

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Vestry Minutes

November 10, 2020

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, Cyril Meredith, John Murphy, Brent Sigmon

Absent: Jo Kelley, Sandi Robertson

Guests: Rachel Kirk, Cyril Meredith III, James Rousey, Barbara Steele

Call to Order:

Fr. Norman opened the meeting with prayer at 6:35 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: Fr. Norman

The agenda was unanimously approved (Meredith III/Meredith II).

Approval of Minutes: Fr. Norman

The minutes for September were unanimously approved (Sigmon/DiGregorio).

The minutes for October were unanimously approved with amendment (Delaney/Felton).

DISCUSSION:

Fr. Norman read 3 passages from Dwight Zscheile's, "The Agile Church" (p. 43, prophets speak; p. 76, what God is doing in our midst; and p. 77, change led by ordinary members). Fr. Bailey asked Vestry members reflect on words, themes and/or ideas that stood out in the passages. Their reflection included:

- vestry work is the work of many, all of us;
- St. Stephen's provides a sense of comfort for parishioners;
- if we adhere to status quo, there will be missed opportunity;
- prophets need to speak up, we should be challenged to go into unknown territory;
- it's necessary to step back, be open, talk and listen to others, gain their perspective;
- be attentive and wonder what God is up to through St. Stephen's; and
- ask what God want us to be.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS:

Senior Warden: Brent Sigmon

Mr. Sigmon discussed a meeting in which he, Fr. Norman, Ms. Delaney and Mr. Cameron Ellis participated regarding DIOET parishes that have sponsored Boy Scouts of America troops. Called by the DIOET Chancellor and Canon to the Ordinary, the meeting addressed transfer of liabilities (arising from abuse and allegations of abuse) from sponsor parishes to the national BSA organization. There is no knowledge of abuse or allegations of abuse at St. Stephen's Oak Ridge. The boy scout troops we were sponsoring are no longer active. Vestry expressed concern for the wellbeing of those who have been injured through abuse while in scouting and the importance of preventing abuse.

Junior Warden: Judith Delaney

Ms. Delaney referred Vestry to her written report.

Priest-in-Charge: Fr. Norman

Fr. Norman updated Vestry about the status of staff members who had tested positive for COVID or were in quarantine. All staff are now out of quarantine and healthy. Fr. Norman discussed attendance at St. Stephen's virtual and in-person worship services and coffee hours. He noted in-person attendance increased after the service was moved to a later start time. Virtual service attendance has generally remained the same. Participation in coffee hours is about 4 or 5 people per session with substantive fellowship among the participants. Continue to monitor and refine as needed. Fr. Norman shared St. Stephen's initial plans for Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas. Services and activities will be different this year in response to the COVID 19 pandemic. A pre-recorded worship service will be streamed on Thanksgiving Day. There will not be a shared meal at church on Thanksgiving Day. A "miniature" Advent Fair is planned for church families with children to foster community and fellowship within this segment of our parish. Advent Lessons and Carols will be recorded and streamed. No Blue Christmas service will be offered, vulnerable parish members will be contacted individually. The week before Christmas, St. Stephen's may participate in "drive-through" nativity pageant sponsored by the Oak Ridge Ministerial Association. Christmas Eve services are still under consideration (live or virtual). There will not be a Children's Christmas Eve pageant. There will be a pre-recorded service broadcast on Christmas Day.

ITEMS FOR ACTION

Approval of the October 2020 Finance Committee Report: Cyril Meredith

Mr. Meredith submitted the finance report with Finance Committee's recommendation for approval. There is a favorable balance for the year to date, income is ahead and expenditures are behind those forecast. The October financial report was unanimously approved.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Program Committees

Christian Education: Nancy Anderson

Ms. Anderson informed Vestry that Children's Chapel will be reactivated during in person services and that they are soliciting adult volunteers. She noted Advent Fair activities will be held the second Sunday in December. Fr. Norman discussed the benefit of establishing a separate group that coordinates adult Christian education programming.

