

Minutes for Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2020, Vestry meeting

**Zoom Meeting of St. Stephen's Vestry
Pittsfield, Massachusetts
Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2020, at 7:15 p.m.**

Present: Co-wardens Tom Dillon and Erin Sullivan; Canon to the Ordinary Rich Simpson, the Rev. David DeSmith; members Valerie Andersen, Wendy Coakley, John Culver, Leah Luczynski, Mark Miller, Angie Moon, Louise Penney, and Chris Plankey.

Valerie - canoeval4@gmail; Wendy Coakley - wendycoakley72@gmail.com;
John - culvie229@gmail.com; Tom - tdillon45@hotmail.com;
Leah - leah@leahinteriors.com; Mark - mark@berkshire.net;
Angie - amoon@pittsfield.net; Chris - chris@djchrisplankey.com;
Louise (communicate through Tom); Erin - esullypede@gmail.com

Meeting begins at 7:19 with a prayer by Rich and a brief check-in by members.

Search and Bridge Updates: (a) Rich says he has shared news of St. Stephen's opening for a new rector on a Facebook page called The Gathering of Leaders. He says the parish did a great job of welcoming John Tarrant as interim rector in the summer and fall of 2019, and he salutes John as doing "a lot of good work" in the seven months at St. Stephen's before his death. (b) Rich says we are in "exactly the place where it makes sense to be to continue the search. (He notes that a retired priest is serving as a bridge priest at Christ the King Church in Wilbraham following the recent unexpected death of its rector at age 48. (c) Tom says David DeSmith, retired and living in the Berkshires, graciously agreed to serve as "bridge" priest at St. Stephen's until a new rector is on board. Rich says David is "perfect" for the position. Tom says we're also lucky to have Jenny Gregg of the Cathedral of the Beloved in Pittsfield helping to fill in. (d) Rich says those wishing to put the Parish Profile on Facebook should copy that link from the parish website and paste it onto a Facebook post. Chris says he will add to the profile introduction information on how candidates can apply. "It's a great profile," Rich says. (e) Tom says David, who already has a pension and healthcare insurance, will be in the office three days a week, and will be at church Wednesday for the taping of next Sunday's Eucharist. David will work up to 20 hours a week and that there will be "flexibility on both sides." (f) On a motion by Angie seconded by Tom, members voted unanimously to hire David as bridge. His compensation of about \$2,420 a month will be in his contract. (g) Erin says the retired priest Bill Loutrel has been "awesome" before and since John T.'s death, and Tom said so has Jenny. (h) Wendy says the Search Committee will meet again this Sunday, virtually, and Rich reminds everyone that its job will be to present the Vestry a slate of candidates for rector to decide from.

Administrator Coverage: Parish Administrator Sarah Morrison will leave on Oct. 5 on medical leave and probably will not work at all for two weeks, after which she expects to work from home mostly on finances. Bert Boos will work some of Sarah's hours.

David Joins Meeting a few minutes after the vote to hire him.

Property Update: Chris, a Property Committee member, says the big issue is lighting. (a) A lot of the lights in the sanctuary are out “and we don’t know why.” He asks for a go-ahead to get an electrician who already has the necessary electrical diagrams for the building to come in and get the lights on. Members unanimously approved a motion by Angie seconded by Valerie to engage the electrician. (b) Bill Carter also wants to move forward on an existing project to replace some sanctuary lighting. Chris says cost numbers for that project are “all over the map” because exactly what fixtures are to be selected is unknown. But he at least sees a discount saving something like \$15,000 to \$10,000. Tom notes the parish will save a lot on the reduced use of electricity with the replacement lights. (c) Erin notes that a homeless person is living under an evergreen bush and an evergreen tree to the west side of the front entrance on East Street near the church sign, and that something related to this could expose the parish to a liability. Chris says the bush is overgrown and “way past trimming.”

Stewardship Update: (a) Valerie says the Stewardship Committee, which she chairs, is down to three people: her, Leah, and Al Symonds, so new members are welcome. (b) The committee will have an article in the next issue of The First Order. (c) Valerie and Leah are updating the pledge cards and brochures to be put in envelopes and given to parishioners who pick up their dinners for the meal on Saturday, Oct. 17, that would have taken place in the dining room were it not for coronavirus restrictions. (d) Parishioners will be able to see a video at 6 on Oct. 17 (put together by Chris) concerning this year’s stewardship appeal, thanks in part to Angie having her school Zoom equipment and knowing how to put movies on it. The link to it will be emailed out with the link. (e) Vestry members should mark Oct. 17 on their calendars to show up at 4 p.m. to help with the dinner.

Finances: The Finance Committee (Leah, Josie Ellis, and Don Phipps) met on the evening of Sept. 14. Leah will email members the latest updated financial figures she had hoped would be ready for this meeting.

Odds and Ends: (a) Erin says attendance on Sunday, Sept. 11, was 30 people. (b) Angie asks about VPODs at the two in-person weekly services, and Erin asks Vestry members to sign up for when they know they can do it. (b) Roy Stillman will open the church for the Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning services.

Next Vestry Meeting: Tuesday, Oct. 12, at 7:15 p.m., by Zoom.

MEETING IS ADJOURNED at 8:29 p.m. with a prayer by David.

Respectfully submitted, Mark Miller