

**St. Stephen's Episcopal Church**

**Vestry Minutes**

January 11, 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 Vestry. (DiGregorio/Herbes).

**Approval of Minutes:** Fr. Norman

The minutes for December were unanimously approved (Bovee/Delaney).

Motion in minutes that contract with Volunteer Mechanical was approved by email.

**DISCUSSION:**

Fr. Norman led discussion from Dwight Zscheile's book, "The Agile Church" p 95 (Chapter 5) discussing Discipline 2 Addressing Fear of Shame. Fr. Bailey reviewed the concepts including:

- All of vestry are leaders. Sometimes fear of being leaders in the church. War stories about vestries of the past fighting or griping within the vestry. Tends to make some shut down.
- Christ calls us to show strength out of our weakness. We are a conduit through which Christ works. It isn't our strength but Christ's.
- Thoughts from Vestry members-
  - failing to meet expectations
  - lack of knowledge about what is required
  - "Peter Principle" - common feeling that "I won't live up to demands/expectations" that lead to hindrance of being able to do all you can do
  - caught as a pretender
  - new member to an established group
  - attitude of take it or leave it
  - feeling that this vestry is a very loving group
- Wrap up
  - How can we show the extravagance of God's love
  - How can we communicate this sense of purpose and support to others and to remind them that fear and trepidation are OK?
    - CARES program and outreach to Parish through Parish Life activities, e.g., the gift bags distributed during the pandemic

- Vestry provides leadership whether it likes it or not, either overtly or by not showing leadership. Through its leadership, the Vestry leads by who they are, defining where the Parish is going, and supporting the Priest-in-Charge
  - Be specific when approaching someone to do something
  - Mentoring, someone to lean into, a buddy, is important when taking on a new task
- In a loving community we can be seen for who we are without fear

## LEADERSHIP REPORTS:

### **Priest-in-Charge:** Fr. Norman

What does returning to in-person church look like? The discussion produced the following questions to consider:

- What will be the service times when reopening? Bailey hopes that the church may reopen by Easter but realizes this is ambitious. He anticipates a phased approach using a general rule of 25% of capacity for opening indoors. For example, if the capacity of the Sanctuary is 200, then 50 people would be allowed for an inside service in the Sanctuary.
- What if more than 50 people want to attend? Reservations will be required; how do you determine which 50 people will attend?
- What about outdoor service for opening back up? The current capacity is set at 75. Could that number be increased?
- Can number of services be increased to accommodate demand?
- Should the level of vaccination be Incorporated into decisions to open back up? Should the Parish keep track of who has been vaccinated?

Fr. Norman requested that thoughts be emailed to him. This topic will be discussed further at the February Vestry meeting. He will have a discussion with Cyril who is the new Chair of Liturgics.

Fr. Norman stated that the Drive-through Nativity was a great success and commended all the parishioners who helped. First Christian Church, the first stop on the drive, counted more than 600 cars that came through. The Ministerial Association is discussing doing it again next year with additional attention given to traffic control.

### **Sr Warden:** Judith Delaney

The next mutual ministry review will be in March per Fr. Norman's agreement. The tentative time selected is Wednesday, March 3 from 6-8pm. Bailey will confirm the date with Cannon Michelle Bolt. During the first review she was interested in how the church was doing.

Ms. Delaney proposed each Vestry member give a brief 90 second "elevator story" introduction of his/her personal history. She gave a brief background of her family, church, and work experiences. She proposed rotating through the committee report list. The Junior Warden will share her story in February.

**Jr Warden:** Barbara Steele

Before the pandemic, Kathryn Grubb was reassembling the flowers from the altar on the previous Sunday into smaller arrangements and placing them throughout the church. Since no one has been allowed in the church for the last 10 months, the altar flowers have not routinely been taken care of each week. In addition, Ms. Grubb was doing this with no backup. Faye Martin agreed to be the backup. For the time being none of the altar flowers will be put in the church since no one is there. A suggestion was made to take them to nursing homes or assisted living facilities. If there is no alternative found, the flowers will be thrown away. Ms. Delaney stated that Ms. Grubb took a bouquet that day to Dr. Ebersole today and brought one to her for her birthday.

Lil Hise, who has been ordering altar flowers for many year, wants to retire from that commitment. Fr. Norman is looking for a replacement.

**Finance Report:** Jim Rousey

There were \$813,633.96 in assets at end of 2020, an increase of \$21,945.12 from \$781,788.84 from the end of 2019. That's good. However, the balances identified in the annual 2019 audit were higher, since the fund balances are not finalized until mid-January. The interest income from the various endowment funds compared to the principal was very uneven. An investigation into this discrepancy between the funds is being investigated by Cameron Ellis.