Evangelism: Judith Delaney

Ms. Delaney informed Vestry that in response to the National Episcopal Church distributing grants to promote evangelism, St. Stephen's will submit a grant request to provide fencing around the children's playground. The objective is to provide a welcoming environment for families with children especially children with special needs. Additional discussion about fencing playground will be conducted.

Liturgics: Fr. Norman

A meeting is being planned for late November to discuss Advent and Christmas services.

Outreach: John Murphy

No addition to written report.

Pastoral Care: Liz Herbes

No addition to written report (which contains substantial information about pastoral care initiatives).

Administrative or Support Committees

Buildings and Grounds: Lew Felton

Mr. Felton provided an update on improvements to wall mounted HVAC units in the Nave. Originally scoped as replacement of thermostat controls, it was determined a better solution is replacement of four wall units to improve space conditioning, provide a long term solution, and best use funds. Mr. Felton noted resolution of Nave HVAC as highest priority need. Upgrade of AV equipment, is also being addressed.

Communications: Fr. Norman

There have been band width issues in City of Oak Ridge on Sundays. St., Stephen's is evaluating how to improve its posture.

Finance: Cyril Meredith

Mr. Meredith discussed development of St. Stephen's 2021 budget. Mr. Meredith noted that the Finance Committee is implementing recommendations identified in the 2019 financial audit.

Gifts and Memorials: Barbara Bovee

No addition to written report.

Memorial Garden: Brent Sigmon

No addition to written report.

Nominating: Brent Sigmon

Mr. Sigmon noted 2021 Vestry Officer and committee assignments are under development. Fr. Norman mentioned that St.. Stephen's delegates to the 2021 Diocesan Convention will be voted at the December Vestry meeting,

Parish Life: Bonnie Bautz

No addition to written report.

Personnel: Judith Delaney

No addition to written report.

Stewardship: Judy DiGregorio

Ms. DiGregorio noted St. Stephen's annual stewardship campaign is on-going.

ADJOURNMENT: Fr. Bailey Norman

The meeting adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Courtney A. Manrod, Secretary

Next meeting December 8, 2020

Reports for November 10, 2020, Vestry Meeting

WARDEN'S REPORTS

Sr. Warden

Jr. Warden

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Christian Education

You may recall last summer's Children's Chapel, when the children left the congregation before the sermon to attend a song and story session in the chapel. In order to accommodate families attending the in-person outdoor service, we will revive this activity beginning Sunday Nov. 15. We need volunteers, not to lead the procession and present the activity, but to follow behind and shepherd any wayward lambs.

Since the retirement of both Adult Forum and Bible Study coordinators in the spring and the onset of covid, the Christian Ed Committee has had no Adult Ed representative. Father Bailey has recommended a separate committee for Adult Ed and has been conversing with likely candidates.

An outdoor Advent Fair specifically targeting our parish families with children is planned for Sunday Dec. 6 following the outdoor in-person church service. If weather or public health protocols prevent the event, the Advent activities and materials will be packaged for pick-up at church or delivery to the families' homes.

Evangelism

No report

Liturgics

No report

Outreach

We participated with High Places church in our first "teacher appreciation" day. ORHS teachers and staff (100 persons) were provided individual "we are thankful for you" sacks containing apples, cakes, bagels, and hard candy. Feedback indicated that ORHS (our neighbors) greatly appreciated the thought

A second Appreciation Day is scheduled for November 18.

Our 2021 budget request was discussed and a final request was agreed on

The Committee also received a detailed report from Cameron Ellis on the medical clinic in Haiti

