

St. Stephen's Vestry Minutes
November 14, 2023

Present: Fr. Bailey Norman, Fr. Ashton Sims, Jim Anderson (treasurer), Leah Bailey, Adam Cavender, Tom Clary, Judith Delaney (substitute secretary), Emily Doane, Cleon Hartman, Ashley Hillis, Rachel Kirk, Courtney Manrod, Cyril Meredith III, Beth Reed, Jim Rousey, Barbara Steele

2024 Vestry Members: Alan Liby, Ben Shassere, Tyler Walker

Guests: Canon Michelle Bolt, Heather Hartman

Absent: Craig Brent (new Vestry member), Betsy Ellis (Secretary)

Call to Order: Fr. Norman

Fr. Norman called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. and offered an opening prayer.

Introductions: Fr. Norman

Fr. Norman introduced Canon Bolt and the 2024 Vestry members.

Opening Devotional: Leah Bailey

Ms. Bailey offered a prayer in honor of St. Oscar Romero that was read in unison.

Approval of the Agenda: Fr. Norman

The agenda was presented with the caveat that some items may need to be tabled until the next meeting based on the time available. The agenda was approved with the caveat. (Meredith/Clary)

Approval of the Consent Agenda: Fr. Norman

The September meeting minutes were approved as submitted. (Bailey/Hillis)

Developmental Goals and Priest-in-Charge process: Canon Bolt

Canon Michelle thanked everyone for their support of Fr. Bailey, Fr. Ashton, and their families during the past two years. She explained that earlier vestries had been engaging in Mutual Ministry Reviews (MMRs) every six months as part of the process of moving Fr. Bailey from the Priest-in-Charge position to that of Rector. Then, due to Fr. Bailey's illness, this process underwent a "pause." She is with us this evening to restart the process.

She explained MMRs are recommended to be conducted at least once a year by all parishes. They supply a snapshot of the life of the parish at a given moment. They are not a performance review but rather an update in the life of a parish.

She presented the following questions for everyone to answer and then discuss with a partner:

1. During this season, what's going well and what are we grateful for?
2. During this season, were have we been disappointed and or are grieving?
3. As we look ahead, what are we hopeful about and is there anything that makes us anxious?

The responses as shared by the members are found as an attachment.

Following the vestry's responses to the questions, Canon Michelle shared several observations. She encouraged continual revisiting of the status of the parish. She noted that energy shifts over time as new people can change our focus. A growing church has to go where the energy is and notice where it is not. We may find things that may have been important in the past may not be so much in the present. It is important to go where the energy is.

Canon Michelle is stepping down from her position the end of November. The Venerable Jerry Askew, Archdeacon, has been assigned as Interim Canon. It is very important to her that she has been able to see the process of Fr. Bailey from Priest-In-Charge to Rector through to the end. This has been the final MMR in that process and her last meeting with St. Stephen's vestry.

She outlined the next steps in the process of calling Fr. Bailey as Rector. The first step is to adopt a set of current Developmental Goals. Developmental Goals are not a "check-list" of tasks to accomplish but rather a broader picture of incremental change for the parish. They will address the growth of the parish—spiritually, physically, financially. After the Developmental Goals have been defined, the vestry outlines how Fr. Bailey is the best person in partnership with the vestry to help the parish reach these goals.

The third step is to communicate to Bishop Cole that St. Stephen's is ready to call Fr. Bailey as Rector. The Bishop is looking forward to receiving this letter. He will respond in the affirmative. The final step is the Bishop installs Fr. Bailey as Rector in A Celebration of New Ministry sometime in 2024.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

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

Fr. Bailey thanked everyone for their work in getting the Annual Report together and the Annual Meeting. The wonderful things that are going on at St. Stephen's were highlighted at the Annual Meeting but the fact we are facing several crossroads was also shared. These crossroads include but are not limited to the current state of our financials and the need for capital improvements on the building. He encouraged everyone who was not able to attend to listen to the recording on the website that was made possible by Brent Sigmon after the livestream blacked out. The December Evangel will contain follow up articles addressing the crossroads by both Courtney Manrod and himself.

Assistant to the Priest in Charge: Fr. Sims

Fr. Sims expressed his regret that he missed the Annual Meeting due to illness. He shared that he is very grateful for the presentation of the resolution recognizing his part in keeping St. Stephen's functioning so well during Fr. Bailey's and Elizabeth Pack's absence due to illness.

