

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Vestry Minutes

July 14, 2020

Conducted as an on-line meeting via ZOOM platform due to COVID-19 Social Distancing Restrictions

Present: Fr. Bailey Norman, Nancy Anderson, Bonnie Bautz, Barbara Bovee, Judith Delaney, Judy DiGregorio, Lew Felton, Liz Herbes, Jo Kelley, John Murphy, Sandi Robertson, Brent Sigmon

Absent: Cyril Meredith

Call to Order:

Fr. Norman opened the meeting with prayer at 6:32 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: Fr. Norman

The agenda was unanimously approved (Murphy/Herbes).

Approval of Minutes: Fr. Norman

The minutes for May were approved unanimously as submitted (DiGregorio/ Sigmon)

The minutes for June were approved unanimously as submitted (Sigmon/ Delaney)

WARDENS' REPORTS:

Senior Warden: Brent Sigmon

Mr. Sigmon said an organization of the Resource Room is underway. In conjunction with going up to Clearfork, Nancy Carow and Linda Twohig have been going into the boxes in the room identifying items that can be used for Clearfork and what should be kept and discarded. There are a couple of dead trees around the property which raise liability issues. There is some other landscaping too close to the building that needs attention, in particular some holly tree. Brent has a meeting with Craig Bjelland this Saturday to get an estimate.

We are three fourths of the way to the first mutual ministry review. One of the purposes is to make sure we are looking forward and being responsive to our current situation. Brent would like to schedule the review on a Wednesday evening during the first part of September. It will be done with Canon Michelle as a Zoom meeting. Brent will provide a couple of dates then choose one as well as an alternate. Since this won't be done in person, the Canon will send out a survey a few weeks before to expedite getting into the meat of the review during the Zoom meeting. She also proposed doing breakout sessions which is possible with Zoom.

Junior Warden: Judith Delaney

Ms. Delaney had nothing to report.

Priest-in-Charge: Fr. Norman

Fr. Norman began the discussion of Chapter 3 of The Agile Church by Dwight Zscheile. He read the opening sentence of the chapter and asked how it pertained to our situation today. Bailey made reference to 1968 with the fear and uncertainty of that time being similar to today. In contrast, he made reference to an immigrant from Israel whom he met. The immigrant who just

got his citizenship last year and spent \$50K in the process said that America is a great place. Where are we at St Stephens as a church right now? How do we address people and what do we say? The book speaks about the church when it has been at its best has been untidy and messy, fluid, dynamic. We see our lives through different eyes and God at work in it. Bailey challenged the vestry to think about what tools are needed to address the current situation, especially civil rights. The church is often about changing culture in the church and the world.

After the Parish survey closed, a few written responses were received. With the extra surveys, there were 143 responses. With the rapid publishing of the response, there was positive feedback from the parish. Thoughts, observations, surprises – many varied opinions, many comments, but still cohesive despite our differences. Bailey's thoughts were provided to vestry in email last week. The Parish won't open any time soon. There is concern from the staff and Sunday morning support about opening. Elizabeth who is working from home, is working hard behind the scenes on many fronts, but is concerned about coming back in next few weeks. Three people are interested in doing in person church primarily just to sit down together for the fellowship. The funeral for Donna Riffe was outside and masked. The service for Michael Manrod will push the situation with need for a protocol for ushers to hand out to attendees. Masks will be required, the sacrament will be very limited, and only a few musicians will provide music. Bailey wants feedback on what worked/ didn't work.

Preparations are getting started for the Fall. Children's Christian Ed is meeting next week with Nancy Anderson and Linda Twohig. Bailey is talking to Caroline Wood tomorrow. Bailey has wanted to gather families of children and youth to discuss what they want. He is talking to various adults about 2 different situations for Adult Education – virtual, physical is challenge – depending on which level will we be at. Adult Christian Ed is planned with another Book Club of the book Just Mercy. Several survey respondents expressed interest in a Bible study. Bailey is doing a recorded Bible Study on the Book of Acts – recorded 2 already, 12-15 minutes each for ?? weeks. Bailey has been gathering with local ministers – Derek Hammond, Mark Flynn, Ministerial Association. He is also getting involved with Clericus at the Diocese.

Reopening the church: Several projects going on within the church that Bailey didn't find out about until done. Please keep Bailey in the loop so that he can provide support, not to micro-manage. Vestry is in agreement about holding off on re-opening for now.

ITEMS FOR ACTION

Approval of the June 2020 Finance Committee Report: Cyril Meredith

Mr. Meredith submitted the finance report with his summary in his report. Income is ahead and expenditures behind where expected for this time of year. Bailey suggested sending a reminder about pledge to whole parish. The June financial report was unanimously approved (Felton/Herbes).