Pastoral Care

Update on CARE (Calling and Reconnecting) Ministry

- A letter was sent by Bailey to a group of about 40 parishioners who have been identified as possible Team Coordinators. This letter explained the program in detail, outlining the goals and asking them to prayerfully consider if they are called to this ministry.
- Steve Herbes and I are now doing a follow-up call to each of these persons to answer any questions and see if they are willing to make a commitment of at least one year, but preferably two years.
- Each participant will be assigned a group of 8-10 family units, ranging in ages and life circumstances.
- This will be followed by a 60-90 minute training. It will be offered in two formats: 1) a Zoom meeting; and 2) a social-distancing meeting in the Grove.
- Our hope is there will then be an official launch of the program in early Advent. There will be publicity about CARE in various formats (announcements by Bailey, Evangel, E-news).
- Each person in the parish will then receive a letter or email with further information about CARE, including who their team leader will be.
- Team Coordinators will then call each person once a month to see how they are doing, whether they have things to celebrate, any concerns, and how the church can be of help. This will be communicated to either Bailey or Liz or Steve Herbes (CARE Coordinators) depending on the need.
- Steve and Liz will periodically check with all the Team Coordinators to discuss how things are going, and continue to fine tune the program as we learn.

Building and Grounds

We currently have enough funding pledged to cover replacing four of the HVAC units in the Nave and to install associated equipment and controls to handle the new units. Volunteer Mechanical will perform the work.

The long-term plan is to sequentially replace units in the Nave as funding is available, after we evaluate the operation of the new units and their ability to handle the heating and cooling needs. Please note that the remaining existing units will remain operational and can be used in the current manual mode to augment the four units as needed during the evaluation period. It is possible we will not need to replace all twelve units in the Nave in order to have a system that is able to maintain comfortable temperatures in the Nave.

We will need to accept a proposal from Volunteer Mechanical for the work, the amount will be approximately \$22,500. This work will begin after the first of next year. It should be noted that there are a few areas outside the Nave, e.g. Chapel and Choir room, that will probably need some HVAC work soon and that work must be evaluated and is not part of this effort.

Bylaws and Policies

Nothing to report.

Communications

Finance

The Committee again met remotely via Zoom at 7:00 PM on November 3, 2020. In attendance were Rob Steele, John Cox, Chris Kirk, Jim Anderson, Merry Keyser, Brent Sigmon, Cameron Ellis Bailey Norman and Cyril Meredith.

The Committee reviewed the Finance Report for October 2020. Through October, our income is at 85% and expenditures are at approximately 79%. The target as of October would be 83.33% (five/sixths of a year). Through October, the Church is still doing well financially. We had budgeted to be \$33.5K in the negative on a Net total basis but we are only negative \$1.5K. We are approximately \$32K better off than we budgeted. Finance Committee believes the report accurately reflects St. Stephen's financial picture through October and recommends Vestry approval.

Discussion continued on Budget for 2021. Missing input was identified and subsequently provided after the meeting. A copy of the Draft Budget as of 11/8/20 is attached for information. Including all requested changes and estimated income as of current Stewardship campaign, budget shows a deficit of \$26K. we will either need the pledge campaign to come in higher and/or the receipts for the last two months of 2020 to be more than expected to be able to balance the budget. Finance Committee has not evaluated the budget as of this time. Hence the FC Change column is blank.

Recall that the Audit was approved last month. The Auditor made seven (7) recommendations for St. Stephens. There were no findings. Recommendations included documenting meetings via minutes, change role of check signer and bank statement reconciler, Finance committee member to oversee/review monthly bank statement, use vouchers for payments including credit card payments, get receipts for all purchases (we do this now), prepare a deposit slip for plate deposits (we do this now). Finance discussed the recommendations but did not reach any final conclusions. Further discussion necessary before any changes can be suggested or recommended.

Gifts and Memorials

The HVAC system will require more \$. The prices have gone up and the plan is to do a long term fix. ie: remove/replace existing units and have a central control installed. We need a new Wish List.

Memorial Garden

Brent Sigmon has talked with three potential contractors, including our current lawn mowing contractor, about weeding maintenance in the coming year. We are discussing a single contractor for both the Memorial Garden, which has its own funding, and the rest of the church grounds, funded by the General Fund. So far, no responses.

Nominating

No report

Parish Life

No report

Personnel

No report

Stewardship

Dan, Judy Kidd and I contacted numerous parishioners by email and snail mail reminding them to send in their pledges as soon as possible. Judy Kidd also wrote a Stewardship Thought for the enews.