

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Vestry Meeting

July 15, 2025

Present: Beth Bailey, Leah Bailey, Craig Brent, Ashley Hillis, Roger Johnson, Carol King, Alan Liby, Courtney Manrod, Fr. Bailey Norman, Ben Shassere

Absent: Tyler Walker, Julie Webber

Call to Order: Fr. Norman

Fr. Norman called the meeting to order at 6:29 p.m.

Opening Devotional: Carol King

Carol King opened the meeting with prayer.

Approval of Agenda: Fr. Norman

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

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Rector's Report: Fr. Norman

Fr. Norman welcomed Gary Dreier as a new Vestry member to fill the term of Cleon Hartman who resigned. Mr. Dreier was nominated and approved via an email vote of the Vestry.

Fr. Norman gave a pastoral update. Steve Damos is in the hospital. John Reed, a former member of the parish and the father of James Reed, passed away on Sunday.

He gave a report on activities he has been involved with in the community. There is a ministerial association coalition in town creating a support group for immigrants in the area. Fr. Norman is participating as an individual not as clergy representing the church. If interested in knowing more about this, ask him. The United Way is heading up the effort to increase awareness of all things going on in the community.

There was a shooting in the Scarboro community on Memorial Day. There is a push to have very honest conversations between the black and white communities in Oak Ridge. Voices of the black community are not always heard.

Senior Warden's Report: Leah Bailey

Mrs. L. Bailey thanked Mr. Dreier for joining the Vestry.

The Committee Chairs meeting last Sunday went very well. There are lots of opportunities for committees to work together to get things done.

Next Sunday, Lemonade in the Grove will be run by Isaiah House 117. They will provide everything. We will put out a donation box.

There was an ice machine incident in the kitchen last Sunday. Leah got a call at 7:30 and by the time she got to the church, it had been taken care of. The ice maker has been repaired. A new filter has been ordered. There was no damage to the kitchen.

Junior Warden's Report: Ben Shassere

The Committee Chair meeting went very well. Budgets are going great for those committees in attendance. Mr. Shassere thanked Vestry for being a liaison with the committees.

FINANCIAL ACTIONS

Approval of the June Financial Report: Courtney Manrod

Halfway through the year, 61% of pledges have been received with expenses at 43%. There is still a \$54K budget deficit. The Finance Committee requests Vestry approval of the June financial statement. Vestry unanimously approved as submitted.

Approval of transfer from G&M to GF: Courtney Manrod

G&M recommended moving ~\$64K to a TR account under the management of Vestry. What remains in G&M is ~\$41K in designated funds of which ~\$19k was moved to specific designated TR accounts. When money transferred to Vestry is spent, Dan DiGregorio and Barbara Neill should be notified so that the families can be sent an acknowledgement. There was a recommendation that there be an "owner" of GM998 and guidelines established for the use of the funds. A motion was made to transfer supervision of \$65,168 in GM998 from G&M to Vestry with the condition that the Wardens will provide further guidelines for the use of the funds. This was approved unanimously. (Manrod/Hillis)

Mid-year Financial Review: Courtney Manrod

The mid-year review is in progress. Finance committee members are reaching out to various individuals in charge of accounts to review needs for the remainder of 2025, any changes to the assumptions used to create the 2025 budget, and to get an estimate for 2026 funds. There are large gifts and personnel changes to consider as the 2026 budget is drafted.

Approval of Key Card Quotes: Ben Shassere

There are 2 bidders. Fleenor submitted a quote for \$20K+ that included special keyed access with timed entry. Smart Property (Pee J Alexander, small business owner) will submit a bid by the end of the week. The quotes will be sent to the Vestry members for review. Fr. Norman recommended that he and the Wardens review the quotes and make a recommendation on which one to accept. A representative from that vendor will be requested to attend the next Vestry meeting to answer questions.

Approval of Way-finding Signage: Leah Bailey

Nancy Carow and Mrs. L. Bailey are working together on the exterior signage. The next step is to print out the signage to scale. The vendor being used is Graphic Creations and they provided the same quote that was submitted two years ago. The current structure will be reused. Michael Trank will repaint the structures with black heat-resistant paint.

NEW BUSINESS

Year-round Stewardship Campaign: Alan Liby and Fr. Bailey Norman

There is nothing new. A chair for Stewardship has not been found. Fr. Norman provided Mr. Liby with resources for year-round Stewardship. The information on time and talent is similar to Invite, Welcome, Connect. Jennifer Davis is coordinating the time and talent portion. A search is on to identify someone to take on the money portion of Stewardship. If you know of someone to head this portion, let Fr. Norman or Mrs. L. Bailey know. Jim Rousey has kept track of recording the actual pledges. He wants to step down. A search is on for someone to replace him.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

New Mission Statement: Fr. Norman

A handout was distributed with the mission statements gathered from the discussion of this topic at the June Vestry meeting. Several other mission statements were provided during the meeting:

- To know and share the love of Jesus Christ through worship and service.
- To restore all people to unity in God and each other in Christ (mission statement of the national church).
- A community that welcomes all to love God, one another, and the world.
- Where God is seen, love is felt, and lives are changed.
- To love God and love our neighbors.

Our current mission statement is “Where God is seen, love is felt, and lives are changed.” Fr. Norman will present a couple for discussion next month.

Tulane Ave. Lot: Leah Bailey

The Vestry is not interested in selling the property. Fr. Norman asked Vestry to keep thinking about the idea of closing the church’s portion of the road that links Vienna and Tulane Roads.

Grounds Keeping: Roger Johnson

The grounds have been sprayed for weeds. Weeding will be done tomorrow.

Sunday Vestry Rep.: Ashley Hillis

Ashley will be available at both coffee hours next week and email a written report to Vestry

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Vestry

Building and Grounds: Roger Johnson

The main sign on the lawn in front of the church lot should be illuminated with solar-powered lights.

By-Laws and Policies: Courtney Manrod

The Evangelism and Renewal policy is final, and the Parish Life policy is final with a one-word change. These policies were approved unanimously.

Christian Education: Ashley Hillis

Everything that CE is doing was in the bulletin insert last Sunday.

Communication: Julie Webber

No report.

Emergency Preparedness: Ben Shassere

No report.

Evangelism Team: Tyler Walker

Starting in August, there will be a light breakfast from 8:45-10 when there is no Parish Life event. Other committees will be asked to take a month. There will be a Newcomer's luncheon after the 10:30 service on September 14. St. Stephens will participate in the Halloween event and parade in Bissel Park on October 23 from 5-8 pm. Other October events are "Retreat On Your 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

No additional report beyond May Financial Report and Mid-Year Review status presented earlier in the meeting.

Gifts and Memorials: Beth Bailey

No report.

Hospitality Area: Beth Bailey

The room and hall have been painted. The area still needs new covers for electric outlets and a table. Pictures have to be hung.

Liturgics: Ben Shassere

No report.

Memorial Garden: ??

No report.

Outreach: ??

No report.

Parish Life: Leah Bailey

PJs and Pancakes with s'mores is scheduled for July 26. On August 10 there will be a Blessing of the Backpacks and Teachers at the 10:30 service and a pool party at the Briarcliff pool from 1-3. The Monthly Parish Potluck will be breakfast from 9:00-10:15 on August 24th.

Pastoral Care: Carol King

Additional sets of defibrillator pads for adults and children will be ordered in the next three months as that will be closer to their expiration dates.

Personnel: Craig Brent

No report.

Technology/IT: Julie Webber

No report.

The meeting closed with the Lord's prayer at 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy Ellis
Secretary

Next Vestry meeting is August 19, 2025, at 6:30pm