

**St. Stephen's Vestry Minutes**  
**April 16, 2024**

**Present:** Fr. Norman, 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

**Guest:** Heather Hartman

**Call to Order:** Fr. Norman

Fr. Norman called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm with a prayer.

**Opening Devotional:** Ashley Hillis

Ms. Hillis offered the prayer of General thanksgiving from the Book of Common Prayer.

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

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

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

There was a correction to the March minutes under Leadership Reports, Rector's Report, item 3. The text "Book of Common Prayer" should be added to the end of the text. Corrected minutes were approved unanimously (Hillis/Bailey).

## **LEADERSHIP REPORTS**

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

Fr. Norman thanked the Vestry for their presence at his installation and their effort to paint the Parish Hall and Balcony in the Nave and tidy the Narthex. Clergy that attended the event complimented him on the enthusiasm they felt from the Parish during the event.

His letter agreement is with the Personnel Committee. It requires some subtle changes before it is sent to the Diocese for approval. Once it comes back from the Diocese, it will be presented to the Vestry for approval.

In the next few weeks, one wedding (offsite), three funerals, and the annual Bishop's visit/confirmation are scheduled. Fr. Norman received good feedback on the adult forum by Emily Doane. There was good attendance at the joint Contemplative service with First Methodist Church last Sunday. Twenty parishioners were among the 70 in attendance. The next service is scheduled for May 12 and will be in the Nave. Fr. Norman is meeting with the clergy at FUMC on Thursday about continuing the service beyond May. If the service continues beyond May, parishioners will have to be identified to organize the service. There are 8 people who have indicated that they want to be confirmed on May 1 at 6 pm. DOK is hosting a reception with light refreshments after the service. Youth Sunday is May 12. Britton Peterson will preach, and several other youth will be helping with the service.

A little red wagon was purchased to collect donations for the Blessing Box. It will be in the Narthex and brought forward by youth during the service to be blessed.

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

Fr. Sims continues to work on expanding the Newcomer's program.

**Senior Warden:** Courtney Manrod

Given the myriad of special events recently happening at St. Stephen's, Ms. Manrod briefly reflected on special moments that stood out to her. The parish's acknowledgement of their support of Fr. Norman and his ministry during the installation service; Fr. Norman's acknowledgement of long time parishioner and faithful servant Bonnie Nestor prior to her departure, and Emily Doane's God in the garden program.

She reminded the Vestry that many things get done through the committee structure. She encouraged everyone to take initiative in that portion of the ministry for which they are responsible. She reminded Vestry that St. Stephen's has even more potential and that the world we live in very much needs that which the church offers.

**Junior Warden:** Leah Bailey

Ms. Bailey stated that preparation for the installation service was great. She expressed her gratitude for the support of each person who helped make the service special and successful including the Vestry members.

**ITEMS FOR ACTION**

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

Dr. Clary stated that income is tracking ahead of expenses. No line items stand out. Funds with the Trust Company have been moved to a money market account getting 5% interest. For the first quarter of 2023, endowment fund increased \$27,000 with \$9,000 in interest. The March financial statement was unanimously approved.

There was a question about anticipated changes in employees' salaries and compensation during 2024 and how that will affect the budget. Changes in salary and compensation during 2024 will be tracked and incorporated into revised funding requirements for the year.

**Approval of Seminarian Support:** Tom Clary

The level of support will be \$3000/semester, the same as last year. These funds are covered by parishioners and paid directly to the school. This was approved unanimously.

**Approval of Revised Credit Card Distribution:** Tom Clary

There are currently 4 credit cards with individuals names on them. The suggestion is to keep the cards with Fr. Norman's and Simon Ballintoy's name on them and to cancel the other two when they come up for renewal. Unanimously approved.

**Approval of Changing Vestry Meeting Dates to 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays:** Fr. Norman

Fr. Norman requested the monthly Finance Committee meeting and Vestry meeting be moved to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month, respectively. This will provide an extra week to prepare requisite financial reports for the meeting. The changes were unanimously approved (Bailey/Clary).

