

**Stephen's Vestry Minutes  
December 13, 2022**

**Present:** Fr. Ashton Sims, Fr. Charles Fels, Bonnie Bautz, Adam Cavender, Tom Clary, Judith Delaney, Liz Herbes, Rachel Kirk, Cyril Meredith, Beth Reed, Jim Rousey, Barbara Steele

**Absent:** Fr. Bailey Norman, Lew Felton, Sandi Robertson

**Guests (incoming 2023 Vestry members):** Leah Bailey, Emily Doane, Cleon Hartman, Ashley Hillis, Courtney Manrod

**Call to Order:** Fr. Fels

Fr. Fels called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. He led a lectio divina.

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

The request was made to move the agenda item concerning voting for vestry officers was moved to the last item under "New Business." The agenda with this modification was approved unanimously by voice vote.

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

There was a correction to the Minutes of the November 15, 2022 meeting. Tom Clary was listed as a guest and should be listed as a member. The corrected minutes were approved by voice vote.

**LEADERSHIP REPORTS**

**Vicar:** Fr Fels

Fr. Fels had lunch with Fr. Norman who sends his greetings. His situation is that he has an appointment at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota on February 13. It will last 5-7 days. The hope is that the results of this visit will provide answers about his medical condition. Bailey wants to come back in January but will wait for the results of the trip to Mayo. He has a meeting with Bishop Cole next Monday and is open to what the Bishop decides.

In his short time at St Stephens, Fr Fels likes everything he has seen. With the current state of the Christian faith in this country, it is going to take effort to grow. Although 15% of Christian churches are growing now, St Stephens is not among them. Comparing 2017 to 2022 Advent attendance, the numbers are down in 2022. The church has many positive assets, but money has to be put into them and changes made because the current model is no longer working. He suggests looking at those churches that are growing and determine their best practices as a starting point. There are 5 such churches in the area.

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

Fr. Sims agreed with what Fr. Fels stated. He is excited about possibilities, but we must decide if we want to grow. Growth requires change and work, and can cause discomfort.

**Sr Warden:** Judith Delaney

Judith requested that outgoing Vestry members turn in their white notebooks.

**Jr Warden:** Barbara Steele

Barbara had nothing additional to report.

## Items for Action

### **Finance:** Tom Clary

With 91.6% into the year, income is above budget and expenses are slightly below budget. Paying some expenses out of restricted funds has helped with the income shortfall. In addition, a gift was received for \$20K of which \$15K went to the general fund and \$5K went into restricted funds. If the year ends on budget, all the interest from the endowment funds will be spent. The financial statement for November was unanimously approved.

### **Approval of St Stephen's commitment to the diocesan "ask":** Tom Clary

The ask is \$62,195 based on the 2021 budget. It was unanimously approved.

### **Approval of housing allowance for Frs. Norman and Sims:** Fr. Fels

The requested housing allowance of \$25K by Fr Norman and \$29K by Fr. Sims with the remainder of each one's salary for 2023 as compensation was passed unanimously (Clary/Cavender)

### **Approval of Adam Ballintoy's admission as a Postulant for Holy Orders:** Fr Fels

Fr Sims went with Adam Ballintoy to meet with the Bishop. The Vestry, the Priest-in-Charge and the Secretary signed the agreement. The expectation is that the parish who raises up a person for holy orders will support that individual through seminary. The signed document was approved unanimously (Sims/Meredith)

### **Approval of St Stephen's financial support of Adam Ballintoy:** Fr Fels

The parish support for educational costs in preparing for his ordination will be determined following the January Finance Committee meeting.

### **Approval of Diocesan Convention Delegates:** Fr Fels

Cleon and Heather Hartman and Bill Lawrence were elected as delegates. Alternates are Adam Ballintoy, Beth Reed and Betsy Ellis.

## Items for Discussion

### **Basketball goal:**

A gift of a basketball goal was made to the parish. It was accepted unanimously (Delaney/Hartman). Fr. Norman has approved 2 locations, by the dumpster and 3 parking spaces in the back parking lot. Adam Cavender preferred the dumpster as the location. This will require moving the dumpster.

## Reports

Note: Only Committees with additional information not in submitted reports are recorded.

### **Finance:**

Rob Steele has prepared a proposed budget for next year. Most line items remain the same as 2022. Currently there is a \$55K shortfall between pledges and the proposed budget. A final budget will be presented at the next Vestry meeting.

### **Outreach**

In discussions with Fr Norman, there are ways of funding Outreach other than a line item in the budget. He proposes that Outreach be funded at the same level as last year and engage in an experiment in 2023. Each month Outreach will identify a charity and loose offering as well as designated offering for

that month will go to the charity minus discretionary Sundays. If the offering exceeds \$25K for the year, then the money will go back into the general fund. This may require modifying the policies for Outreach and Gifts and Memorials.

**Stewardship**

To date 101+ pledges were received with a total in excess of \$510K. 120 pledges were received in 2022 and 144 in 2021. Contact by email and phone call is being made to those who have previously pledged but have not pledged for 2023.

**New Business**

**Election of Vestry Officers for 2023:** Fr Fels

Judith Delaney nominated Courtney Manrod for Sr Warden, Leah Bailey for Jr Warden, and Betsy Ellis for Secretary. Barbara Steele nominated Jim Anderson for Treasurer. All were approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned with the reading of the Thomas Merton prayer at 7:54 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elizabeth Ellis  
Secretary

*Next meeting January 19, 2023*