

**St. Stephen's Episcopal Church**  
**Vestry Minutes**  
February 11, 2020

**Present:** Nancy Anderson, Bonnie Bautz, Judith Delaney, Judy DiGregorio, Lew Felton, Liz Herbes, Cyril Meredith, John Murphy, Sandi Robertson, Brent Sigmon

**Absent:** Barbara Bovee, Jo Kelley

**Call to Order:**

Mr. Sigmon called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**Opening Devotion:** Mr. Sigmon

Mr. Sigmon opened the meeting with a prayer.

**Approval of Agenda:** Mr. Sigmon

The following two changes were made to the agenda: addition of an action item to approve expediting allocation of moving funds to the new rector; and deletion of 2019 Parochial Report review (report not ready). The amended agenda was unanimously approved (Murphy/Delaney).

**Approval of Consent Agenda:** Mr. Sigmon

The consent agenda, as follows, was unanimously approved (Murphy/DiGregorio).

- Vestry minutes of January 14, 2020.

**WARDENS' REPORTS:**

**Senior Warden: Brent Sigmon**

Mr. Sigmon discussed near term actions to enhance security for the Vesting Sacristy and Choir Room. He stated that Fr. Norman concluded preaching at Trinity Episcopal Church in Mobile, AL last Sunday (February 9). His first service at SSOR will be Ash Wednesday. Mr. Sigmon conveyed Fr. Norman's intent to actively engage the Vestry in devising and implementing a strategic path forward St. Stephen's. To that end, Fr. Norman has commended the book, The Agile Church by Dwight Zscheile to the Vestry. Fr. Norman's first Sunday service as Priest-in-Charge at St. Stephen's will be March 1, 2020. There will be a single service at 10:00 with a pot luck luncheon after church.

Mr. Sigmon discussed Fr. Norman's request to organize a series of Sharing Faith Dinners during Lent. These are a structured way for small groups of fellow parishioners to share some of their faith stories. No more than 10 people meet for dinner, during which, one by one, they draw a card with a pre-printed question and respond with a story of their own faith experience. There is no discussion, no commentary or questions and answers, just attentive listening, then ultimately taking one's turn. Mr. Sigmon invited Vestry involvement by their hosting or moderating these informal dinners.

Mr. Sigmon informed the Vestry that First United Methodist Church, St. Stephen's neighbor, is interested in having Vienna Road made a one way route. Vestry opposed the suggestion.

**Junior Warden:** Judith Delaney

Mrs. Delaney discussed on-going improvements to the Youth Rooms. She noted they are seeking to re-home the pool table.

## ITEMS FOR ACTION

**Approval of the January 2020 Finance Committee Report:** Cyril Meredith

Mr. Meredith presented the January 2020 financial report and stated that the Finance Committee recommends approval. The January financial report was unanimously approved.

**Acceptance of 2018 Financial Statements Audit:** Cyril Meredith

Mr. Meredith presented the subject report and Finance Committee's recommendation for Vestry approval. The auditor changed companies and is being submitted a year late. The report states that the financial statements accurately present, in all material respects, the assets, liabilities and net assets on a cash basis for St. Stephens' Episcopal Church as of December 31, 2018. Vestry unanimously voted to approve the audit report.

**Approval of Fr. Norman's Housing Allocation:** Brent Sigmon

Mr. Sigmon made a motion for Vestry to approve Fr. Norman's allocation of \$51,400 for salary, \$24,000 for housing and \$6,250 for SECA. Vestry unanimously voted to approve the allocation (Sigmon/Delaney).

**Approval to Advance Payment to Fr. Norman for Move:** Brent Sigmon

The Vestry unanimously approved to advance \$3,500 to Fr. Norman to expedite moving his family to Oak Ridge, TN from Mobile, AL (Sigmon/Delaney).

## ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

**Report on Diocesan Conference, Evangelism 101**

Mrs. Delaney, Bautz and DiGregorio effectively presented highlights gleaned from the November 2019 Diocesan conference, Evangelism 101, held at St. Andrews in Maryville. They discussed learning non-threatening ways to evangelize; how to "tell your story"; update of web pages and technology use (increasing St. Stephen's visibility on social media); and disseminating information in multiple ways. They noted testimony as a solemn declaration and encouraged the ability for parishioners to talk about sacraments.

