

**St. Stephen's Vestry Minutes**  
**January 19, 2024**  
**Zoom Meeting**

**Present:** Fr Bailey, Fr. Ashton, Leah Bailey, Craig Brent, Tom Clary, Adam Cavender, Emily Doane, Betsy Ellis (Secretary), Cleon Hartman, Ashley Hillis, Alan Libby, Courtney Manrod, Beth Reed, Ben Shassere, Tyler Walker

**Call to Order:** Fr. Norman

Fr. Norman called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

**Opening Devotional:** Alan Libby

Mr. Libby opened the meeting by reading 3 brief quotes of Martin Luther King to mark Martin Luther King Day

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

The agenda was unanimously approved as submitted (Clary/Hartman).

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

The December 2024 minutes were unanimously approved as submitted (Hillis/Hartman)

**LEADERSHIP REPORTS**

**Priest-In-Charge's Report:** Fr. Norman

Fr. Norman is gearing up for Inquirers' Classes to start January 31. Seven people want to be confirmed and 10 others are interested. There may be a need to move the Bishop's visit from the scheduled Wednesday night.

The Envisioning Committee wants to continue gathering survey input through mission conversations with small focus groups, especially targeted at groups that are under-represented in the affairs of leadership. The input from these groups will be used to refine St. Stephen's mission statement. This activity should be wrapped up by mid-year.

We need to ensure the approved Vestry meeting minutes are provided to the archivist and posted on the web.

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

Fr Sims is working with Fr. Norman to develop the Inquirer's Class.

The Fall 2024 Camino trip has enough people signed up to go to make it viable. Funds are being collected for the trip.

**Senior Warden:** Courtney Manrod

Ms. Manrod is excited to be working on Vestry this year. Much effort has gone into laying the groundwork of how to position St Stephen's going forward. There is much to accomplish this year.

**Junior Warden:** Leah Bailey

Data from the green census sheet gathered at the September Ice Cream Social has been entered into the database in preparation for the 2023 Parochial Report. There will be follow up with individuals who did not turn in a census form so that this report is accurate. A draft of an updated Parish Directory has been printed. Photos of parish members will be collected to include in the directory.

Ms. Bailey commended the Vestry for its teamwork work during the January 9 Executive Session focused on completion of Priest in Charge process.

### Items for Action

#### **Approval of Letter to Bishop:** Leah Bailey

Ms. Bailey discussed the letter that resulted from the January 9 Executive Session, written in support of calling Fr. Norman to be the next rector of St. Stephen's. The letter was accepted unanimously (Liby/Clary).

#### **Approval of the December 2023 financial statement:** Tom Clary

Dr. Clary reviewed the December 2023 financial statement. He noted St. Stephen's ended the fiscal year in accordance with the approved 2023 budget. Pledge income met the budgeted amount. As planned, prior year investment earnings in the amount of \$46,000 were transferred to the general fund during 2023 to offset costs. Investments earned \$32,500 for 2023. Dr. Clary stated the December 2023 financial report was an accurate representation of St. Stephen's financial status and, on behalf of the Finance Committee, recommended its approval. The financial statement was unanimously approved.

#### **Approval of 2024 budget:** Tom Clary

Dr. Clary provided an overview of St. Stephen's proposed 2024 budget. The proposed budget forecasts expenses of \$680,571 in 2024. The expenses are apportioned as follows:

- 65% staffing related costs;
- 19% fixed costs (e.g., utilities, insurance, maintenance, repair, service contracts, IT, etc.);
- 10% Diocesan pledge;
- 5% programs (e.g., outreach, worship, pastoral care, music, Christian education, evangelism and renewal); and
- 1% long term investment/capital improvement.

Based on 2024 pledges received to date and historical trends, the forecasted 2024 pledge income is \$554,000. As proposed the 2024 budget included an additional income stream entitled "Challenge income/reallocation" in the amount of \$126,823.

Dr. Clary relayed Finance Committee observations made during preparation of the 2024 budget.

- The current number of pledgers is 100 (vs. 140 ten years ago).
- There is a need for a sustainable budget.
- Additional review and reporting throughout the year are needed.
- To increase income, additional fund raisers will be required.
- There is a need to educate parishioners about legacy giving.

Vestry discussion of the proposed budget focused on the importance of a clear vision of mission and ministry and a sustainable budget; the need to increase and diversify income sources; and opportunities for cost reduction. They emphasized the importance of closing the funding gap as soon as possible, ideally by mid-year. The importance and need to communicate St. Stephen's status with the Parish was emphasized. This communication should include goals, finances, and future plans.

Fr. Norman described the curacy model for a two-priest parish and noted St. Stephen's rich history of supporting curates and the larger church through development of new priests. The Vestry expressed its support for continuing this model at St. Stephen's.

A proposal was made to adopt the 2024 budget contingent upon completing the following:

- The Vestry communicate the 2024 budget issues with Parish by mid-February.

- The Finance Committee work with the Bookkeeper to assess all service contracts and other areas to identify cost reductions by the end of the first quarter.
- The Finance Committee conduct a review of the budget by the end of the first quarter.
- The Finance Committee develop a strategy for a second mile campaign by April.

The proposal was approved (Liby/Clary, 9 yays, 3 nays)

### Items for Discussion

**2024 Vestry Committee Assignments:** Fr. Norman

Fr. Bailey developed a list of assignments.

**Changing day/time for monthly Vestry meetings:** Fr Bailey

Fr. Bailey asked the Vestry to consider if there's a better day and time for the monthly meeting other than the second Tuesday starting at 6:30pm.

### Committee Reports

NOTE: Unless noted below no reports were received.

**Parish Life:** Leah Bailey

In December, Parish Life held a catered dinner after the Service of Lessons and Carols. There were 65 people who signed up, but only 48 attended. While the event was not geared specifically to make money, it certainly wasn't intended to lose money—but we did lose \$300.

January kicked off the new year with the Feast of Kings on the 7th. Three Kings' Cakes from three different cultures were offered and devoured! Attendees were also able to make their own crowns, which was very popular with the children.

Parish Life events to come include the Mardi Gras Family Fete on February 3rd from 5:30-8:30, the Lenten Fair—a partnership between Christian Ed and Parish Life—on February 11th at 11:15, and the Annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner on February 13th beginning at 5:30 followed by the burning of the palms. All will be held in the Parish Hall.

### Old Business

**Personnel Status:** Fr Norman/Adam Cavender

There was a discussion about the status of an employee on medical leave. This was followed by discussion about how to fulfill the role of Parish Secretary going forward including transitioning the role to a Parish Administrator in order to best meet Parish needs.

### New Business

Nothing to report.

Fr. Sims closed the meeting with a prayer for the church. The meeting adjourned at 8:48 pm.

*Next Vestry meeting is February 13, 2024*

Respectfully submitted,  
Elizabeth Ellis  
Secretary