Building: Lew Felton

The system in the Nave is both heating and cooling and consists of wall units. In looking for vendors to upgrade, Volunteer Mechanical, our current contractor, is the only one so far

interested in working on an upgrade. The positive is that this contractor understands the system well. Lew has asked them to provide a proposal to improve regulation of the system in the Nave – central control for stepwise regulation. He is looking for funding. Bailey has begun looking around for gifts for that work and has about \$3000 so far. He is planning to talk with others this week.

The shed roof is being repaired by Brogdon. In Room 209, the exterior repairs have been completed and they are waiting for rain to confirm that the leak is fixed before doing the interior repairs.

Communications Development: Sandi Robertson

The camcorder that was ordered for the new sound system will be here for use with Michael Manrod's funeral. A custom piece for the sound system is being built. When it is finished, a firm install date will be set. The new microphone has been delivered and was used for last Sunday's service. Several folks commented that the sound was noticeably better.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Program Committees

Christian Education: Nancy Anderson

Nothing beyond submitted report

Evangelism: Judith Delaney

Update on Michael Trank's progress on new Welcome video to be put on a scannable QR (Quick Response) code that will be put on a plastic key tag and also posted on internet. Keegan Yearwood is helping with her new degree in video production. Michael is talking to parishioners about doing portions of the video. He wants the video ready by September.

Liturgics: Jo Kelley

Outreach: John Murphy

Clearfork is doing well. The 3rd box is going up next Monday. There are 43 kids and 60 families being served which is more than when the camp was done in person. Brent and Nancy are going up Friday. Bailey has never been there and is planning to go Friday also.

Pastoral Care: Liz Herbes

Nothing further to add to the written report. Liz and Steve meeting with Bailey next Thursday to discuss implementing Connection Groups (i.e., Calling Tree).

Administrative or Support Committees

Buildings and Grounds: Lew Felton

Nothing in addition to what already reported.

Bylaws and Policies: Lew Felton
Nothing to report

Communications: Sandi Robertson
Nothing additional to report

Finance: Cyril Meredith
The committee hopes to have on-line giving up and running by the end of July.

Gifts and Memorials: Barbara Bovee
There is no report since the last meeting was in early May. The next meeting is scheduled in early August. A gift was received from Chap Toomer's estate for \$28K. It is believed that Chap wished it to go to the Heritage or Legacy Fund.

Memorial Garden: Brent Sigmon
See report

Nominating: Brent Sigmon
Currently, the Chair of the Finance Committee has to be a Vestry member. With Cyril going off the Vestry next year, Vestry representation on this committee will be minimal. Consideration should be given to changing the by-laws to require Vestry representation on the Finance Committee instead of requiring a Vestry member to the Chair.

Given the current pandemic situation, the topic of absentee voting for Vestry has become an issue. A change in voting such as this may require a by-law change that would have go through the Diocese.

Parish Life: Bonnie Bautz
A "care" package was sent out to each parish family as a reminder that St Stephen's is there for them.

Personnel: Judith Delaney
No report. Bailey plans to raise the issue of staff compensation at the next meeting.

Stewardship: Judy DiGregorio
There is a meeting tomorrow at 6PM led by Alan Liby, Chair. The committee will discuss the stewardship campaign for coming pledge cycle.

ADJOURNMENT: Bailey reminded the Vestry to be very mindful of where you are and to take care of yourself. In these times claim your voice to speak out as, in the midst of this, God is speaking. Go into the chaos to bring God's voice and truth telling. Keep the faith and keep on praying.

The meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth D. Ellis
Standing in for Courtney A. Manrod, Secretary

Next meeting August 11, 2020

Reports for July 14, 2020, Vestry Meeting

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Christian Education

Sherry Burchfield continues to provide Sunday School lessons via our YouTube channel. Caroline and Nancy have prepared the Christian Ed sections of the new Evangelism presentation for newcomers. Fr Bailey, Linda, and Nancy will meet soon regarding programming.

Evangelism

No report

Liturgics

No report

Outreach

The Committee again zoomed for its monthly June meeting. Ecumenical Storehouse was discussed as St Stephens shares running the store with First Christian for the month of July. Roger Johnson is now the SS representative on the ES Board.

Clearfork: SS has now twice delivered boxes containing craft materials and games to over 42 kids. At least one more delivery will be made. The Committee approved a \$500 donation to Grace Point to help defray expenses.

Pastoral Care

1) Committee members, especially the Eucharistic Visitors, have continued to make periodic phone calls to different members of the parish.