**Report on Diocesan 2020 Convention**

Ms. Kelley, delegate back-up, attended the Diocesan Convention in place of Mrs. Pack, delegate, who could not attend due to illness. No further report was provided due to additional illness and absence at the February Vestry meeting.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Program Committees

#### **Christian Education:** Nancy Anderson

During discussion of possible missed opportunities to promote our church during outreach activities, Ms. Anderson urged caution in proselytizing in settings involving the local school district, such as the Walk Over Wednesday (WOW) lunch ministry. She noted WOW twitter feed is followed by the official Oak Ridge Schools twitter account and is linked every week to the Oak Ridge High School Counseling and Oak Ridge Schools Technology Departments, who often “like” or “retweet” St. Stephen’s weekly lunch menu tweets. One of the weekly WOW menu Facebook posts is on the Friends of Oak Ridge Schools Facebook page, and (only after being directly questioned) St. Stephen’s indicated we are feeding, not preaching, during WOW lunches. Ms. Anderson mentioned Connie Lane Douglas has been hired as second paid staff for nursery work, ensuring the availability of two adults per Safeguarding requirements. Ms. Anderson noted the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper is fast approaching and adult helpers will supplement youth workers as needed. She stated a Safeguarding of God’s Children training will be conducted at St. Stephen’s in the near future, March 7 or 8.

#### **Outreach:** John Murphy

Mr. Murphy stated the Outreach Committee did not meet in January and will be meeting in February. The next food basket distribution will be March 12-14, 2020. Volunteers are needed, especially for activities the morning of March 12.

#### **Pastoral Care:** Liz Herbes

Ms. Herbes reported the committee is functioning well with Fr. Steve Damos providing (interim) clergy and Steve Herbes lay leadership. The committee is evaluating of a lay visitation ministry (akin to Stephen’s Ministry).

### Administrative or Support Committees

#### **Buildings and Grounds:** Lew Felton

Mr. Felton reported he is still getting acquainted with the church and its systems. Brent Sigmon and Nancy Carow observed and reported gutter overflow and other issues during a recent heavy rain storm. Mr. Felton is going to speak to Cameron Ellis about getting contractor support to repair systems.

#### **Bylaws and Policies:** Lew Felton

Mr. Felton stated that Canon Micelle Bolt indicated a change to St. Stephen’s By-laws will be needed to allow absentee voting. He noted Vestry will collectively need to determine the criteria that enables St. Stephen’s parishioners to vote absentee.

**Communications:** Sandi Robertson

Ms. Robertson stated a Communications meeting is being rescheduled. They are drafting a public announcement regarding Fr. Norman's arrival. The committee is working on a general policy to outline what is and is not to be posted on social media.

**Finance:** Cyril Meredith

Mr. Meredith discussed Finance Committee personnel changes. John Cox and Jim Anderson will become new members while Barbara Neill and Merry Keyser will be rotating off the committee.

**Gifts and Memorials:** Brent Sigmon

The committee met wherein they discussed use of undesignated funds (\$11,000) and committee member succession planning. In the Vestry meeting Mr. Sigmon noted the need to develop contingency plans to ensure capable folks are present to perform work and serve. Ms. Bautz noted the benefit of committees establishing general procedures for accomplishing their activities. Mr. Felton further noted St. Stephen's By-laws and Policies provide the context for each committees' operation.

**Parish Life:** Bonnie Bautz

Ms. Bautz noted Parish Life instituted use of a web based application ("app") to sign up to bring food for the Agape Feast and welcome luncheon on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Felton noted it is important to be cautious when using apps in order to protect the user's identity. Mrs. Bautz noted Parish Life has many ideas about how to build community between St. Stephen's and the surrounding neighborhood.

**Stewardship:** Judy DiGregorio

Ms. DiGregorio mentioned the committee had met and they are ready to engage with Fr. Norman when he arrives.

**CLOSING PRAYER AND ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting closed with a prayer and adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Courtney A. Manrod  
Secretary

Next meeting March 10, 2020