

St. Stephen's Vestry Minutes
July 16, 2024

Present: Fr. Norman, Fr. Sims, Leah Bailey, Craig Brent, Adam Cavender, Tom Clary, Judith Delaney (Substitute Secretary), Emily Doane, Cleon Hartman, Ashley Hillis, Alan Liby, Courtney Manrod, Ben Shassere, Tyler Walker

Absent: Betsy Ellis (Secretary), Beth Reed

Guest: Heather Hartman

Call to Order: Fr. Norman called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Opening Devotional: Fr. Sims

Fr. Sims gave the opening devotion. He shared an inspirational poem entitled *God Is Not the Problem*.

Approval of the Agenda: Fr. Norman

The agenda was approved (Liby/Bailey).

Approval of the Consent Agenda: Fr. Norman

The consent agenda was approved with the following correction to the minutes: Fr. Ashton, Beth Reed, and Adam Cavender were not present at the June meeting. Spelling corrections were sent to Betsy. (Manrod/Walker)

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Rector's Report: Fr. Norman

Fr. Bailey thanked everyone for their part in the successful reception for Fr. Ashton and Anna the past Sunday. The next Sunday will be Fr. Ashton's last service with us. Fr. Bailey assured Fr. Ashton that everyone would be only a phone call away and ready to offer whatever help they can.

At the August meeting a discussion will center around what a "one-clergy" church will look like going forward including what changes will need to happen and looking at recruitment of volunteer ministry help. Steve Herbes has volunteered to serve as a volunteer lay pastoral care coordinator. He will pick up some of the pastoral visitation work of the parish "checking up" on some of those parishioners who are no longer able to come to church. This has been a big part of Fr. Ashton's ministry.

Fr. Bailey continues to consult with Simon on the development of the Parish Administrator's role and job description. He will bring to the August meeting an extension of Simon's temporary position to the end of 2024 for official approval. Simon has agreed to continue until the end of the year.

Fr. Bailey drew everyone's attention to the calendar in the packet that Simon has developed listing events between now and the end of the year. It is a "living document" that will be added to as events are identified. He emphasized the need to let the office know if you are planning a meeting or gathering of some sort so it can be added to the calendar. Simon says, "If it's not on the calendar, it's not happening."

The Envisioning Committee has proposed different uses of some of the spaces in the building. Space for Christian Ed classes takes first priority. Space is being requested for offering St. Stephen's "swag" as part of our fund-raising efforts. Deborah Clary and Sara Norman are leading that effort. It is important to develop a "master plan" for use of the building spaces.

He reminded everyone that the first Sunday in August will be the time change for the services to 8:00 and 10:30 a.m. It is also Mass in Grass followed by a picnic at Melton Hill Lake. He thanked Leah for arranging it.

Assistant to the Priest in Charge: Fr. Sims

Fr. Ashton was sorry to have missed last month. He was in Utah where he saw “lots of rocks” and roads without guard rails. He said he felt “very close to God” on those roads.

He thanked the Vestry and said it has been great working with them. He gets his “last word” this next Sunday after which the Sims will be moving to Chattanooga.

Senior Warden: Courtney Manrod

Courtney, on behalf of the vestry, expressed gratitude and love to Fr. Ashton. She told him it has been a privilege to work together. We will miss you.

Junior Warden: Leah Bailey

Leah expressed thanks to everyone for all the help this past Sunday and especially to the Cavenders and the Shasseres for their extraordinary help the cooking. Parish Life wouldn't happen without everyone's help.

She helped with the Clearfork Learning Camp the previous week. There were “lots of children.” Unfortunately, four of those in attendance tested positive for Covid but the remainder of the staff have tested negative and remain asymptomatic. She thinks it went well and there was good weather for the week.

Everyone should have received an email yesterday about SharePoint. If anyone encountered difficulty logging in, she recommended being sure to copy the entire password. This software will allow everyone to see and work on the same document together.

ITEMS FOR ACTION

Approval of June 2024 financial statement: Tom Clary

Tom reported that income is tracking ahead of budget and expenses slightly below. Donations have slowed down as historically expected during the summer months. Gifts and Memorial funds were used to cover the cost of the HVAC repairs. Changes in payroll are expected moving forward. The Friday eNews is now reporting actual expenditures rather than budgeted.

Upon the recommendation of the finance committee the June financial statement was approved.

Vestry approved issuing a Regions Visa card to Junior Warden, Leah Bailey.