2) Steve Herbes spoke with Anne Finley, the Pastoral Care Chair at Trinity-Crossville to discuss the specifics of their Phone Tree as well as other aspects of their Pastoral Care ministry. Anne shared in detail the different aspects of their ministry including :1) how they handle their phone tree, which they call "Connection Groups," 2) a meal train where folks sign up on a calendar online to provide meals every other day for two weeks for people going through a difficult time, and 3) the composition of a "Parish Ministry Council" which operates in parallel to the Vestry and is based on the model of a local Methodist Church.

3) Steve and Liz Herbes have given Father Norman a list of possible coordinators for each group within the Phone Tree. A future meeting is planned to discuss this further and finalize plans.

Building and Grounds

No report

Bylaws and Policies

No report

Communications

The Communications Committee met Friday, July 10, to review activities of the committee in the past month. These include:

1. We should have a firm installation date for the new system by Broadway Sound by Tuesday, July 14 (meeting time).
2. Members of the committee have been arranging to privately stream/record funeral services for parishioners during the pandemic.
3. Fr. Bailey and committee are looking into a "Virtual Coffee Hour" via Zoom. Other churches who have done this have pointers about how to make it work smoothly.
4. There was a lot of discussion about various Christian Education offerings/book studies which will now be offered virtually for the foreseeable until COVID numbers become manageable.
5. Simon spoke of an upcoming "Hymnathon" which could be offered both virtually and available to parishioners who could sit outside on lawn chairs and enjoy the music.
6. We have purchased a new sound recorder/microphone for the service! (Zoom H6) We had immediate positive response on sound improvement last Sunday.
7. We have decided that purchasing a laptop would be best for managing the broadcast equipment, because of portability/lockup-ability.
8. Discussed the creation of a specific broadcast script and camera presets for services to maintain continuity and quality control of services.
9. Stats for our YouTube Channel:
125 subscribers
10,765 views
1,800 hours
10. The switch to a new website will be investigated after the migration to the new google suite email for nonprofit.

Finance

The Committee met in a hybrid fashion again with, part in attendance at the Church and part in attendance via remote electronic access.

The Committee reviewed the Finance Report for June, 2020. Pledge income, compared to last month, is much closer to what is typical. Overall for the year, we remain slightly ahead of where we should be as of June. As of the 50% mark of the year, we have collected 52.79 percent of our pledges. Total expenditures are at 46 percent. This is the second month where we did not have pay the Diocesan pledge. This savings represents just about 2 percent of the under expenditure. We will resume paying the \$4,710 monthly assessment next month. Other than a larger monthly pay amount in the Life, Health, Short-term account that will correct itself in July, all other accounts looked correct. The report accurately reflects the financial condition of St. Stephen's through June, 2020. Finance Committee recommends approval of the Report.

Next topic is the Audit status – 2019 books. Cameron reported that the Auditor is actively working on the audit. She has requested some additional details as she reviews the books. This is typical. We should now expect the audit to be issued shortly. No firm commitment yet though.

Rob was not in attendance at the meeting so there is no report on on-line giving from the person who set it up. Ancillary information was provided by Cameron that with the use of Realm, we now have three income streams. We get a notice from the Bank every time that Realm sends a deposit. But, then Cameron has to chase the detail of the deposit from Realm. It is a little bit of a bookkeeping chore. Cameron believes that he will get used to the flow and it will not be a problem. Follow up discussion with Cameron after the meeting revealed that about \$2,000 came in through Realm and about \$6,000 through PayPal. This is out of \$33K in monthly pledge receipts.

Roger confirmed again that the new check reader/scanner is working quite well.

Bailey advised Finance about a bequest that the church has received from the Toomer estate. It is approximately \$25,000. Bailey also advised Finance that the church had a quote for upgrading the thermostats on the heat/cool units in the Nave. The proposal will link them together so they are all controlled by one thermostat. The estimate is approximately \$10,000. Bailey requested that Finance see if there was any place where we could get the funds to do the work. Finance will think about it.

Gifts and Memorials

No report

Memorial Garden

Joe Moore, who does the mowing for St. Stephen's, has agreed to take on some of the weeding and groundskeeping tasks in the MG and the other church grounds. He is to provide approximately 3-4 hours per week. Bids from two larger groundskeeping services were much more costly, though some of that cost difference was due to larger scope of work. We will evaluate whether the level of effort that Mr. Moore is able to give is adequate for our long term needs as we plan for next year.

Nominating

No report

Parish Life

No report

Personnel

No report

Stewardship

The Stewardship Committee will hold a meeting by zoom Wednesday at 6 pm led by Chairman Alan Liby. We will discuss dates, timeline and structure of this year's campaign.