

**St. Stephen's Vestry Minutes**  
**May 21, 2024**

**Present:** Fr. Sims, Leah Bailey, Craig Brent, Adam Cavender, Tom Clary, Emily Doane, Betsy Ellis (Secretary), Cleon Hartman, Ashley Hillis, Alan Liby, Courtney Manrod, Beth Reed, Ben Shassere, Tyler Walker

**Absent:** Fr. Norman, Ashley Hillis

**Guest:** Deborah Clary, Heather Hartman

**Call to Order:** Fr. Norman

Ms. Manrod called the meeting to order at 6:33pm.

**Opening Devotional: Tyler Walker**

Mr. Walker offered readings from St Ignatius and Romans 12:1-2 focused on self-denial and following God's will.

**Approval of the Agenda: Fr. Norman**

The agenda was unanimously approved as submitted (Bailey/Liby).

**Approval of the Consent Agenda: Fr. Norman**

There were 2 corrections to the April minutes. Beth Reed was not present. Under Leadership Reports, Rector's Report, second paragraph, change "letter agreement" to "Letter of Agreement." With noted corrections to the April minutes, the consent agenda was approved unanimously (Clary/Liby).

**LEADERSHIP REPORTS**

**Rector's Report:** Fr. Norman

In his absence, Ms. Manrod offered a prayer for Fr. Norman and his family and for the family of Judy Kidd.

**Assistant to the Priest in Charge:** Fr. Sims

Fr. Sims reported on the conference that he attended in the Diocese of Arkansas.

The contemplative service held on May 12 at First United Methodist Church (FUMC) had 40-45 in attendance. The next services will be June 9 at FUMC and July14 at St. Stephens.

He introduced the "Priest is In" concept to be open 2 Sundays of each month during the coffee hour after the 10am service. The concept is that parishioners can ask the clergy any questions that they have.

He was asked about the status of changing service times. He said feedback had been positive so far. Fr. Norman is the lead on this change.

**Senior Warden:** Courtney Manrod

Ms. Manrod thanked the Vestry and Clergy for their service to St. Stephens.

**Junior Warden:** Leah Bailey

Ms. Bailey thanked the Daughters of the King for hosting the cake and coffee reception after the Bishop's visit.

She noted that the Ministry Fair has been postponed until Fall. The date has not been set. She hopes the format will be like old-fashioned "Rally Day."

On May 26 there will be a potluck after the 10am service. The hope is that this will revive a tradition of a potluck each month.

Ms. Bailey is looking for a caricaturist to do a caricature of Frs. Bailey and Sims for the "Priest in Charge."

#### ITEMS FOR ACTION

**Approval of March 2024 financial statement:** Tom Clary

Dr. Clary stated that income is tracking at 48% and expenses at 33%. The line items that are running ahead of the budget are those that require quarterly payments. Funds with the Trust Company have been moved to a money market account getting 5% interest. For the first quarter of 2023, endowment funds increased \$27,000 with \$9,000 in interest. The April financial statement was unanimously approved.

**Approval of funds/renewal of two service contracts:** Courtney Manrod

The service contract with Comcast was renegotiated for \$200 less per month for 2 years starting immediately. The lease with MLS on the copier in the Business Administrator's office is up in 2025. Appalachian Business Company (ABC) has offered a lease on a copier that better fits our needs with the potential to save ~\$1500 over 2 years. The advantage of the ABC offer is that there are 2 contracts, one for the machine and the other for copies made. This arrangement offers more control over costs. The contracts with ABC start immediately. Both contracts were accepted unanimously. (Liby/Clary)

**Approval of means to record e-mail votes:** Courtney Manrod

A motion was made and unanimously approved to record any votes made by email into the meeting minutes for the month in which the vote was taken. (Cavender/Bailey)

During the discussion on this topic, a question was raised concerning transitioning to electronic records management. The benefit of having electronic records was discussed. It was noted this transition is a future, significant undertaking that needs planning and commitment. This item will be passed to the Technology Committee to address.

#### Vestry Votes via E-Mail During May 2024

May 15, 2024: Motion to expend ~ \$3,725 to replace one failed HVAC pump unanimously passed (Bailey/Hillis).