The Stewardship Campaign resulted in \$458,094 being pledged which is an increase of \$12,712 over 2019. There was a small increase in the number of pledges (107 in 2021 vs 105 for 2020) and the average amount pledged. Fr. Norman commended the Stewardship committee for their efforts, especially the letters of encouragement sent out by Judy DiGregorio and Judy Kidd to those members who did not return a pledge card.

The proposed budget for 2021 budget added \$20,000 to the pledged amount based on the average received in addition to pledges over the last 5 years. The addition over the pledged amount comes from loose offering (little is coming in now but \$4200 came in last year) and from those parishioners who refuse or forget to pledge.

Total projected revenue for 2021 is \$589,333. All requests including increases were covered plus a 2% increase in staff salary except Fr. Norman and Simon Ballintoy who already received an adjustment to his salary. With the required 10% buffer to the expected disbursements, the 2021 General Fund budget is \$589,333. This will drain all extra interest income from the endowment fund. A review of long-standing programs in relation to future plans should be considered since the budget at its current level is not sustainable.

The motion from the Finance Committee to approve the 2021 budget was passed unanimously.

**ITEMS FOR ACTION**

**Approval of the December 2020 Finance Committee Report:** James Rousey

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

## ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

### Program Committees

#### **Christian Education:** Nancy Anderson

No addition to written report. Christian Ed meets this week.

Fr. Norman mentioned that Caroline Wood will leave at end of February. Molly Justice and her husband Caleb are taking the lead of EYF. Ms. Wood will wrap up renovations of the youth room before she leaves.

#### **Evangelism:** Bonnie Bautz

No addition to written report. Ms. Bautz wants to meet with Fr. Norman and Ms. DiGregorio, the past vestry representative. Ms. Delaney reported that Michael Trank finished the new video for newcomers with key chain QR code to access the video. Ms. Bautz wants to make some additions and would like to add this item to the information material that is given out to newcomers to Oak Ridge at the Welcome Center. Ms. Bautz talked to Mr. Ballintoy about doing a children's music program after the pandemic restrictions of gatherings is lifted.

#### **Liturgics:** Cyril Meredith III

No addition to written report

#### **Outreach:** Liz Herbes

No addition to the written report. The Christmas "basket" campaign was very successful. John Murphy will stay on as Outreach Chair for another year.

#### **Pastoral Care:** Barbara Steele

Nothing to add. Kickoff of CARE was successful.

### Administrative or Support Committees

#### **Buildings and Grounds:** Lew Felton

Same report as last month. He has a contract with Volunteer Mechanical to do the HVAC work. There are funds in hand to replace 4 units and the control system in the Nave. Materials to do the work will come in around end of January with work not beginning before mid-February.

The extensive water damage in Room 209 was repaired for ~\$3900. The room needs to be painted at some later date. Mr. Felton is looking for volunteers to do the painting.

Mr. Felton is in discussions with Brent Sigmon about a proposal that he has for landscaping of grounds and Memorial Garden. Mr. Felton will send out email about this tomorrow.

#### **Bylaws and Policies:** Lew Felton

No addition to written report.

#### **Communications:** Sandi Robertson

Rob Steele who has been the guru of Realms software wants to give it up. This software is underutilized for what the church is paying for it. There are two modules to the software: Finance and Membership. The financial module is currently used, but implementation of the Membership module is needed. Elizabeth Pack is working on the membership module. A new person needs to be identified

to learn the financial system from Rob Steele or go to training funded by church. Ms. Bautz offered to replace Mr. Steele. Fr. Bailey will touch base with her tomorrow.

**Finance:** Jim Rousey

Mr. Rousey discussed the status of St. Stephen's 2021 budget. He noted forecast 2021 pledge income is currently approximately \$50,000 less than the forecast 2021 operating budget. He noted the need to identify and train additional people on Realm software.

**Gifts and Memorials:** Barbara Bovee

No addition to the written report. Deborah Clary is ready to give up Chair of this committee. Fr. Norman will talk to Ms. Bovee about that and the Wish List which needs to be updated.

**Memorial Garden:** Jim Rousey

No addition to written report. Mr. Sigmon is staying on the committee.

**Nominating:** Nancy Anderson

Fourth year Vestry members constitute the membership of this committee: Ms. Anderson, Ms. Bovee, Ms. DiGregorio and Mr. Felton. Fr. Norman suggested that they start thinking about people to nominate for the next Vestry election.

**Parish Life:** Rachel Kirk

Ms. Bautz, the previous Parish Life Chair is mentoring Ms. Kirk who has assumed that role.

**Personnel:** Bonnie Bautz

Nothing to report.

**Stewardship:** Judy DiGregorio

Ms. DiGregorio and Judy Kidd talked or wrote to many folks who did not return pledge cards. Pledges are still coming in. Alan Liby does not want to continue as Chair. Fr. Bailey asked the Vestry to share thoughts on possibilities for a new Chair.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Fr. Bailey Norman

The meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elizabeth D. Ellis, Secretary

Next meeting February 9, 2021