absent.

Jim Rousey wants to resign as chair now. There is an effort to find someone interested in replacing him.

Outreach: Cleon Hartman was absent

There was no report.

Parish Life: Leah Bailey

Our 3rd Annual Mardi Gras Family Fête continues to be a hugely popular event. The gumbos, jambalayas, étouffée, and all the other yummy creole/cajun dishes were delicious. Many thanks to all who participated!

The Lenten Wednesday Night Simple Soup Suppers have started. Each Wednesday features a variety of soups, along with various breads, sandwich spreads, crackers and fruit. We have had a higher number in attendance and have expanded to three different soups per night.

Parish Life events in April include Bunco for the ladies on the 5th, the University of Tennessee Chamber Singers' Choral Eucharist on the 6th with a reception following, Our choir will present the Fauré Requiem on the 13th in memory of Judy DiGregorio, and our Annual Parish-wide Easter Brunch and Egg Hunt will be on the 20th.

Pastoral Care: Carol King

Labels are being made for the first aid kits and AEDs. Carol would like to know the interest in a non-certificate training in CPR and the use of the AED. She would like to have the Hospitality Desk volunteers call the individuals on the EV list and to write notes to parishioners who haven't been in church for some time.

Personnel: Craig Brent

Craig Brent reported that he has had several conversations with Simon Ballintoy and Simon has given no indication of his intent to resign as Parish Interim Administrator. Craig also spoke with Ronnie Boyd. Ronnie plans on relocating in the next year to be closer to her daughter. This could potentially be problematic since Ronnie donates a lot of her time to parish administrative duties.

This bears watching since we do not want to be in a situation next year in which we lose both Simon and Roni.

Stewardship: Alan Liby

A Chair has not been identified yet.

Technology/IT: Julie Webber

Brad Hillis is the chair of the committee. With the Hyperion contract ending soon, a meeting has been set up for next month with Hyperion. The one and only big speaker in the

ceiling of the Nave is failing. The desire is to replace it with multiple smaller speakers set to improve the sound throughout the Nave.

The meeting closed with the Lord's prayer at 8:59pm.

Next Vestry meeting is April 22, 2025, at 6:30pm

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Ellis

Secretary

ATTACHMENT 1

2025 Finance Committee

TO DO LIST

2025 Finance Committee membership:

J. Anderson, tbd

J. Cox, tbd

J. Delaney, tbd

D. DiGregorio, G&M Interface

B. Ellis, Counters Lead

A. Liby, Parish Treasurer, Stewardship Interface

C. Manrod, Finance Committee Chair, Performance metrics,

Fr. Norman, Rector

J. Rousey, Memorial Garden Chair, Pledge Database Manager

B. Sigmon, Committee Secretary, Budget Database Manager

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Holistically manage finances

Create a sustainable budget that supports church growth

Establish forward looking work processes

Note: These principles are established to help ensure the future viability of St. St. with respect to its: finances; work processes/policies/volunteer hour requirements; and physical infrastructure.

We need better income planning including investment oversight.

Improve Communication

Revise monthly report format to streamline data presentation and messaging

Establish performance metrics

Implement routine financial status communication with the parish

Diversify income/manage expenses/restore reserves

Increase pledge base

Reestablish capital revolving fund

Reinvigorate planned giving campaign

Develop prioritized unfunded needs list, interface with G&M wish list

Ensure effective fiscal management

Review/revise work practices

Update fiscal policies (e.g., internal controls related to electronic banking)

Refresh Counters training

Explore banking partner change

Conduct property and liability insurance review

Conduct independent financial audit/review

Monitor investment performance

ATTACHMENT 2

Communications update for Vestry meeting

The communications team has primarily focused on Evangel, e-News, and Facebook. We have started promoting this year's Clearfork Learning Camp. For the first time, we will utilize Facebook resources to publicize the camp. I'll include the upcoming Evangel piece as an attachment.

We have also updated and corrected parts of our website. Although it is still a work in progress, we expect further updates by the end of this month. I am optimistic that a new website will be available soon. Andrew Morehead is a strong supporter of this initiative.

He continues to assist with demographic information. We reassessed our target audience, and he refined it to identify our most likely direct mail pool nearby, reducing our target radius from 20 miles to 10 miles from St. Stephen's.

Interestingly, within a 20-mile radius, there are eight other Episcopal churches, while within a 10-mile radius, we are the only one. I am waiting for more information regarding the approximate cost of direct mail to the group with the most potential: 8,000 families with children, 7,000 of whom are under age 15.

We are promoting and participating in local activities in Oak Ridge, with the first being the upcoming ORCMA fun run (sadly, I am not participating). The Facebook placements for this event have been the highest: 2,244 views (we have significantly expanded the number of target groups). However, the interactions remain low at 14. In comparison, the St. Patrick's Day post only had 64 views.

The website's statistics have changed somewhat. One interesting statistic is that 49 people returned to our site compared to the previous 30 days. Another noteworthy statistic is that views on the vestry page increased by 57% (possibly after the update, I'm not sure).

We had 864 visits in the last 30 days (7 today, 23 yesterday). The number of unique visitors is 438 (2 today, 23 yesterday). The most visited page after the homepage is Clergy-Lay Staff. One interesting observation is that 76% of the visitors leave the site after viewing only one page (bounce). This is connected to our overall website content.

IMPORTANT ADDENDUM

Brother Andrew has helped us to produce 597 records of families living within our target area, 10 miles. The Diocese will pay for the mailing list cost (go Andrew!) and we will pay the outsourced mailing house cost. The recommended mailing house is Burns Mailing and Printing in Knoxville; I'll contact them to research costs and lead time.

The most important thing now is to determine the message (s) we want to send out and, the frequency, depending on cost. This is a great opportunity for us to spread the word to new folks:

Age of Head of Household, 35-64

Children present, ages 0-15

Education, Some college, grad school

Income, \$40K-Beyond

Length of residence, 1-5 years

Dwelling type, Single Family Dwelling