

St. Stephen's Vestry Minutes
October 10, 2023

Present: Fr. Bailey Norman, Fr. Ashton Sims, Jim Anderson (treasurer), Leah Bailey, Tom Clary, Betsy Ellis (Secretary), Cleon Hartman, Ashley Hillis, Rachel Kirk, Courtney Manrod, Cyril Meredith III, Jim Rousey, Barbara Steele

Guest: Heather Hartman

Absent: Adam Cavender, Emily Doane, Beth Reed

Call to Order: Fr. Norman

Fr. Norman called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

Opening Devotional: Cleon Hartman

Mr. Hartman opened with a prayer for servant leadership.

Approval of the Agenda: Fr. Norman

The item "2020 Audit" was added as D under "Items for Action." (Clary/Hartman)

Approval of the Consent Agenda: Fr. Norman

The September meeting minutes were approved as submitted. (Hartman/Meredith)

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Priest-In-Charge's Report: Fr. Norman

Fr. Norman introduced the "Clothesline Project." Its purpose is to bring awareness to domestic violence. Bailey has worked with many victims of domestic violence during his priesthood. The visual of a clothesline with shirts that contain quotes from victims is being circulated on the lawns of churches businesses in Oak Ridge. It contains a QR code that links to the Family Justice website. Bailey wants to place the clothesline on the front lawn of the church for a week, beginning on October 13. He wants vestry approval to do this. There was unanimous Vestry support.

There was a nice opening for the Wednesday night supper and Bible study. Bailey asked for help from the Vestry in setting up for the event this week.

He updated the Vestry on the following items from the Bishop's Office.

- The Bishop will visit on May 1, 2024 which is Wednesday night. The request from the Bishop's Office for a visit came as Bailey went out due to illness. There are no additional Sunday visits left. Bailey indicated that he already has several people interested in confirmation.
- The Mutual Ministry Review (MMR) will be November 14 at 6 pm. It will be at least a 2 hour meeting. Bailey will provide dinner. Although Canon Bolt is resigning at the end of November, the process will not end. In the Clergy-Wardens meeting over the next few weeks, this group will come up with developmental goals to send to her. Development goals are not immediately tangible goals but preparation of benchmarks for progress. The Canon

will use those to prepare the MMR. She will send out a survey prior to the meeting. Bailey will send out to the Vestry previous development goals as an example of what to expect. If the Vestry decides to call Bailey as rector, it will be early in 2024.

Assistant to the Priest in Charge: Fr. Sims

Fr. Sims recent travel spree has come to an end. He will not be traveling for the remainder of the year.

There were about 15 folks who attended the Wednesday night Bible study the first week.

Frs. Bailey and Sims are working on a new Adult Formation offering to kick off October 22. It is titled "Weird things in the Bible" (aka Making the Bible mysterious again).

Senior Warden: Courtney Manrod

Ms. Manrod stated her report will be provided during respective agenda items later in the meeting. She encouraged Vestry members to bring first fruits to the work going on in the parish thus enabling peace that comes from knowing that we are giving our best to God.

Junior Warden: Leah Bailey

The process to enter the data from the census forms has started. Then the process to gather information from active members and then newcomers will begin. Consideration is being given to developing an on-line parish directory that will be password protected. Once completed, the database will be used to complete the Parochial Report that is submitted to the Diocese.

On December 2, 2023, there will be a silent auction and Italian-themed pot-luck dinner. It will begin at 5:30 pm with a time to mix and mingle and place bids on auction items.

Leah volunteers at the Family Resource Center. She said that there is a great need right now for notes of encouragement to be written to families in the community who are feeling forgotten, invisible and in despair. Some of these families are homeless. There is a need for gas cards, grocery cards, socks, underwear, and hand warmers as well as "go-bags" filled with a couple of meals to bridge the gap until food pantries are open. Outreach will help with this and Bailey will put a call out to the parish.

Item for Action

Approval of September 2023 financial statement: Tom Clary

The good news and the bad news are that we are on budget. Expenses are up due to one-time annual payments. Giving historically picks up toward the end of the year. The financial report as submitted was accepted unanimously.

The investment income is something that is increasing relied on to balance the budget each year. The third quarter statement has not been received yet. Thirty percent of the annual budget comes from 10 pledging units and per capita giving is going down. Churches that are increasing are diversifying their income stream. Thought needs to be given to where we want to be with respect to long-term sustainability. Bailey would like to use the income from the Heritage fund to start new ministries but we can't do that now because those funds are used to balance the budget.

Approval of Bylaws change: Fr. Norman

At the annual meeting, Fr. Norman would like to vote to change the by-laws to add election of Diocesan Convention delegates to increase awareness and interest about what is going on at the Diocesan level. Sections 10 and 11 on Page 3 must be revised to reflect this change. Vestry must approve the change before it can be presented to the Parish for approval. The Vestry accepted the change unanimously. Courtney will get announcements out to the parish.

