

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Vestry Minutes

February 9, 2021

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, Rachel Kirk, Cyril Meredith III, Sandi Robertson, Jim Rousey, Barbara Steele

Absent: None

Call to Order:

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

Approval of Agenda: Fr. Norman

The agenda was approved unanimously by the Vestry. (Felton/DiGregorio).

Approval of Minutes: Fr. Norman

The minutes for December 2020 were unanimously approved (Herbes/Steele).

DISCUSSION:

Fr. Norman led the discussion of Dwight Zscheile's book, "The Agile Church" continuing in chapter 5 at the bottom of page 94 about engaging ambivalence and conflict. He introduced the concept of "double looping" where there is circular questioning with no resolution to the problem at hand. He asked for examples of conflict that was not resolved in a good way: Issue identified were

- unresolved underlying problems
- underlying assumptions
- lack of participation

He then asked for examples of conflict that was resolved

- Majority allowed the minority to speak acknowledging point made by minority with change in resolution – e.g., 12 Angry Men (movie)
- Both sides providing input and listening to information provided
- Cooling off period and coming back later to discuss the issue
- Recognition that it takes time to resolve conflict with lots of communication and discernment – e.g., marriage of same sex couples in the church

LEADERSHIP REPORTS:

Priest-in-Charge: Fr. Norman

The end of the book discussion was a segue into Fr. Norman's report. The date of the next mutual ministry review will be March 3 which has been confirmed with Canon Bolt. She will send out a survey, probably next week, that will be like the one sent out before the last review. It will focus on 2 topics:

- Internal expectations which are complicated by COVID – important to understand the role of the priest and the vestry, and the expectations of the priest and the vestry. This spirals out to the congregation.
- What is our mission? A parishioner recently asked the Sr Warden that very question.

Fr. Bailey expressed his appreciation for the feedback he received concerning service times and arrangements. Services will remain virtual through February and probably March. He hopes that services can start back in person outside in April. There is still hesitancy about services inside. There was a discussion about whether the availability of the COVID vaccine changes anything. Given the demographics of the parish, the older parishioners are getting the vaccine, but it is not available to everyone yet. The sentiment was that decisions should be made about “us” collectively. There was consensus that services should be virtual through Lent. To collect the sentiment of the parish after that, a survey will be sent out in March like the previous one. Fr. Norman wants parishioners to have the opportunity to have a say. He and the parish secretary will work on putting the survey together.

Fr. Norman is starting to plan for Holy Week and Easter. He plans to meet with the Liturgics Committee soon.

The Outreach Committee has a meeting this week with Bishop Cole about Haiti. St. Stephens has a long history of working in Haiti, but this ministry has fallen by the wayside. Currently, St. Stephens provides \$20,000 annually to support the clinic in Haiti largely through private donations. While St. Stephen’s wishes to continue the support, the money isn’t there. The meeting with the Bishop is to bring him into the loop, so to speak, and hope he will be able to help us either to partner with some other parishes or to brainstorm other options.

The parochial report is due in March, but an extension will be requested. Determining attendance will be difficult given COVID. Rob Steele usually does the report, and the treasurer provides the financial information.

The Inquirer’s Class has 22 members with 12 interested in confirmation or reception. There are 3 weddings scheduled so far for 2021. The first one is Memorial Day weekend and whether it will be inside or outside is to be determined. All 3 couples are interested in being active members.

Sr Warden: Judith Delaney

Ms. Delaney was a delegate to the virtual Diocesan Convention which lasted 3 hours. She stated that it was highly informative and encouraged anyone on the Vestry to attend.

Jr Warden: Barbara Steele

Ms. Steele gave her “elevator speech” to the Vestry. She stated that the CARE group was going well with only a few people not interested. She suggested that if it is hard to make contact with someone to send out a note or email.

Finance Report: Jim Rousey

Mr. Rousey presented the January financial summary to which he had added bar graphs for better clarity. He asked for feedback on the graphics and any suggestions to clarify it. Receipts totaled \$56,094, including pledges of \$49,864 and prior year pledges of \$6230. Disbursements for January totaled \$44,651. New to this month’s summary were bar graphs visually presenting actual financials contrasted to budgeted financials. He asked for feedback on the graphics and any suggestions to clarify it. The finance committee recommends approval.

On a separate matter, the finance committee discovered the annual budget, approved last month, had omitted through a faulty summation formula \$7500 to repopulate the revolving fund and the priest's sabbatical fund. The committee requests the Vestry approve an additional \$6545 to the budget, providing \$5868 in funds for Capital Revolving and Sabbatical funding and \$587 in additional operating buffer funds. Funds are available from an increased amount of Endowment Fund Income. The amended budget was approved unanimously.

ITEMS FOR ACTION

Approval of the January 2021 Finance Committee Report: Jim Rousey

Mr. Rousey submitted the finance report with Finance Committee's recommendation for approval. The January financial report was unanimously approved.

