

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Vestry Minutes

April 13, 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. Bailey opened the meeting with prayer at 6:33 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: Fr. Bailey Norman

The agenda was approved unanimously by the Vestry. (DiGregorio/Herbes).

Approval of Minutes: Fr. Bailey Norman

The minutes for March 2021 were unanimously approved (Delaney/Felton).

DISCUSSION: Fr. Bailey Norman

The Agile Church, Chapter 5, Discipline 4, Interpreting the present in light of the past, page 96-98

Fr. Bailey began the discussion by asking "What did you hear from the Bishop's sermon this past Sunday?"

- We are in the Secret City but don't need to be the secret parish
- Invite someone to come to church
- We are the church behind the church – he feels we are capable to do more than what we are doing
 - Fr. Bailey has always been struck that because of where we are located, we have to work harder. But we have always been a player in the community
 - One of the churches behind the original church of Jesus Christ
- We are doing better than some parishes coming out of the pandemic, therefore empowered to go forth
- The Bishop is impressed with us. When you have someone very capable, load them up.

Fr. Bailey shared that Bishop feels St Stephens is a vibrant parish doing great things already. The search process took so long because of our past. Past rector searches and clergy had to be taken into account. So how do we adapt to go into the future. For starters, the website is being updated with final tweaks and new pictures before going live.

Page 97—Heart of discipline, 2 sentences, “Church leaders are curators and stewards of stories and practices of community...Help connect useable past as we go into the future”

- What is the “useable past”?
 - Everything old is new again.
 - Implies some unuseable past – pick positive pieces to help move forward, not the negative that needs to stay in the past.
 - Episcopal church is welcoming to everyone. For example, the search committee asked Fr. Bailey about his attitude toward gay marriage.
- Where does the useable past connect to the future?
 - Father Pollard, who was science and religion. Idea to put out something about Fr. Pollard.
 - The role of the vestry is to tell the story of St. Stephens – useable past – to whole new group of people.
 - Listen to the stories of others.
 - Make ourselves known where we aren’t known.
 - Doing the drive-through pageant at Christmas got lots of cars in our driveway.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS:

Priest-in-Charge: Fr. Bailey Norman

Fr. Norman thanked the vestry for their help in getting through Holy Week and the Bishop’s visit. He is encouraging the staff to take a few days off in the near future.

The Bishop thoroughly enjoyed his time here last Sunday. He said the life and vibrancy here is wonderful.

There was an event at the Methodist church during the Bishop’s visit. A man who was stopped by the police broke free and ran and hid in the church causing an evacuation to search the building. This brings up the issue of building security during the worship service. Then there was the shooting at Austin-East. Fr. Bailey asked that the Vestry be sensitive to the fact that some people in the parish were touched by this tragedy, and he asked the Vestry to pray for the victims.

As follow up to the book *Just Mercy*, Fr. Bailey is thinking of the idea of “Laundry Love” where church rents out laundromat for several hours and hangs out, provides drinks and snacks and is present to have conversations to get to know the patrons with no strings attached. The Evangelism Committee is already thinking of that idea. This will have to wait for COVID to be over. Fr. Bailey wants to talk to laundromat owners to see how they feel about it. The idea is to get to know community so that when tragedy strikes the church is known.

Sr Warden: Judith Delaney

Ms. Delaney thanked Fr. Bailey and staff for all work that went into Holy Week and the Bishop’s visit. She thanked Parish Life for bags that were given to the confirmands. They were well received.

Jr Warden: Barbara Steele

Ms. Steele echoed Ms. Delaney's sentiment.

Finance Report: Jim Rousey

Mr. Rousey submitted the finance report with Finance Committee's recommendation for approval. The report showed revenues of \$168,494 and disbursements of \$117,512.

ITEMS FOR ACTION

Approval of the March 2021 Finance Committee Report: Jim Rousey

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

Beginning indoor worship: Fr. Bailey Norman

Fr. Bailey sent out a document about indoor worship which included gathering protocols. The results of the parish survey will go out in Evangel. The proposal is to start indoor worship on May 2 with up to 50 people total in the church. Registration will be required. So that everyone has an equal opportunity to register, sign up will begin at 5pm on Sunday and close at 5pm on Tuesday. Fr. Bailey is willing to add another service if demand warrants it. Some choir members are willing to come back, seated in front pews. Fr. Bailey will rely on Simon concerning the music. Streaming of the service will continue. Outdoor service will continue at least through the Fall. The outdoor service will be cancelled when there is inclement weather. The Vestry confirmed that indoor worship will begin on May 2. Fr. Bailey will send a pastoral letter to the parish explaining the path forward. Ms. Robertson stated that we have ability to do overflow in the Parish Hall.

Fr. Bailey asked Ms. Robertson to investigate technology that enhances hybrid meetings (i.e., both in person and virtual together).

Sponsorship of an immigrant family: Judith Delaney

The parish has experience supporting an immigrant family. Ms. Delaney was throwing the idea out about how we might go about it. There is Bridge Refugee Services in Knoxville that Fr. Bo worked with. Sandi has friend who coordinates extensively with Bridge. The suggestion was made that the Outreach Committee scope it out and determine what approach to take. Outreach is meeting at 1pm on Thursday. Ms. Delaney and Ms. Herbes will attend to present the idea.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Program Committees

Christian Education: Nancy Anderson

Nothing to add to the submitted report.

Evangelism: Bonnie Bautz
Nothing to add to the submitted report.

Liturgics: Cyril Meredith III
Nothing to add to the submitted report.

Outreach: Liz Herbes
Nothing to add to the submitted report.

Pastoral Care: Barbara Steele
Nothing to add to the submitted report.

Administrative or Support Committees

Buildings and Grounds: Lew Felton
The HVAC is being shifted from winter to summer mode. The temperature is being monitored to ensure a good balance is maintained. The thermostats on the new units are password protected, but the old units can still be tweaked.

Bylaws and Policies: Lew Felton
Several changes will be sent out. A policy on funding authorization and how money is spent will be circulated.

Communications: Sandi Robertson
The updated website is finished and will go live next week. Adam Ballintoy is training 3 people to run streaming equipment.

Finance: Jim Rousey
The Vestry provided feedback to the Finance Committee concerning internal controls. There is a need for a confidentiality policy and a non-disclosure agreement for those who work with personally identifiable or financial information.

Gifts and Memorials: Barbara Bovee
Nothing to add to the submitted report

Memorial Garden: Jim Rousey
Nothing to add to the submitted report

Nominating: Nancy Anderson
Nothing to add to the submitted report

Parish Life: Rachel Kirk
Nothing to add to the submitted report

Personnel: Bonnie Bautz

Because of the additional staff time in creating all the virtual items, consideration is being given to allowing comp time for lay staff. Fr. Bailey will bring this up with Canon Michelle when he meets with her next week.

Stewardship: Judy DiGregorio

Fr. Fr. Bailey has a candidate for Stewardship.

ADJOURNMENT: Fr. Fr. Bailey Norman

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth D. Ellis, Secretary

Next meeting May 11, 2021