Approval of Christian Education Committee restructure: Rachel Kirk

There is a desire to split the existing Christian Education Committee into two committees, one for the children/youth and the other for adults. The funding has been split for these two groups for some time. The change was accepted unanimously.

Audit for 2020: Tom Clary

This audit is completed without any findings. There was one comment concerning the fact that 30% of the budget comes from 10 pledging units.

Items for Discussion

Preparing for 2024 budget formulation: Courtney Manrod/Tom Clary

This is one of the Vestry's key activities. The process used by the Finance Committee consists of following the progress of the stewardship campaign, gathering information from the clergy concerning staff salary increase, reviewing the Gifts and Memorial funds for possible gifts that are available, and querying committees about funding requests for the coming year. The Finance Committee formulates a draft budget for approval by the Vestry. The request was made that each committee be very specific about items included on their list and funding requested for each item.

Communications status: Fr. Norman/Ashley Hillis

Communication has many moving parts. The communications effort was stalled for some time because of health issues among individuals who are key to this effort. Reintegration of all the players is underway with lots of good work going on. The challenge is getting everyone on "the same page." Elizabeth Pack is the hub of communications in the parish but what that looks like has changed. Bailey has received good feedback on the E-News but some issues also need to be addressed. It is lengthy and has not been sent out consistently or on time. Vision and goals for communication are not clear. Consideration should be given to multiple avenues of communication since different demographics use different media. The timeliness is critical, especially for Parish Life events.

Committee Reports

NOTE: Each committee representative was given the opportunity to report. Only those committees with a report are included in this section.

Memorial Garden -- The repointing and painting of the stone wall is complete. Fall planting will occur in the next few weeks.

Parish Life -- The ice cream social was successful with the ingathering of census forms and the distribution of at least 75 scoop of ice cream. About 40 people attended the Tex-Mex potluck and presentation by Father Wallen in El Paso.. Olivia Cox and Emily Doane did an excellent job of presenting the effort that they are working on addressing the needs of immigrants in our area. The Tea that wrapped up the London Choir trip was a huge success with tons of volunteers

helping and a good presentation of the trip. The last Sunday in October will be Boo-charist. November will feature a potluck following the Parish meeting. There has been a request for a Thanksgiving lunch but someone to lead this effort has not been identified. Parish Life has been successful with partnering with other groups in the church. The latest partnership is with Daughters of the King for a Bunco party for the women of the church during the dark and dreary time after the new year.

Nominating Committee – Two people have agreed to run for Vestry. Barbara Steele will write an article for the E-News and bulletin insert.

Old Business

Status of the Ad Hoc Committee – 2023 UK Choir Trip: Leah Bailey

There is still an outstanding balance on the account for the trip. About a third has come in during the last month. A plan has been developed to cover any outstanding balance. Leah would like to keep the committee active for another month.

2023 Annual Meeting: Fr Bailey

Fr Bailey asked that the committee reports be submitted early so that Elizabeth has ample time to put together the annual report.

Annual Bylaws and Policy Review: Courtney Manrod

Courtney asked that any comments be sent to her.

Emergency Preparedness status: Courtney Manrod

Two bids have been submitted for the door locks. They are \$1500 apart. The emergency preparedness and security plan is coming along but help is needed to put it together. Courtney will put an article together to solicit help.

Building and Grounds: Cleon Hartman

There are numerous projects that need to be done in the near future that require significant funds: \$4000 to pour the concrete pad for the new dumpster location, \$5000-6000 to clean the roof of moss to extend its life. The elevator and fire alarm system are reaching the end of their lives. The chiller on the HVAC is reaching its useful service life.

New Business

Envisioning Committee: Fr Norman

Heather Hartman is the new committee chair. The charge of the committee is to look at the building and the grounds to evaluate how they can be better used to meet our mission. The first meeting was October 8. Heather read a survey that the committee wants to send out to the parish a week after the Vestry provides feedback about the survey to her. She plans to present the results of the survey to the Vestry in January.

Companion Ministry: Fr Bailey

Bailey met with Steve Herbes and Jamie Kennedy. They plan to start the training in January. The training is open to anyone who wants to know more about pastoral care. The group will be small because of the type of training. Another session will be offered later next year.

Stewardship: Fr Bailey

There will be a series of speakers who are less visible in the parish at the 10 AM service. Four out of the 5 needed have been lined up so far.

Blessing box: Fr Bailey

The blessing box is doing what we hoped it would do. It has been cleaned out a couple of times but that is expected. There is a need for several folks to help keeping the box stocked.

The meeting ended with the Lord's prayer at 8:48 PM.

Nex Vestry meeting is November 14, 2023

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Ellis
Secretary