Grounds maintenance: Lew Felton

Brent Sigmon has done extensive research concerning grounds and Memorial Garden maintenance in the future. A proposal was created and bids obtained to do mulching and weeding. One acceptable proposal was submitted for \$3000 by Cutting Edge. Additional details are in the Building and Grounds report. The motion to approve the bid was made and unanimously approved (Felton/Rousey).

Building and Grounds Long Range Planning: Fr. Norman

Building and Grounds Committee has the charge to attend to routine maintenance of the church property. Fr. Norman feels a need to develop a long-range plan for the church property. His vision is to develop the plan and the finances to fund the plan to move into the future. Fr. Norman has met with Ray Evans several times concerning this issue. Mr. Evans is a long-range planner and is interested in developing the plan but not the financial piece. Fr. Norman asked for permission to form a committee under Stewardship to address this issue. There were no objections from the Vestry. Fr. Norman will come back to the Vestry to ask for formal approval of the committee once it is formed.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Program Committees

Christian Education: Nancy Anderson

No addition to the written report. Caroline Wood's last day is February 28. The new EYF leaders are challenging the youth to do 3 acts of kindness each week.

Evangelism: Bonnie Bautz

The committee members are Judith Delaney, Victoria Madeglia and Michael Trank. A trifold about St. Stephens is being developed to place at various locations throughout the city as well as in the information packet that the city sends out to welcome new residents. Parishioners who are not cradle Episcopalians are being asked to do 30 second mp4 recordings on their phones about why they became Episcopalians. Bonnie wants to include a diverse sample of the Parish. She is specifically asking Fiona Yearwood and Adam Ballintoy to do a segment. She asked for any Vestry members who are interested to contact her.

The committee is developing a list of ideas for future events once it is safe to gather together again. These include a Spring Fling which Fr. Norman is familiar with; a summer music camp for kids (Simon

Ballintoy); and a joint event with a Black church. For some of these events, Stewardship will partner with Parish Life.

Fr. Norman will forward an email he received from Jim Anderson asking for consideration of including a spot about the parish in the Oak Ridge High School football program.

Liturgics: Cyril Meredith III

No meeting has been held since the last Vestry meeting.

Outreach: Liz Herbes

No addition to the written report. The committee is highly active with 12-14 members and 5 subcommittees.

Pastoral Care: Barbara Steele

Nothing to report.

Administrative or Support Committees

Buildings and Grounds: Lew Felton

The HVAC work to replace 4 units in the Nave has started. Once the units are in place, work will begin on installing the modern thermostat controls. This work is just the beginning of work that is needed on the HVAC system, such as switching between heating and cooling, frozen valves, and pumps that do not work properly.

Bylaws and Policies: Lew Felton

Mr. Felton has been reviewing all the policies. Some are incorrect and others need to be updated. He asks each committee to review its policies. He would like to have them all updated by Fall.

Communications: Sandi Robertson

The new website is being beta tested. It is targeted at newcomers. It is on a new platform that allows access from a laptop or mobile app, is very user friendly and easy to update. A link will be sent to the Vestry by Adam Ballintoy. Ms. Robertson asks Vestry members to try to find glitches in it and to look specifically at what each committee wants to include. Send any feedback to Mr. Ballintoy.

Finance: Jim Rousey

The committee currently has 10 members who are reviewing financial procedures. The committee will hold a mid-year review in June which is part of its charge. This will be a line-by-line review of expense items. He will request input from each committee about expenses incurred and any other issues.

Gifts and Memorials: Barbara Bovee

The committee met on February 2. Deborah Clary stepped down as Chair but will remain on the committee. Ms. Bovee is the new chair. The wish list that is currently on the website needs to be updated. She asked the Vestry members to gather ideas for this list from their committees. These ideas should fall outside the normal budgeted expenses. This list will be prioritized by Fr. Norman and the Vestry.

Memorial Garden: Jim Rousey

There was a feeling among the Vestry that the mowing in the contract with Cutting Edge needed to be locked down. Mr. Felton will review this with Brent Sigmon.

Nominating: Nancy Anderson

One candidate has been identified to stand for the next Vestry election.

Parish Life: Rachel Kirk

Nothing to add to the report. Fr. Norman mentioned the Bishop's visit on April 11. Traditionally, a reception is held after the service. However, with the uncertainty of the state of the pandemic at that time, other options are being considered. Fr. Norman will touch base with Ms. Kirk about this issue.

Personnel: Bonnie Bautz

Ms. Bautz provided feedback to Ms. Delaney and Fr. Norman. She has spoken with Simon Ballintoy.

Stewardship: Judy DiGregorio

Fr. Norman has someone in mind to head the Stewardship Campaign and will reach out to Ms. DiGregorio this week.

ADJOURNMENT: Fr. Bailey Norman

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth D. Ellis, Secretary

Next meeting March 9, 2021