Adult formation is going well. 30-35 people have attended the Wednesday night dinners. After the choir members went to practice, there was a consistent group of about 20 who stayed for the study of Mark.

He and Leah Bailey are planning a Camino trip for 9/28/24-10/8/2024. It is planned primarily for the youth and perhaps some young adults. An initial information meeting will be held December 10, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. between the service.

Senior Warden: Courtney Manrod

Ms. Manrod will submit her report to the Vestry electronically.

Junior Warden: Leah Bailey

Ms. Bailey will submit her report to the Vestry electronically.

Item for Action

Approval of October 2023 financial statement: Tom Clary

The good news and the bad news are that we are on budget continues. The 2023 budget was balanced by expecting to use interest income from our investments. So far \$20,000.00 of that interest has been required to cover current expenses. The potential is there that we may have to use \$45,000.00 more. This would leave us with little to no investment interest for future budgets.

How to relay this message to the parish was discussed. It was decided that a snapshot of the current financial status with a short commentary would be shared with the parish via the weekly E-News, the Evangel, and the Sunday bulletins.

The financial report as submitted was accepted unanimously.

Approval of 2024 Diocesan Commitment: Tom Clary

The diocesan commitment for 2024 is \$71,251.00. This amount is based on our 2022 income. The finance committee acknowledges that the diocese has been very supportive of St. Stephen's and recommends paying the full amount of the "ask."

Approval of paying the full amount of the 2024 Diocesan Commitment was unanimously approved.

Approval for funding for roof cleaning: Cleon Hartman

Mr. Hartman reported he is waiting on estimates for replacement of front doors and new locking hardware. The existing hardware is no longer being made; therefore, there are no replacement parts available. He has devised a temporary solution to secure the door.

Mr. Hartman made a motion to spend \$6,000.00 to have the roof, building, and sidewalks cleaned using a safe solution. The motion was seconded. Mr. Hartman explained algae, moss, and other plant life is growing on the roof. It causes damage to the tiles which in turn leads to leaks and damage. Cleaning will extend the life of the roof and improve the overall appearance of the building. A deposit is required because the company has to hire a lift. They have done a similar cleaning of First Methodist.

The vote to authorize Mr. Hartman to have the work done was passed unanimously with the caveat that the Finance Committee will recommend the funding source.

Approval of funding for building access control improvements: Courtney Manrod

Ms. Manrod stated she should have requested this item be tabled at the beginning of the meeting. She has not had the opportunity to craft the proposal or have it reviewed prior to the meeting this evening.

The proposal will cover changes which will provide enhanced building perimeter security. Changes include key fob entry for the three main business door and high security locks with keys that are hard to copy. She stated this will cost around \$17,000.00 from Gifts and Memorials.

She also commented that the front red doors will need to be replaced in the future and suggested that a special campaign might be held to raise those funds.

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 will submit a report if there is one via e-mail to the vestry.

Old Business

2024 Budget Formation: Courtney Manrod/Tom Clary

Ms. Manrod gave an overview of the church's financial structure. She explained that when the finance committee brings proposals for the 2024 budget to the vestry, some hard decisions may have to be made. Our policy states we are required to have a balanced budget that contains an operating reserve that provides cash flow to pay our bills.

Report of Pledges Received: Jim Rousey

Mr. Rousey reported pledges that have been received to date are just over \$300,000.00. 105 pledging unites for a total of \$555,000.00 is projected.

Fr. Bailey outlined the steps leading up to formulating the 2024 budget. The Finance Committee formulates a budget based on the needs of the various ministries. They present a preliminary budget to Vestry at the December meeting. Pledges often come in during December so the final budget is presented in January. The Vestry then approves as presented or makes any necessary changes.

Mr. Rousey closed the discussion with concern for the welfare of St. Stephen's. He asked for prayer that the Holy Spirit is working to grow our ministries. He considers prayer for the church to be a major responsibility of the Vestry.

New Business

Comment on the Budget: Jim Anderson

Mr. Anderson reminded the Vestry members to convey to their committees that it is not necessary to spend all their budget this year in order to have the same amount next year. If they don't need it this year, don't use it.

Agenda Items Tabled: Fr. Norman

The remaining items will be tabled due to the lateness of the hour.

The meeting ended with prayer at 8:30 p.m.

Nex Vestry meeting is December 13, 2023

Respectfully submitted,
Judith Delaney for
Elizabeth Ellis
Secretary