

St. Stephen's Vestry Minutes
September 12, 2023

Present: Fr. Bailey Norman, Fr. Ashton Sims, Leah Bailey, Adam Cavender, Tom Clary, Betsy Ellis (Secretary), Ashley Hillis, Rachel Kirk, Courtney Manrod, Beth Reed, Jim Rousey, Barbara Steele

Absent: Jim Anderson (treasurer), Emily Doane, Cleon Hartman, Cyril Meredith III

Call to Order: Fr. Norman

Fr. Norman called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Opening Devotional: Fr. Norman

Fr. Norman opened with prayer.

Approval of the Agenda: Fr. Norman

The agenda was approved as submitted. (Bailey/Rousey)

Approval of the Consent Agenda: Fr. Norman

The August meeting minutes were approved as submitted. (Steele/Bailey)

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

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

Fr. Norman appreciated the church coming together for Mary Lou Murphy's service which was packed. He had several observations that became apparent because of the service. There were many visitors some of whom had mobility issues. As a result, the signage both inside and outside needs improvement directing people, for curb appeal and to make a good first impression. Training the ushers concerning dealing with disabilities and visitors/newcomers is needed. These are things to think about and to keep an eye on.

There are lots of events coming up. The 10am service will be the only service this coming Sunday with ice cream from Lolli and Bobo's afterward in the Grove. This is a kick-off to update the parish directory. A form to update this information will be in the bulletin. Bailey asked that the Vestry be there to help collect forms. On the first Sunday in October, there will be a tea after the 10am service to wrap up the London Choir trip and Evensong at 5pm using 1662 prayer book. The Evensong will include music that was sung by the choir during their London trip. A love offering will be taken at the Evensong as a fund raiser.

Assistant to the Priest in Charge: Fr. Sims

Fr. Sims reported that the August Vestry retreat was the first one he attended. The Wednesday night programs will kick off with a Tex-Mex potluck and Zoom with Father Mike Wallens who runs the Rio Grande Borderline Ministries. This ministry was the recipient of the 2023 Lenten Mite Box in-gathering. Subsequent Wednesday night programs will focus on the Gospel of Mark.

The young adult group that Fr. Sims was leading fell apart last year. He has the idea to turn this into a family game night that will include kid-friendly board and video games. He is planning to kick this off in mid-October.

The Evensong set for the first Sunday in October will use the 1662 prayer book. This is appropriate because it is part of our Anglican heritage and the choir can use the same music as they used in London.

Fr Sims will lead a DOK quiet day on November 18 from 1-4pm for women of the parish.

Senior Warden: Courtney Manrod

As an example, Ms. Manrod reviewed personal goals she established as Senior Warden at the beginning of year. The goals provide focus helping her to enable meaningful actions that will have lasting impact.

Junior Warden: Leah Bailey

The church's status as a not-for-profit establishment has been fully restored. No more forms have to be filed with the state until end of December 2024

Ms. Bailey asked for several Vestry members to help with collection of the forms for the parish directory during the Ice Cream event in the Grove next Sunday. There is a secondary need to update the directory for use in filling out the parochial report.

She has 2 ideas for fund raising:

- She has run several silent auctions. She will run one on December 1 as an Italian potluck. Items to be auctions should be services or new items. She asked Vestry members to think of goods or services to contribute and are potentially big money makers.
- She has permission from the clergy to plan a pilgrimage to Camino Santiago de Compostela for the 2024 Oak Ridge schools Fall break. Fr Sims will go on this trip. The goal is to get young people and families involved. She would also like to advertise to the WOW students.

Item for Action

Approval of August 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. The Diocese stipend for Fr Sims ended in August. Giving historically picks up toward the end of the year. Because of an anticipated cash flow issue at the end of the summer, \$20K was transferred from investment interest to cover expenses. The financial report was accepted unanimously.

Annual Meeting: Fr. Norman

The Annual meeting will be moved to November 12 to allow election of Vestry members and delegates to convention. Changing the time of the annual meeting requires no change to policies but electing delegates to convention does. Fr. Norman wants to eliminate virtual voting although that cuts out parishioners who are physically unable to attend. A suggestion was made that over the next year to investigate allowing parishioners who are physically unable to attend to vote virtually. Fr. Norman will put out a call for convention delegates.

