

Minutes of April. 16, 2020, St. Stephen's Vestry Meeting

Thursday, 7:15 p.m., Virtually by Zoom
Pittsfield, MA

Present: The Rt. Rev. John Tarrant, interim rector; co-wardens Erin Sullivan and Tom Dillon, Valerie Andersen, Wendy Coakley, John Culver, Leah Luczynski, Mark Miller, Angie Moon, Louise Penney, and Chris Plankey.

Parishioners with questions or comments may contact Vestry members:

Valerie Andersen, canoeval4@gmail.com	Mark Miller, mark@berkshire.net
Wendy Coakley, wendycoakley72@gmail.com	Angie Moon, amoon@pittsfield.net
John Culver, culvie229@gmail.com	Louise Penney (via Tom's email)
Tom Dillon, tdillon45@hotmail.com	Chris Plankey, chris@djchrisplankey.com
Leah Luczynski, leah@leahinteriors.com	Erin Sullivan, esullypede@gmail.com

The meeting began at about 7:20 with a **Check-In** with members summarizing their experiences during the days of Covid-19 restrictions.

Interim Rector Report: (a) John T. recounted how the virtual services have gone in the Chapel this month, giving special thanks to **Chris Plankey** for putting to work his audio-visual expertise enabling parishioners and non-parishioners alike to virtually attend services, to **Jenn Gregg** for assisting and on Easter Sunday preaching, and to **Bill Frazier** for reading of Scripture, and to all involved in the “drive-by” administering of the sacraments on Allen Street; he said he is considering doing this once a month. (b) John has been in his office five days a week. The BARC cleaners haven’t been in since the third week in March. (c) Opening part of the nave on Tuesday and Thursday mornings for homeless people or those staying in shelters to have coffee and charge cellphones has gone well; professional cleaners come and sanitize on Wednesdays and Fridays. This program is sponsored by the Cathedral of the Beloved. (d) We’ll resume services in the church “when the governor and our bishop say we can.” We are currently developing a re-opening strategy. (e) The Rev. Bill Loutrel of Stockbridge, a St. Stephen’s parishioner, will preach sometime this month. (f) The Rev. Jennifer Gregg’s daughter Noelle will help her during the Mothers Day service on May 10. (g) St. Stephen’s Table is offering take-out only on Thursdays and Fridays and has fewer guests than it did when people were able to eat in the dining room. (h) “Feedback is always welcome.”

Profile Committee: Chris said the end-of-May goal to have the committee’s work done may not be achieved owing in part to Covid-19-related communications challenges. At least, the parish profile should be done by the time Canon Rich Simpson goes to a national caucus in September that is important to priests looking for a possible move. Erin noted that the profile shouldn’t change (“We are who we are”). John T. noted that during the last national economic downturn, beginning in 2008, the tendency was for priest considering a move “just stayed put for two or three years.” He said he would contact Rich.

Stewardship: Valerie, chair of the Stewardship Committee, said it hadn't had a scheduled meeting because of virus restrictions. It plans a pledge drive for talent (getting involved in ministry in various ways) at its next meeting.

Server Change: John T. said the church will switch from Verizon to Spectrum, saving about \$105 a month, and praised administrator Sarah Morrison for doing much of the work involving numerous phone calls. Lee Audio recommends we keep a land line for the alarm system. The new plan does not include wifi because we have our own system everywhere except in the nave. Chris said we should be able to rig up something to connect the nave.

Finances: (a) In her update Leah said coronavirus disruptions shouldn't affect first-quarter figures. Big question is "where we'll start to see something." As of this meeting we haven't received a first-quarter statement from the diocese regarding investments. Expenses related to water, heating and electricity should be lower. (b) Vestry received and accepted the Audit Report as presented. Leah said there were some comments about the balance sheet and about internal control. There needs to be a new inventory of church property, which was last done years ago by Al Symonds and Don Phipps. (c) Erin said that with many unknowns occasioned by the coronavirus St. Stephen's should anticipate that revenue will be less. Chris said a compensation package will be expected from us in the search for a new rector.

Closing: The meeting was adjourned at about 9:10 p.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 13, at 7:15 p.m., in the Sears Room or by Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Miller