

St. Stephen's Vestry Minutes

April 7, 2022

Conducted via ZOOM platform due current surge in COVID.

Present: Fr. Bailey Norman, Fr. Ashton Sims, Bonnie Bautz, Adam Cavender, Judith Delaney, Lew Felton, Rachel Kirk, Cyril Meredith III, Beth Reed, Sandi Robertson, Barbara Steele

Absent: Tom Clary, Liz Herbes, Jim Rousey

Call to Order:

Fr. Bailey Norman called the meeting to order with prayer at 6:32 p.m.

Approval of Agenda:

 Fr. Bailey Norman

The agenda was approved as submitted (Lew Felton/Cyril Meredith)

Approval of Consent Agenda:

 Fr. Bailey Norman

Approval of March 8, 2022 meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved as submitted. (Barbara Steele/Adam Cavender)

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Priest-in-Charge:

 Fr. Bailey Norman

Fr. Bailey said he plans to invite Alvin Blount, the diocesan archivist, to lead a workshop on Becoming Beloved. The workshop will deal with tough issues and look into how we can engage with the communities around us that don't necessarily look like us.

He and Fr. Ashton attended the annual clergy conference today. Canon Michelle was present and will let Fr. Bailey know hopefully by tomorrow concerning the date for the 4th Mutual Ministry Review—either April 27 or 28. When asked if she will give the Vestry the go-ahead to make a rector call, she replied, "Yes."

Fr. Bailey encouraged everyone to attend at least one Holy Week service in addition to Palm Sunday and Easter Day.

ITEMS FOR ACTION

Finance Report:

 Judith Delaney

At the end of March, the yearly receipts totaled \$161,735.34 or 28.17% of the budget. Disbursements totaled \$148,455.01 or 23.55% of the budget.

The March statement is an accurate reflection of the finances. Approval of the March 2022 Finance statement was accepted unanimously.

2021 Parochial Report:

 Fr. Bailey Norman

Fr. Bailey explained the Parochial Report goes to the Diocese and then to the National Church. Any reports the National Church makes concerning communicate size, etc., comes from a compilation of Parochial Reports. St. Stephen's is reporting the total membership of Active Baptized members is 468. Average Sunday attendance including in-person and on-line viewers is 153.

The 2021 Parochial Report was unanimously accepted (Adam Cavender/Cyril Meridith). It will be filed with the Diocese.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Barbecue Pit: Adam Cavender/Fr. Bailey

Adam described the new semi-permanent barbecue pit that will be constructed of cinder block behind the labyrinth. It will be 8 feet long, 4 feet wide, and 8 feet high. He said concerning the placement, he'd considered the prevailing winds in order not to be an annoyance to the neighbors or people in the church building. Parish Life will use it to prepare dinner in honor of the Bishop's visit.

Bookkeeper job description: Father Norman and Judith Delaney

Judith gave an update on the process to identify a new bookkeeper. Seven applications have been received from the posting on Indeed.com. One has been rejected because it came from a company in New Jersey that wished to contract the job. All the other applicants are local. A team composed of the Personnel Committee and representatives from the Finance Committee will conduct the initial interviews via Zoom. Interviews will be conducted Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of Easter week.

REPORTS

Buildings and Grounds: Lew Felton

Lew reported that after soliciting bids a new company was chosen to replace a pump and the coupling of a second pump in the "furnace" room. He is pleased with their work. He also reported that because the maintenance budget is already 50% spent, he will be very cautious the remainder of the year. He plans to do some small painting jobs.

NEW BUSINESS

Bonnie Bautz said the kitchen has been dirty and items placed incorrectly in the refrigerator after use. Because we feed groups outside the parish family, WOW for instance, we are inspected twice a year by the health department. No one specifically was being blamed but she needed to call our attention to the problem. Lew suggested posting refrigerator instructions on its door. Beth suggested a "gentle reminder" to the parish.

The meeting ended at 7:31 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Judith Delaney, Substitute Secretary

Next Meeting: April 27/28, 2022

Reports for April 7, 2022 Vestry Meeting

PRIEST-IN-CHARGE REPORT

We are sliding into an extremely busy time here at St. Stephen's – what else is new! First, we will be celebrating Holy Week and Easter “fully Involved” for the first time in three years! The Liturgics Committee has gone over the details, a full complement of lay ministers is ready to go, and bulletins are being printed as we speak. I would strongly encourage you to attend at least one Holy Week service (not counting Sundays), especially if you have never done so before. It is not only the most sacred time of year in our calendar, but the liturgies we celebrate are the most moving of any we do.

After a brief recovery period, we will jump right in with two major events in early May. First, Bishop Cole will be here for his annual visit on May 1. At this point, we have seven confirmations, one reception, and four reaffirmations. We will have our usual schedule that Sunday, but the service of confirmation will take place at the 10 AM service.

Ashton's ordination to the priesthood will be held May 7 at 11 AM. Of course, the Bishop will be with us once again for that service.

