

St. Stephen's Vestry
May 9, 2023
Minutes

Present: Bailey Norman, Ashton Sims, Adam Cavender, Tom Clary, Emily Doane, Cleon Hartman, Ashley Hillis, Rachel Kirk, Courtney Manrod, Cyril Meredith III, Beth Reed, Jim Rousey, Barbara Steele

Also Present: Jim Anderson, Judith Delany

Absent: Leah Bailey, Betsy Ellis

Fr. Norman called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. He opened the meeting with prayer.

Fr. Bailey's opening remarks

- Fr. Bailey commended the vestry for their leadership of and faithfulness to St. Stephen's during his and Elizabeth's absence. He shared that others in the greater community had commented to him about the "good things" going on at St. Stephen's. They acknowledged St. Stephen's as a "special place of deep faithfulness" where parishioners are moving forward despite uncertainty and loss. Our parishioners were also characterized as a community of Christ's followers, one that is willing to work together to embrace a new season and carry on.
- Mother's Day is this next Sunday. Although it is a time to celebrate the mothers in our lives, it is also a time to be very mindful that it is not a joyful day for many people in our midst. We can celebrate something and also walk together in grief and solace.

The agenda was approved (Rousey/Clary).

The consent agenda was approved (Rousey/Steele).

The Priest-in-Charge's Report: Fr. Norman

- Fr. Bailey said he has been impressed with all that has been accomplished while he was away.
- Fr. Bailey noted Elizabeth Pack is back in the office. He and she reviewed her weekly and monthly duties. They will meet at least weekly to review performance of the job and to help address barriers that may impact performance. Fr. Bailey will provide a return-to-work status to the Personnel Committee who, in turn, will update the Vestry as return-to-work progresses.
- Youth Sunday is this coming Sunday. The youth will participate in all the ways they are allowed. Britten Peterson will serve as a chalice bearer together with the adult chalice bearers. Caroline Wood will lead the music.
- The basketball goal placement was discussed. Fr. Bailey's preferred location is where the dumpster is currently located. This would necessitate the relocation of the dumpster. This can be an action item at the June meeting.
- Fr. Bailey discussed Sherry Burchfield's (Youth Christian Education Director) proposal to designate a "Quiet Room" as a way to reach out to all who attend services at St. Stephen's including families with young children and people with special needs. He is reviewing

specifics related to the proposal, including the location and best space use, to foster its near term approval and implementation.

- Fr. Bailey informed the vestry about an upcoming event, *It's All About Love*. This is a churchwide festival and revival featuring worship, learning, community, and action that will take place in Baltimore, Maryland on Sunday, July 9, through Wednesday, July 12. He noted it will be a wonderful opportunity to see and hear Presiding Bishop Curry preach in person and encouraged attendance. He noted Sherry Burchfield will be attending and would enjoy the fellowship with other St. Stephen's parishioners. Fr. Bailey offered financial aid if anyone is available to go. It was noted that the conference is scheduled during the time when the choir and many parishioners will be in London.

Assistant to the Priest-in-Charge's Report: Fr. Sims

- Fr. Ashton is glad he has been able to help Fr. Bailey get back "up to speed" in the office.
- He and Anna will be traveling to Scotland for their long-awaited honeymoon. It's only taken five years. He will miss the May 14th and 21st services but will be return in time for Pentecost on the 28th. He plans a sung Eucharist for the Pentecost 10:00 service.
- During June he will be planning for adult Christian Formation and Inquirer's Classes.

Senior Warden Report: Courtney Manrod

- St. Stephen's is blessed to have Fr. Ashton.
- Courtney expressed her gratitude to the vestry for their efforts in making the Vestry-sponsored Welcome Back luncheon for Fr. Bailey a success. She has received many positive comments from parishioners.
- She noted we are approaching the half-year point and encouraged the Vestry to continue to focus on how to best fulfill its role. She recalled Stephen Covey's precept to "begin with the end in mind" and encouraged Vestry, as they tackle our church's "temporal affairs", to look ahead one to two years. What we do today sets the stage for where we can go tomorrow.

Junior Warden Report: Leah Bailey (in absentia)

- The parish luncheon was a huge success. There were 138 in attendance. Thanks to Adam Cavender and Jim Anderson for manning the grill and Jim Rousey for the veggie burgers. Cleanup was accomplished in less than an hour.
- The subcommittee update is completed and needs to be posted on the website.

Approval of the April 2023 Financial Statement: Tom Clary

- Tom reported that for the year-to-date income is greater than expenses. A routine mid-year 2023 budget review will be conducted in July. In conjunction with this review, the Finance Committee will look ahead at changes needed for the 2024 budget. two to three years ahead especially as we transition to a two-priest parish.
- The financial statement was unanimously approved.
- Tom pointed out there has been a gain of approximately \$25,000.00 in our investment accounts so far this year.

Discussion

Fr. Norman led the Vestry in a conversation about church security and emergency preparedness. The conversation addressed the steps that St. Stephen's can take to improve security as well as

steps to be better prepared in the event of an emergency. The need was noted for steps and resulting actions need to address what more can be done:

- on Sundays prior to and during worship services;
- during weekday office hours; and
- the rest of the time.