OLD BUSINESS

Developmental Goals: Fr. Norman

At the June meeting, Fr. Bailey shared a checklist of items that describe a welcoming parish. He is asking vestry members and several other parishioners to visit churches with this checklist in mind and report back what they observed. Then vestry members will use the checklist to evaluate the welcoming environment at St. Stephen's with a goal of determining what it means to be a church that practices evangelism.

Leah, Courtney, Cleon, and Tyler have volunteered to visit. Fr. Bailey will identify four additional visitors. The churches to visit are First Methodist and Grace Lutheran here in town and St. Elizabeth and Apostles Anglican in Knoxville.

Challenge Progress: Tom Clary

The finance committee's mid-year review shows a cautiously optimistic potential year-end surplus of approximately \$37,000.00 rather than \$127,000.00 "challenge." This is due to efforts of the parish. Many parishioners have made supplemental contributions and/or raised their annual pledge amount. The temporarily restricted funds have been moved into an interest-bearing account. A silent auction was held and additional fund raisers are planned.

Savings have been accomplished through several different means. Undesignated G&M funds were utilized for one-time unexpected expenses such as the HVAC repairs. Service contracts have been re-evaluated. There have been personnel changes.

Building Security: Fr. Norman and Ben Shassere

Fr. Bailey reported a new locking mailbox has been ordered. There have been periodic issues with our mail being accessed by outsiders. Most recently a parishioner alerted Fr. Bailey to the possibility of a check made out to the church not being received. That situation is being investigated through the issuing bank.

Several cameras have been installed. There is no active monitoring at this time but Simon is watching them. A Wi-Fi dead spot in the parish has been identified. Hyperion has been notified.

Ben reported most of the current security issues have been taken care of by Simon and Cleon. The changes need to be recorded for inclusion in the overall safety plan. We are looking at next year's budget to cover things that cost money such as signage and the keyless-entry system. Together with the physical installation will be the determination of who needs/has building access and when. There can be categories of access. Electronic monitoring will be used.

The Emergency Plan will include in addition to building access/safety plans for in case of fire, bad weather, and intruder, etc. Ben is forming a committee and hopes to have something by August or September.

Employer Contribution to Lay Pension: Courtney Manrod

Courtney explained that our policy on lay pension contributions covers a 5% employer contribution, a possible 4% employee contribution that St. Stephen's will match adding up to a possible 9% contribution on the part of the parish.

Personnel Policies: Courtney Manrod

Courtney discussed the existing personnel policies covering compensation, medical and disability insurance, retirement plans, leaves of absence, and continuing education. The vestry will be responsible for any changes to the personnel policies going forward.

If an employee works 30 hours per week, he/she is considered a full-time employee. By church canon personnel who work 30 hours or more are eligible for health insurance. Personnel who work 20 hours or more per week are eligible for church pension.

St. Stephen's medical coverage is currently more generous than most of the other churches in the diocese. St. Stephen's policy allows the employee to choose which level of coverage they prefer. The other

churches are paying a fixed amount and the employee has the option to add to that for additional coverage. If St. Stephen's makes a change in insurance coverage, there will be many questions to be answered and new policies to be developed. All must be accomplished in a manner that is responsive to the needs of our employees.

The personnel committee will meet and develop a presentation that will help the vestry develop any changes to the current policies. The diocese carries the insurance policies but the parish chooses how much coverage to provide.

Celtic Service: Fr. Norman

Fr. Bailey and the ministerial team at First Methodist have decided to continue the Celtic services once a month on the 2nd Sunday of the month. First Methodist will host the August service and St. Stephen's the September service. One of the goals of offering this service is to provide an opportunity for worship to people who may not be comfortable in traditional settings.

Envisioning Committee: Heather Hartman

Heather shared an update on the activities of the Envisioning Committee.

- The new informational box for the labyrinth has been installed. Deborah Clary had the lead on that project.
- Deborah and Sara Norman are working on the "swag" shop. The current Christian Ed office is being proposed for the shop because of the windows. Also proposed is having swag for sale in the parish hall before and after services. An adult and a child would work the sale table.
- Digital signage is proposed inside of the church in lieu of bulletin boards. There would be one in the narthex, one at the end of the business area hallway over the water fountain, and a larger one in the parish hall. The information on the signs is computer generated. Committees would provide information to the parish administrator for posting. Bulletin boards on the second floor and in the office-area can be utilized by committees.
- Some changes have already been made in the hospitality area. Some furniture has been removed to provide space for a small refrigerator for water and the coffee maker.
- Exterior signage is being updated.

ITEMS. FOR DISCUSSION

Nursery: Fr. Norman

Ola our nursery worker has had her baby girl and will out for the next 8-12 weeks. Parish nursery workers are needed. Rachel Kirk is stepping down the end of August. Julie Webber has been helping. At least one other person is needed. It is a once-a-month commitment.