A motion was made to "amend the bylaws to allow for election of convention delegates and alternates at the annual meeting." It passed unanimously (Bailey/Manrod). This change to amend the by-laws must be voted on at the annual meeting.

Stewardship Drive: Fr. Bailey

The Stewardship drive will kick-off in October. Fr. Bailey is meeting with John and Olivia Cox about the drive later this week.

London Choir Trip Committee: Leah Bailey

Since all activities for the trip are closed, Ms. Bailey asked that the committee be disbanded. It was pointed out that there is a negative balance on the financial report for the trip, indicating that funds are still owed. As a result, the motion was tabled until the financial question is resolved.

Items for Discussion

St. Stephen's Goals: Vestry and PIC Parish Goals Fr. Norman

There was a review and further discussion of items discussed at the Vestry Retreat. There were themes that emerged

- Green
 - Parish Community
 - Building community
 - Outreach
- Red
 - Develop resources – financial, real estate, people for leadership
 - Same folks always do things; running on autopilot
 - Need for a mission statement for the parish

Fr Norman handed out the draft of the Vestry goals from the last mutual ministry review. There were lots of opportunities, but the autopilot has to come off. He asked “what kind of ownership will Vestry take?” There is opportunity and energy but there has to be ownership.

Mid-year budget review: Vestry action: Courtney Manrod

Ms. Manrod led a discussion regarding actions Vestry should take in response to the results of the mid-year budget review. In July the Finance Committee completed its requisite annual mid-year review of St. Stephen's finances. The review consisted of:

- a comparison of actual 2023 General Fund expenditures through June against the corresponding budgeted amounts;
- revision to forecasted income and expenses for 2023;
- a summary of important considerations and recommended actions for 2023; and
- an initial forecast of 2024 and 2025 budgets.

In summary the review identified that, at the end of June 2023, expenses were higher than planned and income was less than planned. This results in the forecasted year end funding shortfall to be higher than originally planned. Reserve funds are available to cover 2023 expenses. The review reinforced that the amount of reserve funds available to offset 2024 expenses will be limited.

Vestry discussed how to improve budgetary practices. Actions discussed fall under the following categories: maintaining a balanced budget, managing expenses, diversification and increase in revenue streams, and replenishing reserves.

The mid-year financial review is an important benchmark both to gauge Vestry's fiscal management as well as the opportunity for accomplishment of future ministry and mission. The review also serves to prepare Vestry for their role in preparation and approval of the 2024 budget.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Each Committee chair was given the opportunity to make a report about their committee's activities. Those committees with activities to report are listed below.

Building and Grounds (Cleon Hartman): He is putting together a team for addressing building and grounds needs. Ray Evans asked to step down as Chair of the Envisioning Committee but wants to remain on the committee. Heather Hartman agreed to take over as chair.

Memorial garden (Rousey): Progress is on hold while the mortar and repointed bricks dry enough to paint.

Nominating (Barbara Steele): Mrs. Steele noted three parishioners have submitted their intent to run for 2024 Vestry and a fourth candidate is considering doing so.

Parish Life (Leah Bailey): There were successful events between Christian Education and Parish Life in August. The parish gave our seminarian a great send off. The Tex-Mex potluck and program will include a Love Offering for the Rio Grande mission.

Bylaws and Policies (Courtney Manrod): The review will be deferred until October/November.

OLD BUSINESS

Emergency Preparedness and Security, Courtney Manrod

Progress is continuing in each of the three principal preparedness areas. The group has received an estimate to improve building access controls. Additional bids are being solicited. Begun physical security improvements (specifically providing line of sight) noted in the UT Law Enforcement Innovation Center assessment of our building and grounds. The group is compiling an outline and instructional materials for an emergency preparedness plan for St. Stephen's.

NEW BUSINESS

Community activity – Oct 7 Festival Disability Activity Fair. The Oak Ridge ministerial committee asked churches to provide food. St Stephens was asked to provide 25-50 sandwiches.

The meeting closed with the Lord's prayer led by Fr. Norman. The meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Ellis
Secretary

Next meeting October 10, 2023