On other fronts, I have reached out to Alvin Blount, the diocesan archivist and director of the Becoming Beloved Community ministry (which is the ministry promoting greater awareness of racial reconciliation) to come and offer a workshop at St. Stephen's in the near future. We have engaged in several studies and conversations since I have been here on ways in which we can talk with each other about racism and how we may appropriately reach out to the African-American community in Oak Ridge about engaging in conversations. This initiative is much more than simply learning about racism, although it is important to know that these conversations are a crucial foundation needed before we can do anything else. But a number of our members have expressed a desire about how we can engage more deeply with people who, to be blunt, look different than us and have very different perspectives of the world. More to come on this shortly.

The Envisioning St. Stephen's Committee has resumed its sessions after a lengthy hiatus. They are in the process of formulating a series of long-term property needs that will help strengthen the ministry and viability of St. Stephen's for years to come.

Our New Service Discernment Committee also met recently with Canon Beverly Hurley Hill, Canon for Mission and Lay Ministry in the diocese. One of the conversations we had was, as we envision what the permanent service looks like, Canon Beverly encouraged us to do some “experimentation”, i.e., looking at trying some new things. I will elaborate on this at the meeting on Thursday, but I'm excited that we are taking some steps forward in this discernment work.

CURATE'S REPORT

No report

WARDENS' REPORTS

Senior Warden

No Report

Junior Warden

No report

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Christian Education

No Report

Adult Christian Formation

No report

Evangelism

No report

Liturgics

The Liturgics Committee met Monday evening. We discussed and worked on planning the following: Holy Week, Easter, Ashton's ordination, and the youth service.

Outreach

- Food Basket subcommittee met on March 28th. Discussion was centered on the report of two of its members who had visited every food bank in Oak Ridge, contacted all the sources for free meals and met with Jo Bruce, Director of the Family Resource Center. Based on their findings of the very active and generous 5 Food Banks in Oak Ridge, availability of weekly free meals and the recommendation of Jo Bruce, it was voted to recommend to the Outreach Committee that the Food Basket Program be discontinued in its current format.
- The full Outreach Committee met on March 31st. The following items were discussed.
 - It was voted to discontinue the Food Basket Program in its current state. A letter with a handout of local resources will be sent to each recipient of the last Food Basket. It will then be followed up with a phone call to answer any questions and ensure that the family was aware of resources available.
 - Future focus for Food Baskets:
 - Emergency Food Bags for walk-ins and homeless individuals
 - Continuing to collect items not purchasable with SNAP benefits such as laundry detergent, soap, shampoo, etc. These would be given to Jo Bruce who can distribute them to needy families.
 - Exploration of possible assistance to TORCH as they expand their program as well as possible needs in Clearfork.
- Several new ministries have been launched and are thriving:
 - A joint ministry with First United Methodist Church to drive a food truck one Friday each month to the Morgan-Scott Project.
 - A ministry of writing a short note to the homeless staying at Knoxville Area Rescue Mission (KARM). A group from St. Stephen's will take over 300 handwritten cards to KARM in early April.
- Naomi Asher (Director of United Way) will be providing training to volunteers, who will assist in screening people seeking help with utilities, medicine, gas, etc. Hopefully this will lighten the load on Elizabeth Pack, who has been handling this among her many other responsibilities. Initial plan is to take requests for assistance during a set time each week.
- Planning has begun for our ministry in Clearfork. A representative from First United Methodist met with our team to explore working together.
- An update was given on the clinic in Haiti. The nurse practitioner reported a marked increase in cases with COVID-like symptoms. Because of their lack of tests, this cannot be confirmed. Medicine continues to be in great demand.
- WOW continues to operate smoothly, with an average of about 37 students coming weekly for Wednesday lunch.
- St Stephen's continues to provide a team to pick up furniture on the second Saturday of every month for Ecumenical Storehouse.

Pastoral Care

- St. Theresa's Flower Ministry is being reactivated and will begin the 1st Sunday after Easter. Eleven women have volunteered to put the flowers from the altar arrangements on Sunday and Tuesday into vases that can be delivered by the EVs, clergy, and some of the volunteers to homebound individuals, and those in the hospital and nursing homes. Nine of the women met on April 1st to discuss details and work out a schedule.
- A ministry of sending birthday cards (and possibly, anniversary and get-well cards) to church members is being launched as soon as all church members birthdays are collected.
- The EVs continue to make calls to members of the congregation.
- After Easter, the expanded Pastoral Care Committee hopes to meet to discuss its restructuring, scope and goals.

Building and Grounds

No report

Bylaws and Policies

No report

Communications

Communications met Friday, April 1 and discussed scheduling and content for holy week services and streaming schedules.

Policy and content for social media applications were developed.

There's a problem with getting new and reliable Videography techs for streaming. Lack of regular volunteers.

Finance

No report.

Gifts and Memorials

No report

Memorial Garden

No report

Nominating

No report

Parish Life

No report

Personnel

The notice of the bookkeeper's position was posted on the Diocesan website and Indeed on March 30, 2022. As of today, Tuesday April 5, there have been 7 applications received. One has been rejected as it was from a company in New Jersey that proposed contracting the position. Interview questions and a timeline for interviewing the remaining 6 applicants is in development.

Stewardship

No report