

St Stephen's Vestry Minutes
September 17, 2024

Present: Fr. Norman, Leah Bailey, Craig Brent, Adam Cavender, Tom Clary, Emily Doane, Betsy Ellis (secretary), Cleon Hartman, Ashley Hillis, Alan Libby, Beth Reed, Ben Shassere, Tyler Walker

Absent: Courtney Manrod

Guests: Beth Bailey, Lola Estes, Heather Hartman

Call to Order: Fr. Norman called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

Opening Devotional: Ben Shassere gave the opening devotional. He read the passage from Matthew about Jesus inviting Peter and James to follow him.

Approval of the Agenda: Fr. Norman
The agenda was presented and approved (Walker/Liby).

Approval of the Consent Agenda: Fr. Norman
The consent agenda was approved with no changes to the minutes (Bailey/Hillis).

DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS: Fr. Norman and Visitation Team

The Visitation Team was to go out in teams of 2 into the wilderness of other churches to see how welcoming the church is to visitors. Four teams were established which included the 3 guests and vestry members Leah Bailey, Cleon Hartman, Courtney Manrod, Cyril Meredith, and Tyler Walker. The 4 churches visited were St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church in Farragut, Apostles Anglican Church on Middlebrook Pike, First United Methodist Church and Grace Lutheran Church. Each team gave a report on their visit. Courtney who was absent provided a written report. Each church had its strengths and weaknesses with respect to presence of greeters at the door, signage around the church, information in the bulletin targeted to visitors, and interaction with church members. There was overall concurrence that none of these churches welcomed visitors better than St. Stephen's.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Rector's Report: Fr. Norman

The attendance to the Holy Conversations meeting held at St. Stephen's on August 31 was smaller than expected with 20-25 in attendance. The topic was how to engage in uncomfortable conversations. He will provide a more detailed report in the next Evangel.

There are several new and revised events for December. The date of the Christmas Pageant will be earlier in Advent. Lessons and Carols will be on December 15 with an invitation to attend extended to the community. The early service on Christmas Eve will feature the "Missing Goats" band.

The annual visit from the Bishop will be on December 22. Fr. Norman indicated that there will be 2 baptisms during his visit. There are a number of people who are interested in Inquirer's classes. Since time to the visit is so short, Fr. Norman will hold 3 classes and record several videos rather than the approach used in the past. Rob Steele (the younger) will do the videos.

Fr. Norman and his family will host a Thanksgiving dinner after the 11am service. Parish Life will provide turkey and ham with parishioners asked to bring a dish to share.

Senior Warden's Report: Courtney Manrod

There was no report since Courtney was absent from this meeting.

Junior Warden's Report: Leah Bailey

Sunday, August 25, the Parish Hall was filled with 16 tables highlighting approximately 20 different areas of ministry offered here at St. Stephen's. From Acolytes to Stewardship, Outreach — and to their various ministries — to Parish Life, and our Evangelism chairman walking among the people wearing a "Sandwich Board"— there was something for everyone! In the coming weeks, each ministry will have an opportunity to share a few words about what they do and how the congregation might be able to help.

ITEMS FOR ACTION

Approval of the August 2024 Financial Report: Tom Clary

Tom reported that income dropped below expenses during the summer as expected. A line item for staff travel was added to the CY24 budget because it was inadvertently omitted. Changing the contract for security has provided savings to GF630 Building and Grounds. With the 6 month budget review and adjustment of the budget, some groups experienced funding cuts. If any Vestry member hears anything about these funding cuts, Tom wants to know so that adjustments can be made if necessary. He anticipates "breaking even" at the end of 2024. The report was approved as submitted.

Approval of HVAC maintenance proposal: Cleon Hartman

Volunteer provided a quote of \$6000 for a one year maintenance contract billed at \$1500 after each quarterly visit. The contract will be for one year from the date signed. There was a question about multiple quotes being obtained. Cleon made a good faith effort to obtain multiple quotes. Because of the age of the equipment, it was hard to get anyone interested in providing a quote. There is no policy on obtaining multiple quotes. Adam, who has worked with Volunteer, gave a positive endorsement of the company. The contract was unanimously approved (Hartman/Cavender).