**Approval of Information Technology Committee Policy:** Leah Bailey

Ms. Bailey presented a new stand-alone Technology Policy. Currently, Technology is listed within the Building and Grounds budget. Under the policy submitted it would have its own funding line independent of the Building and Grounds line item. One change was made to the policy as presented. Under the heading "Composition," the "Director of Christian Education" was changed to "Representative of Christian Education." With these 2 changes, the policy was approved unanimously (Manrod/Hillis).

## ITEMS. FOR DISCUSSION

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

The original pump is at the shop to determine if it can be repaired. Another one can be purchased if needed. Cleon expects an answer tomorrow.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

NOTE: Unless noted below no reports were submitted.

### **Adult Education:** Emily Doane

Ms. Doane is leading a new class called "Liturgy in the Garden." The class will be held outside by the St. Francis statue, weather permitting. It will include a devotional, discussion of what is happening in the garden now, and a seed and plant swap.

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

The Easter Brunch and Egg Hunt were a success. Parents liked the "egg eggs-change" option, and we had over 100 people at the Brunch. It appears that the time between services is the 'sweet spot' for attendance.

The Barbecue with our new Rector had a great turnout. This event also generated the largest number of volunteers to date!

The Daughters of the King will host the "Coffee and Cake with the Bishop and Confirmands" reception on May 1st following Confirmation.

Other upcoming events include the 2nd Annual Holy Ghost Weenie Roast on Pentecost (5/19), Mass in the Grass on Trinity Sunday (5/26)—which also marks the beginning of Lemonade in the Grove following the 10:00 service--and the Smokies Baseball Game outing on June 4th.

## OLD BUSINESS

### **Developmental Goals:** Fr. Norman

The focus is on developing an effective modern communication plan. To do that several people, both internal and external, are needed. The biggest complaint voiced in the Envisioning Committee listening events was the lack of better social media. Posting on social media is not consistent. Brittany Shassere offered to help with the posting. The Parish Administrator is now the hub for communications. All communications for posting should go through him. Fr. Norman asked that Vestry members responsible for submitting Committee reports do so through the Parish Administrator. The right people are getting in place but there is a need for improvement to get the word out.

Fr. Norman had 3 homework items. for the Vestry:

1. Take initiative with your committees. Advertise what you want parishioners to know about Committee activities.
2. If you encounter an IT issue, send it to Fr. Norman who is keeping a list of troubleshooting issues.
3. Run all postings for the web through the Parish Administrator who should be coordinating the posting effort but not doing the posting. A few more administrators who can post to the internet will be added.

**Envisioning Committee Update:** Heather Hartman

At least 19 Vestry members and parishioners worked to clean, prep and paint the Parish Hall; the hallway, and stairway leading to the Parish Hall; and the stairs up to the balcony and the balcony of the Nave. At least 6 parishioners supported those working by providing snacks, drinks, and lunch.

**Challenge Progress:** Tom Clary/Courtney Manrod

At the end of the first quarter, income is running ahead, and expenditures are running on target as projected in the budget. However, there is no way to know if this will continue. Parishioners may be increasing their pledge or paying ahead. The accounting system is not able to distinguish which is occurring.

They introduced a Challenge Action Tracking worksheet that will be used to identify actions to increase income, decrease expenses and replenish reserves, and monitor progress toward meeting the challenge.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Ministry Fair:** Fr. Norman

A “soft” Ministry Fair showcasing the breadth of ministries at St Stephens will be part of the Pentecost celebration on May 19. Poster boards from each ministry will go up on May 18. There will be a follow on Ministry Fair in the Fall for parishioners to sign up to participate in ministries of interest to them.

**Proposal to Change Service Times:** Fr. Norman

The proposal of changes to the Sunday schedule is worship services at 8 am and 10:30 am with Christian Education between the 2 services and a coffee hour after the 10:30 service. The switch will be made in the Summer.

The meeting closed with the Lord’s prayer at 8:53 pm.

*Next Vestry meeting is May 21, 2024*

Respectfully submitted,  
Elizabeth Ellis  
Secretary