May 31, 2024: Motion to approve funding for HVAC Pump 4 replacement. Note the Gifts and Memorials and Finance Committees both approved expenditure of up to \$12,000 from G&M accounts to fund these two actions (Hartman/Bailey).

#### ITEMS. FOR DISCUSSION

**Developmental Goals:** Courtney Manrod

In Fr. Norman's absence, Ms. Manrod introduced the goal for discussion, "ESTABLISH processes/mechanisms to *identify, engage, empower* and *integrate* lay leadership." The discussion focused on how to enhance committee and work group function, their degree of autonomy as well as their accountability.

Communication with Vestry for their approval of policy changes and General Fund allocation (>\$1,000) was noted as an obvious boundary. Since Vestry members often are members of work groups/committees, this

is a way for committees to inform and be accountable to keep the Vestry. Other points of discussion were the following:

- Groups leading an initiative should be intentional and respectful of intersections with other committees and collaborate with them to identify and resolve interface issues.
- The importance of informing clergy and wardens of plans and activities.
- Responsiveness of clergy and wardens to information they receive.
- It is often difficult for the group/committee to know who to coordinate with.

It was mentioned multiple times that Microsoft TEAMS tools would be especially useful to facilitate interfaces.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

NOTE: Unless noted below no reports were submitted.

### **Parish Life:** Leah Bailey

Pentecost saw the 2nd annual Holy Ghost Weenie Roast, which was well attended. Many thanks to the Men's group for cooking, and for assisting in the set up and clean up after the event.

On Trinity Sunday, we will have our first monthly Parish Potluck after the 10:00 service. This will not be tied to any Parish Life event nor to a set Sunday.

Lemonade in the grove begins on June 2nd after the 10:00 service. (Coffee hour will still take place following the 7:45 service in the Parish Hall.)

June 4th we will be going to the Smokies Stadium to watch the Tennessee Smokies take on the Birmingham Barons. Tickets must be purchased in advance and will be available until June 2nd.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Challenge Progress:** Tom Clary

Dr. Clary reviewed the Challenge Action Tracking status. He noted that to date we have identified about \$40K of increased income and about \$40K of decreased expenses to close this year's funding gap by 2/3. It is expected we will identify additional increased income and decreased expenses to close the gap in total before the end of the year. Tom discussed the visit with asset planner and the goal to have him make life and legacy giving presentations at St. Stephen's. It was noted that it's important to position St. Stephen's to be successful in 2025 using "pay as you go" philosophy (i.e., matching income and expenses to ensure adequate cash flow) and utilizing "one time" income to replenish reserves.

### **Status of the HVAC:** Cleon Hartman

All 4 pumps have failed. Two were repaired and the 3<sup>rd</sup> will be repaired tomorrow. The 4<sup>th</sup> one cannot be repaired but the vendor has found a replacement and is trying to source it.

### **Envisioning Committee (EC) Update:** Heather Hartman/Deborah Clary

A full report from the committee is attached to the end of the minutes. Items specifically discussed during the meeting are detailed below.

- labyrinth box - Vestry agreed with concept. Since this constitutes a semi-permanent alteration of the grounds, confirmation from Fr. Norman is needed to proceed.

- parking lot paving – The overall recommendation is to also include a pad for dumpster and basketball half-court with removal of driveway pass through between the parking lots. Two quotes have been obtained with estimates ~ \$150K.
- update hospitality space to welcome and seat visitors waiting to see clergy, provide more private workspace for Simon.
- signage
  - exterior:
    - primary corner sign: change outline (and color scheme) vs repaint existing sign
    - handicapped access annotation
  - interior: 2 electronic screens with dynamic messaging (one in Parish Hall, second at the end of glass door entrance hallway). EC needs to propose scope and coordinate with the Communications Committee.
- SWAG shop: EC will meet with Sara Norman and Nancy Carow to discuss the proposal to accomplish this in June.
- Other on-going EC initiatives:
  - Parish Hall - spackle and paint beams (no date, later)
  - Stairwell - finish painting (no date, later)
  - Fire doors - paint (no date, later)
  - Kitchen - declutter, keep clean lines, honor improvements

## **NEW BUSINESS**

The elevator was down after a storm. It was serviced and is back in operation.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

*Next Vestry meeting is June 18, 2024*

Respectfully submitted,  
Elizabeth Ellis  
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*