

**Stephen's Vestry Minutes
February 14, 2023**

Present: Fr. Ashton Sims, Fr. Howard Hess, Leah Bailey, Adam Cavender, Emily Doane, Betsy Ellis (Secretary), Cleon Hartman, Ashley Hillis, Rachel Kirk, Courtney Manrod, Jim Rousey, Barbara Steele

Absent: Fr. Bailey Norman, Tom Clary, Cyril Meredith III

Guests: Heather Hartman

Call to Order: Fr. Hess

Fr. Hess (Vicar) called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Opening Devotional: Fr. Sims

Fr. Sims opened the meeting with a devotional from the Prayer Book (p. 139).

Approval of the Agenda: Fr. Hess

The agenda was approved unanimously. (Hartman/Steele)

Approval of the Consent Agenda: Fr. Hess

The Minutes of the January 19, 2023, meeting were unanimously approved as submitted. (Rousey/Hartman)

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Vicar's Report: Fr. Howard Hess

Fr. Hess has been here 3 weeks. To date he has made the following observations:

- Despite very much uncertainty, the boat is very much afloat and moving forward.
- The organizing skills in the church are unique.
- Both wardens are very talented.
- The curate is at the top of the list of those whom Fr Hess has worked with in his career. It is important the curate not become depleted in working with you.
- The Vestry and wardens' responsibilities are to make sure the clergy does not burn out. They need to hold the clergy accountable for self-care.

Assistant to the Priest in Charge: Fr. Sims

Fr. Sims stated Adult Forum has been going very well with highest attendance at 22. There will be a Lenten book study of "Cross Shattered Christ: Meditation on the Seven Last Words" by Stanley Hauerwas. Ash Wednesday is next week, and Inquirers class starts with Fr Hess teaching the first class on salvation. A Lenten Fair and potluck is scheduled for February 26 after the 10 am service.

There continue to be new faces, especially at the 10 am Sunday service. There are four new children and parents signed up for the Inquirer's class. As Fr Hess said "people are looking for something." Pastoral Care is making progress with an abbreviated Stephen's Ministry to be taught by Steve Herbes.

Senior Warden: Courtney Manrod

Courtney has spent time getting up to speed on issues and opportunities. She asked that Vestry members read the last handout "Three Things to Do With the Offering Plate" handout. The article

discusses the nexus between liturgy, stewardship and outreach. The article informs the change St. Stephen's is making in how Outreach ministry is funded.

Jr Warden: Leah Bailey

On February 9 a significant deposit was made into the Norman's bank account for which they were very grateful. The amount exceeded expectations. It was decided not to share amount because it was a gift. On March 14 at 5:45 pm Finance Committee representatives will give a tutorial on the financial reports to anyone who is interested. She touched base with the Coxes who lead the Stewardship campaign. Thank you notes were mailed to all those who pledged marking the close of the campaign.

Items for Action

Approval of January 2023 financial statement: Jim Anderson

Income was twice expected amount this month. This increase primarily reflects the giving of some pledges (annual total amount) at the beginning of the year. Finance committee recommends approval of the financial statement with the correction of a typo (GF 775) in the restricted accounts which should be (GF755). Approved unanimously.

Approval of elevator maintenance contract: Jim Anderson

Cleon Hartman presented the information on this item. He evaluated the old contract for maintenance contract on the elevator. There is a newer contract with the same or better provisions that will save ~\$2000 annually. Vestry approve for the new contract is required since it is greater than \$1000. Cleon made a motion to approve the new contract. Approved unanimously (Hartman/Bailey).

Items for Discussion

Policy changes for Outreach donations: Courtney Manrod

The By-laws and Procedures Committee reviewed Loose or Plate Offering policy (C-4) and Outreach Committee policy (F-4) related to changes in the way Outreach activities will be funded. This item was presented for discussion. There will be an email vote in the near future so that the Outreach Committee can implement this change by March 1.

Reinstatement of Scholarship Committee: Courtney Manrod

This committee has not been active for some time. In the past it was focused on providing college funds. If it is restarted, Courtney would propose that its scope be broadened to include additional types of scholarships (e.g., internships, EFM, summer camp, Seminarians). The Visa reward points would be used to fund scholarships. Courtney asked for Vestry members to work on this.

Family Quiet Room proposal: Rachel Kirk

The Nursery worker resigned. Volunteers man the nursery for 1-3 year olds. A Quiet Room would be a place to take a child who needed a place to calm down or for parents who prefer to keep very young children with them. It will not be staffed but will be equipped with a TV to stream the service, and it will be regularly sanitized. There is some concern about where it is located so far from Sanctuary. She suggested that a meeting be set up to discuss the idea. The Christian Ed Committee meets tomorrow at 6pm in the Pollard Room and will consider this idea. She will make a report to Vestry in March.

Yard sign campaign: Jim Rousey

Following up from discussion at the January 2023 Vestry meeting, Jim provided a handout that introduced two different ideas for consideration: yard signs to invite folks in and a Good News Garden. Heather Hartman created and shared examples for the signs.

Establishment of a community garden at St. Stephen's was also discussed. The garden would provide parishioners and the neighborhood with fresh produce as well as opportunities to work and be together. There is space for a garden on the church property. This was a topic at the Evangelism Day last Fall (Beth Reed and Adam Ballintoy attended) and should be shared with the Envisioning Committee.

Vestry retreat: Courtney Manrod

Courtney solicited Vestry interest in having a retreat this year. Fr Howard has expertise in church growth and offered this as a possible focus for the retreat. The Vestry is interested in such a retreat. Most likely it would be conducted later in the year to provide the opportunity for Fr. Bailey's participation.

Realtor reception suggestion: Courtney Manrod

Heather Hartman presented this idea about getting the word out that there is an Episcopal church in town. Before COVID, Bonnie Bautz was working on a brochure to give to visitors and newcomers through the Visitor's Center. The Wardens will discuss this idea.

Reports

Building and Grounds: Cleon Hartman

The sewer backed up. The city inspector is of opinion that trees are causing the issue, particularly the Magnolia tree. The manhole that the church owns is in bad repair. The diseased cherry tree in Memorial Garden should be removed.

Communications: Ashley Hillis

The committee is reviewing its roles, how it is organized and its membership.

Parish Life: Leah Bailey.

This committee has 10 events before Easter. Leah still needs three people to make non-vegetarian soup for Lenten soup suppers. Courtney agreed to take March 29 and Jim volunteered his wife, June, to take March 22.

Pastoral Care:

The Committee is active and moving forward with implementation of Stephen's Ministry.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

The meeting closed with prayer by Fr Hess. The meeting adjourned at 8:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Ellis
Secretary

Next meeting March 14, 2023