

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church Vestry Meeting

June 24, 2025

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

Call to Order: Fr. Norman

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

Opening Devotional: Roger Johnson

Father Norman and Roger Johnson opened the meeting with prayer.

Approval of Agenda: Fr. Norman

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

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Rector's Report: Fr. Norman

The new mission and vision statements for the Diocese were presented and discussed. Fr. Norman will present mission and vision statements for St. Stephens at the next Vestry meeting.

Fr. Norman was at Grace Point from June 14-19 serving as one of the Deans at the camp. The Deans provide the religious component of the camp.

On May 31, he and 8 other parishioners went to the Invite, Welcome, Connect workshop at Church of the Ascension in Knoxville. This was the first step in initiating this church-wide effort at St. Stephen's. A parishioner is interested in heading up this program at St. Stephen's. The woman who did the training at Ascension is willing to come to St. Stephen's to do training for the parish.

There is a Christian Ed meeting on the 25th. The committee is looking at several visioning areas. The program for youth is recruiting teachers for next year. A new recruiting approach is to ask for a 4-6 week commitment to teach. Emily Doane is stepping down as the lead for Adult Forum because of her new position with the Diocese. Ann Aaron, who is the current nursery coordinator agreed to do this through the end of the year.

Fr. Norman and several members of Outreach visited Isaiah 117 House which is the Outreach charity for June.

After the Safe Church training last Sunday, someone questioned the need for a background check and the fact that the individual has to pay \$12 for it. If the cost is a burden, the church will consider paying for it.

Fr. Norman believes that he has someone who will serve out Cleon Hartman's Vestry term.

Senior Warden's Report: Leah Bailey

Potential Revenue Sources

Potential sources for 2026 are G&M undesignated funds, the lot behind the church, the donor who is willing to pave a large portion of the parking lots, and the house donated to the church that is working its way through probate. These items may help with the big-ticket items.

The Hyperion contract is up for renewal. The phone service will be wrapped into the renewal, which will save a minimum of \$50/month. A 6th computer was added for audio-visual. The contract has not been signed because it was only received 2 days ago. An extension was given through next Friday to sign the contract.

Select stills and a video from the drone fly over on Pentecost will be added to the website.

Junior Warden's Report: Ben Shassere

Priority List for 2025

The list will be handed out next month. In the August-September time frame there will be a 2nd meeting in addition to the regular Vestry meeting devoted to prioritizing the list. Mr. Shassere asked that everyone think about the date for that meeting.

The next Committee Chair meeting will be after church on July 13.

The highest priority for the undesignated G&M funds is Key cards. The Finance Committee has not resolved the question of what fund the G&M undesignated funds should be moved into.

FINANCIAL ACTIONS

Approval of the April Financial Report: Courtney Manrod

Pledge receipts are \$307K or 56% of the \$552 total pledged. Expenditures are \$219K or 36% of the budgeted total, giving us a year-to-date surplus of \$88K. There were no unusual expenditures during May.

The annual budget review will be conducted in July using data through June 2025. The review will address both General Funds and Restricted funds. Actual income, expenses, budgets, and assumptions will be reviewed. The General Fund budget will be revised as appropriate for the second half of the year. A financial look ahead for 2026 will also be prepared.

The committee is seeking help to review/revise financial work practices; update fiscal policies; and conduct an independent financial audit/review. Ms. Manrod has been talking with a person who may be able to help with this issue.

The Finance Committee requests Vestry approval of the May financial statement. Vestry unanimously approved as submitted.

NEW BUSINESS

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

There are no new updates. Hopefully, a person to lead the effort will be identified soon.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Kitchen Rules and Guidelines: Leah Bailey

Rules and guidelines for the kitchen have been constructed from previous editions of the same.

Tulane Ave. Lot: Leah Bailey

The .57 acre lot is zoned residential, and the buyer is interested in only part of it to build a residence or duplex. Tom Beehan is the realtor and will handle the sale providing it is open to the general public. If the decision is made to sell, approval from the Diocesan Standing Committee will be required since the Diocese owns the property. The Vestry was asked to consider uses for the property, which will be a topic for discussion at the next Vestry meeting.

Policy Updates: Courtney Manrod

The Parish Life policy that was distributed last month has one edit. It will be sent out for a vote by email.

Financial Estimates: Fr. Norman

1. Parking Lot – The total estimate of \$166K breaks out 3 sections of the parking lots. Area 3 with an estimate of \$76K, is in desperate need of repaving. The concrete dumpster pad is an additional \$11,250 and the basketball court \$17,800. A 10% contingency should be added to the estimate. There is a parishioner who is willing to donate at least \$100K to the effort. The Envisioning Committee had ideas about the back lot to deter traffic from using it as a short-cut to Tulane from Vienna. Fr. Norman asked the Vestry to bring ideas for the back lot to next Vestry meeting. This will be a topic on the agenda.
2. HVAC System—Ms. Manrod, Mrs. L. Bailey, and Mr. Johnson met with Volunteer Mechanical. No estimates have been received yet. Options considered are ~\$150K to replace the chiller, an additional \$100K to add a heat pump to the system and keep the boiler as a backup. The wall units need to be repaired or replaced.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Vestry

Building and Grounds: Roger Johnson

Grounds: The downed cedar and kudzu were cleaned up to perhaps save the Russian Yew.