Committee Lists: Fr. Norman

Betsy is working on this as part of the personnel committee. The goal is to have an updated list of all committee members. Each vestry member was asked to help with the committees under his/her responsibility.

Real Property Use/Interest: Fr. Norman

Fr. Bailey shared an email we received from the Art Center. They are planning to build a new Art Center and are inquiring if we would sell 1½ acres where the basketball goal is currently to them. The decision was the vestry has strong reservations about selling.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

NOTE: Unless noted below no reports were submitted.

Parish Life: Leah Bailey

- The Tex-Mex potluck was very successful. The next onsite potluck is August 25. There is a picnic on August 4th following the Mass in the Grass at the lake.
- Thanks to Ashton and Adam Ballintoy for judging the Pie contest. Congratulations to Ashley for her winning pie a second year in a row.
- The Luau themed lunch in honor of Ashton was very successful. There was an overflow of people who wished to honor him.
- Ministry Fair has been moved to August 25.

Adult Christian Education: Emily Doane

Emily and Ashley are looking at a curriculum that focuses on the liturgical reading for the week. The curriculum differentiates by age and grade level.

Christian Education: Ashley Hillis

- Need a meeting in the next few weeks to develop the program for the coming year for the children.
- Chapel is covered through the end of July.
- ADFAC thanks the outreach committee for the donation of the KARM Cards.

The meeting closed with the Lord's prayer at 8:30 pm.

Next Vestry meeting is August 20, 2024

Respectfully submitted,
Judith Delaney
Substitute Secretary

Envisioning Committee Vestry Update 5-21-2024

Grounds:

1. Labyrinth Information Box – Deborah will propose a plan from the committee for approval (image below).
2. Parking Lot – We are hopeful that the parking lot repaving Building & Grounds proposes will include a concrete pad for the dumpster and an area for the basketball half court.
3. Exterior Signage –
 - a. We have been working with Nancy Carow, Father Bailey, and Courtney to select 3 sign upgrade choices to be made available to the parish members for their review and ranking. The design with the largest tally will be made known to the parish during services and in the e-news. Estimates will be sought. The source of funds and timeline are not known at present.
 - b. The remaining signs (exit, entrance) will bear the church logo.

Building:

1. Paint – Will create a spreadsheet of paint colors, finishes, and locations for the Parish Administrator files.
 - a. Doors – Gary will continue to paint the church entry doors red; the office doors are on hold, per Father Bailey.
 - b. Parish Hall – Reaching out to Gary Grubb and Ray Evans regarding best treatment for “rafters.” Gary had said earlier it would be better to patch/paint than to “wrap” with faux wood foam product originally planned. We have no solution for painting or covering the air handlers due to the heat on the surfaces. We asked Nancy Carow to paint a general blessing of Father Bailey’s choice. We are excited to see what and when this will be.
 - c. Hallways and Stairwells – Painting continues – same color as before.
 - d. Fire Doors – Will be painted enamel Sensuous Gray (windowsills in parish hall).
 - e. We will complete painting upstairs over the narthex.
2. Kitchen – Back door needs replacing – Consulting Gary Grubb. Freezer is most urgent of several recommended equipment updates.
3. Digital Signage – As a modern alternative to bulletin boards, the committee would like to see digital signs at the end of the office hall (over an updated water fountain) and in the parish hall. This update would allow submission of images that would rotate to keep everyone informed. Simon (or his delegate) could approve/post new material. After painting the hallway downstairs, many more people were complimentary than complained about missing boards. (Also, there are boards available upstairs.) We propose this as a solution and have no estimates in hand.
4. Church Swag Shop – The committee would like to recommend establishing a shop, where parishioners could purchase St. Stephen’s “swag” (branded coffee cups, t-shirts, sweatshirts, keychains, etc.). We preliminarily recommend the office Sherry Burchfield occupied, as the windows would allow people to see what’s available even if the shop is not open – in a heavily traveled location. Deborah Clary is consulting Nancy Carow and Sarah Norman to discuss and develop a plan.
5. Hospitality – The committee recommends updating this space. It appears there is excess furniture that could be removed, a small refrigerator could hold water for visitors, and a Keurig coffee maker with supplies would be nice, particularly when parishioners are waiting to see Father Bailey, Father Ashton, Simon, or Rachel.
6. Social Media: We are happy to communicate that Brittany Shassere is now helping the Communications Committee with social media (Facebook and Instagram, particularly).



Figure 1: Proposed Labyrinth Information Box