Approval of exterior wayfaring signs: Courtney Manrod

In Courtney's absence, Fr. Norman presented this item. There were 2 parts for the signage. The first is the large sign in the lawn which requires an update with the new times of the Sunday services. He asked permission to use discretionary funds to make a temporary fix to the sign until

a new sign is purchased. The second part was a proposal included in the meeting packet for new wayfaring signs. After concerns were raised about the colors, the font being too harsh, and the symbol for the wheel chair entrance sign with the wheelchair symbol heading away from the entrance, this proposal was tabled. In addition, there is no line item in the budget for the signage. A suggestion was made to use funds from Gifts and Memorials or interest from the Heritage fund.

OLD BUSINESS

Developmental Goals: Fr. Norman

There was nothing else reported on this item beyond the report of the teams who visited different churches given at the beginning of this meeting.

Envisioning Committee: Heather Hartman

This topic was tabled until next month. Heather is planning a committee meeting before the next Vestry meeting.

Prioritized list of needs: Courtney Manrod

This item was tabled until next month.

NEW BUSINESS

Ceiling light fixtures: Cleon Hartman

The ceiling light fixtures are old and some are unsafe. Replacing them with surface mounted LEDs will save electricity and should last 25 years. Cleon has started to replace the units in the drop ceiling himself with the help of parish volunteers. He has found a vendor who will charge \$60/unit. To replace all 74 units in church will cost ~\$4400. He would like to start by replacing the surface mounted units which will cost ~\$2500. There is no money in the budget to do this. He would like to put out an "ask" to the parish to sponsor light fixtures. He asked for approval to spend up to \$5000 to purchase the 74 fixtures needed to replace all the fixtures. Unanimously approved (Hartman/Cavender).

Parish Administrator: Fr. Norman

Fr. Norman is finalizing the job description for this position.

Planned Giving: Tom Clary

Tom met with the financial planner who helped with the reinvestment of the Endowment and Heritage funds about making a presentation about planned giving to the parish in October.

Wall murals: Heather Hartman

One of the recommendations of the Envisioning Committee is to paint murals of Bible stories down the hall leading to the Parish Hall and a blessing over the pass through in the Parish Hall. The same person who did the murals in the children's wing will do these murals. Cost is estimated to be \$800-1200 which will be funded through donations.

Pledge Drive: Tyler Walker

The format for the drive will be parishioner-to-parishioner letter writing with hand-written notes in envelopes mailed to each pledging unit. The list and stationary are ready. There will be 2 writing sessions, one in the daytime and the other at night on October 2 and 9. The second part of the drive will be parishioners giving short talks at both Sunday services starting next Sunday. Tyler will do the first one discussing the importance of pledging. The stewardship committee will meet next Sunday.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Note: Unless noted below no reports were submitted

Building and Grounds: Cleon Hartman

The boxes under the stairs are a fire hazard and must be removed.

Christian Education: Ashley Hillis

There were 12 children in Children's Chapel last Sunday.

Nominating: Beth Reed

Beth needs at least 4 names of people willing to run for Vestry. She would like at least 6 names.

Parish Life: Leah Bailey

The Rally Day/Parish potluck combo worked, with our largest gathering yet. However, we feel that it was too many activities for one Sunday as it was paired with the Ministry Fair. Lemonade in the Grove has finished for the year, and it would not be possible without the many volunteers — from carrying tables to serving to taking out the trash — it is a team effort! Lolli and Bobo's ice cream returned for their 2nd End-of—the-Summer celebration; 65 people enjoyed their free ice cream and the beautiful weather. We hope to make this an annual event. Coming in October is the Blessing for the Animals in the Grove on October 6 and Holy Boocharist and Parish Potluck on October 27.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer at 8:44pm

Next Vestry meeting is October 15, 2024

*Respectfully submitted,
Betsy Ellis
Secretary*