In July, there will be a workday. The effort will be clearing growth on the edge and around trees.

The Memorial Garden spigot is broken at its neck and needs to be repaired. Rick Davis continues to do the mowing. Help is needed to keep up with the various places unreachable by the mower and to get our weed wacker filled with line.

Building: Jim Kring did a nice job cleaning up the utility room. He suggested inspecting the door mats for possible replacement. Installing the LED light fixture at the Elevator on the first floor has become problematic requiring a redo of the insulation to prevent condensation. When this system was installed there were severe issues with poor installation of pipe insulation. The soiled ceiling tile there and in Laura's office have been replaced. Since rust has deteriorated a conduit, our committee will have Volunteer Mechanical look at it for replacement.

The installation of LED lighting is going well. Gary Drier and Brent Sigmon have made great progress in the Parish Hall. More light fixtures are on order. Each fixture is adjustable for brightness. The office has been set to the office staff's needs. Roger will find out if they are dimmable from the switch. The Education Resource Materials room has LED fixtures, and the windows were cleaned. Still functional fluorescent tubes were salvaged for reuse as needed in the long-term lighting project. Let Roger know if someone needs more light 'à la 'fluorescence.

Several minor fixes were accomplished: doorstep for men's room across from kitchen to stop further damage to the ceramic floor; weather stripping on stairwell door nearest the kitchen with two more planned; the kitchen door was supplied with a manual doorstep since the doorstep attached to the door had no rubber stop material and was damaging the floor. No replacement foot could be found. Caleb Justice repaired the Sanctuary front door hardware so that it locks and unlocks properly. The breaker bar on that door is missing some springs. He may ask his doorman friend for suggestions.

By-Laws and Policies: Courtney Manrod

No report.

Christian Education: Ashley Hillis

The Sunday School curriculum is being evaluated. Linda Twohig is retiring from Catechesis and there is no replacement. There will be a switch to Godly Play which Pastor Hendrik has used before. She has provided some ideas for the older kids as well as how to split up the age groups. The emphasis for the older kids will be on Old Testament stories. There is a desire for the teachers to not be parents. Children's chapel continues with a focus on the lectionary. The Calm Room (Room 213) was cleaned out, and an Amazon wish list of items needed for the room was created. Our ADFAC backpacking day for youth is July 17 at noon.

Communication: Julie Webber

Bill Lawrence and Jamie LaRose are working on the website.

Emergency Preparedness: Ben Shassere

No report.

Evangelism Team: Tyler Walker

There is a Women's Bible study on Tuesday evenings via Zoom,

Finance: Courtney Manrod

Planning for 2026 will begin in July through early August. All types of funds will be reviewed. The assumptions used to develop the 2025 budget will be considered to rebase the second half of this year. There will be a look ahead to 2026 regarding baselining and assumptions with health insurance a major factor. Ms. Manrod interviewed an auditor to explore 3 areas: financial work practices shifting to electronic banking; the need for an external annual audit (St. Andrew's in Maryville; does an internal audit); where policies should be placed, and who has the authority to update them.

Gifts and Memorials: Beth Bailey

There is a desire for one Wish List as opposed to one for G&M and one for Vestry. This will require a policy change. The desire is to place the Wish List on the website in a password protected area. The sentiment of G&M is that undesignated funds should not be used to balance the budget but rather used to fund projects.

Hospitality Area: Beth Bailey

Renovations are in progress.

Liturgics: Ben Shassere

No report.

Memorial Garden:

No report.

Outreach:

No report.

Parish Life: Leah Bailey

The drone fly-over and Holy Ghost Weenie Roast were held on Pentecost. The monthly potluck is planned for June 29 followed by the 2nd financial planning presentation. The pie contest will be on July 6. Pie makers are needed. On July 26 (the last Saturday before school starts), the "PJs and Pancakes" event is planned. It will include a fire pit for making s'mores. The event is open to the parish.

Plans are in progress for "Claws for a Cause" on November 11. Eight hundred lobsters will be ordered for sale with the proceeds split between Outreach and the Grace Point "Ask". The contingency is a low country boil if the lobsters are not available. T-shirts

have been designed. It will be an all hands-on-deck for help from the parish. This event will be open to the community.

Pastoral Care: Carol King

A checklist was created for maintenance on the defibrillators. Additional sets of defibrillator pads for adults and children need to be ordered because there are no spares. Emergency exit maps should be strategically placed around the church. Mr. Shassere has the map and hopes to post it throughout the church this summer.

Personnel: Craig Brent

The diocese was contacted about health insurance options for next year. These are not available yet.

Technology/IT: Julie Webber

No report.

The meeting closed with the Lord's prayer at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy Ellis
Secretary

Next Vestry meeting is July 15th, 2025, at 6:30pm