Also discussed was the need to identify what can be done right away (e.g., better secure the building, off duty police presence during services, consult with local police and other churches) as well as longer term actions (e.g., threat assessment and thorough emergency preparedness planning). Some of the specific ideas discussed include:

- cost sharing for an off-duty police officer to sit in a patrol car at the church on Sunday mornings with First United Methodist Church;
- installation of a Ring doorbell at glass and back red doors with a monitor at the secretary's desk;
- the need to isolate/partition areas inside the church;
- study the results of an earlier security study have police give recommendations,
- how to enforce a no-backpack policy;
- installation of a security call button direct to the police station; and
- installation a locking-bar for the doors.

Fr. Bailey offered the following motion:

1. to install ring doorbells at the glass doors and the door from the rear parking lot with a monitor at the secretary's desk,
2. to impose a backpack ban with an exception for parents of young children,
3. to form a Parish task team to address security and emergency preparedness.

Jim Rousey seconded the motion. Courtney asked to amend the motion to include notification of the changes to the parish. Motion passed unanimously. Cleon Hartman volunteered to install the Ring doorbells

St. Stephen's Goals: Fr. Norman

- Fr. Bailey reviewed the suggestions for St. Stephen's future parishioners had made during the "welcome back" luncheon. He asked the Vestry members to identify some broader themes found in the list. (See the original list and themes as an attachment.)
- In order to continue a focus on St. Stephen's goals, Fr. Bailey proposed a Vestry retreat on a Saturday in August at Grace Point. Fr. Howard Hess has offered to lead a retreat for us. Vestry members were asked to have available dates identified by the June meeting.
- Courtney reminded everyone there are also Developmental Goals for the Priest-in-Charge that need to be addressed. The question is "how and when" to begin this process. We might work on this following the Vestry Retreat.

Policy Review: Courtney Manrod

All policies need to be reviewed and updated where needed. Several may need major changes e.g., Communications but others none. Courtney requested everyone to begin this process

and have necessary changes ready to submit to the By-Laws Committee by August and/or September.

Committee Reports

Christian Education: Rachel Kirk

- Work is in progress to hire a nursery attendant. Fellowship opportunities for summer and fall are planned. She and Craig Brent are stepping down from the EYF activities and Sunday School. We currently have only three high school students 2 seniors and 1 junior. Craig has led the EYF program for 10+ years. Many thanks to him.

Buildings and Grounds: Cleon Hartman

- Blakes' Tree Service is scheduled to remove two trees that have encroached on the sewer line plus the two stumps by the playground. Danny's Plumbing had come on short notice to fix the issue in the ladies' restroom caused by the tree roots. He charged a fair price.
- The city sewer inspector said our manhole and pipes are rusted. They will need to be replaced in the future.
- Cleon is anticipating Volunteer Mechanical to propose services they can offer either on an as needed basis or annual contract.
- The outdoor lighting needs attention. Cleon has replaced two recessed light fixtures in the secretary's office and has more to do.
- Michael Trank has been helping with upgrading some woodworking needs.

Communications: Ashley Hillis:

- The committee is in the process of defining its scope. Upcoming meeting is planned to discuss how best to use social media.

Old Business

Personnel Committee: Adam Cavender

- Elizabeth is back in the office. She is still an official full-time employee of the church but is working limited hours as a beginning. There is a defined set of job tasks that she is to be able to complete. It is uncertain at this time how long it will be before she is able to work full-time. That raises the question of what will we do if we need to cover extra duties.
- Fr. Bailey, commended the personnel committee for its ability to give Elizabeth space to re-enter and define specific expectations.

New Business:

- Fr. Bailey reported Tom and Stephanie Teague are moving to Lexington, KY. They have done a wonderful job with the eNews. Jennifer Davis, Harold and Betty Davis' daughter, will be taking over. He reminded everyone to send committee news to Jennifer using the "Editor" address. Wednesday noon is the deadline.
- Fr. Bailey presented for consideration that Jim Kring and Larry Hobson have proposed replacing the wooden tables. They are very heavy and hard to put up and take down. Jim has found some at Sam's that are not too expensive. He proposed taking some action in June.

- Leah Bailey, via written report, stated the goal of the Parish Life Committee is to provide opportunities for the parish family to come together in fellowship. So far this year, there has been a farewell cake and coffee for Fr. Larry and Peg Hess, the Easter Brunch, and an expanded coffee hour. Upcoming events include the Holy Ghost Weenie Roast on Pentecost, a 4th of July bar-b-que with the Outreach Committee, and a parish outing to see a TN Smokies baseball game.
- Cleon reported the current dumpster is rotten. The Waste Company will provide a new one for free but relocation will require a concrete pad. For an extra \$150.00 they will install a bar to keep the lid from being by non-parishioners.

The meeting was closed with Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judith Delaney

The next meeting is June 13, 2023

Addendum:

Goals for St. Stephen's as suggested by parishioners

- Be here 75 years more-passing the torch
- Parents' Night Out
- More children involved in church
- Racial reconciliation
- LGBT outreach
- Small groups
- Alternative service
- Outreach Engagement
- Center of Spiritual Formation
- Environmental Justice
- Comprehensive Pastoral Care

Broad Themes

- Relationships
- Caring
- Everybody welcome
- Investment
- Community
- Love
- Growth