

## St. Stephen's Vestry Meeting September 14, 2021

The meeting began at 7:15 and was held via Zoom.

**Present:** Craig Reynolds, Rev. Nina Pooley, Leah Luczynski, Erin Sullivan, Valerie Andersen, Angela Moon, Wendy Webster Coakley and Chris Plankey.

**Welcome and opening prayer:** Rev. Dr. Nina Pooley opened with a prayer.

**Approval of Minutes:** Wendy moved and Craig seconded and the Vestry accepted the minutes to be approved for the August meeting.

**Treasurer's Report:** Leah Luczynski : We were over budget in August by \$14,000.

Year to date we are over budget \$36,000. But we planned \$107,000. We are under budget in every expense category; and also every income category. We are behind in pledges, \$4,600 as of August. Loose plate offering is down, but that is not surprising.

We are not taking from the endowment. We had a surplus from last year that had moved to the savings. Leah feels we are in good shape. We are seeing a noticeable difference in the electric bill, savings brought on from the new LED lights that were put in. Leah questioned about Berkshire Immigrant Center having paid \$5,700 in March but hadn't paid since. An updated lease was signed. Leah will check in with Sarah and find out if they are paying by the quarter. Craig verified that we budget \$272,000 from pledges and are only down 2.5 % and we are continually astounded by the commitment of parishioners especially during these times.

## **Rector's Report** - Rev. Dr. Nina Pooley

- a. Worship/Preach: Compline is Wed. nights for Creation season. There will be a speaker on the 29th from the Diocese and she will talk about advocating.
- b. New ministry celebration is Oct. 10. Also a bishop visit to the parish. Nina asked that the bishop preach. Our parish has been through a lot and the transitions have been hard; so he will use this as a parish visit and also a celebration of Nina's ministry with us. If anyone wants to plan around celebrating Nina during the service that would be great.
- c. Next mini season: Belonging to God and one another and praying for the healing of the world.
- d. Visioning team: Susan LeBourdais will be joining.
- e. Sacred Ground is starting this week. Hopefully we have parishioners signed up. This program gets great reviews.
- f. Zion collaboration: in talks with them.
- g. Pastoral care- Nina has discussed the current system with Bill Frazier and Sharon Billeter and will continue to join in conversations to build up the team of pastoral care.
- h. Berk. Immigrant Center director, Michelle, heard from Jewish family services who might be interested in finding a space in Pittsfield, possibly at St. Stephen's. They do not have a location in Pittsfield, just Springfield at this time. The Jewish family services are helping with refugees from Afghanistan. Michael Tuck and a

local rabbi were also talking about possibly 60 refugees coming to the Berkshires.

- i. Cara Davis from United Church of Christ said that their building has sold. They might want to use a space at St. Stephen's to worship for several months possibly. We are not sure if it will work or if the auditorium is an option, or how and when they might use our building to worship, but they would pay to rent a space. Cara will be coming over to St. Stephen's to look at spaces and talk to Nina about this.
- j. Val asked about the 5:00 service as some parishioners do prefer that service, but we are keeping to one at this time due to Covid.

**Warden's report:** Craig Reynolds/Erin Sullivan:

- a. Live-streaming quality has improved. There is still more to do. We thank Ken Pooley. We are getting 30-40 views a week and only a few are live stream watchers, many watch later in the week.
- b. Leadership planning- What is going to happen next year? Yes, it is coming. 2022. Erin is departing. Think about people that we know who are active and engaged and might want to step up as some Vestry members are going to be leaving. We need folks on Stewardship, Finance, Property, and pastoral care. Technically, several or almost all of us are up for moving off and some are past due. Also, we are looking for someone to be moving into Leah's position. We want to define the roles and the terms. Ideally someone can assist Leah next year. It is a

rewarding time to serve. We are short one person on Vestry, the assistant treasurer position. We want to build a board and get people intentionally. Val is moving off Stewardship.

- c. The windows: A historic preservation contractor was contacted about the frames of the clerestory windows. He came in this week and quoted us to come in and set up scaffolding in and outside of the church just to inspect the frames. That is a \$10,000 estimate just to look at the windows. Also, it would include a temporary repair of a third story window on the North side of the building that leaks into a second floor office. Hopefully, we can apply for a community preservation grant from the city. (Zion funded 50% of their roof project through this fund.) Applications are due for the grant in November. Our hope would be to get the inspection and have an estimate and plan to apply for the grant this cycle. Craig moved that we allocate \$10,086 to execute the agreement with the historic preservation contractors to evaluate additional work on the clerestory windows. Val seconded and the Vestry voted approvingly. If they evaluate the frames, the fixing of the damaged frames will be an additional cost. Chris mentioned that many people have looked (at least 3) but do not want to touch it, adding that some contractors are concerned about damaging the slate roof. Chris agreed that this is a smart move to have this contractor give us an estimate as it is hard to find anyone to do this work. This is a first step for the windows. The chapel windows that are bowed are a different issue. Is the contractor going to be available? We probably need to jump on it. How do we get the Diocese involved

and how can they support us? If we had painted the frames regularly we would not be in this position. There is a possibility that some of the frames might be able to be saved with caulk and painting, but that has not really been assessed yet. We did get a quote to paint the frames and this alone was \$26,650.

**Property report:** Chris Plankey: We are still waiting to learn when Wooliver Roofing will come to repair the roof. The expense was approved and the estimate is signed.

**Stewardship:** Valerie Andersen : Word cloud is starting. There were 35 words from church this week. Word Cloud Reveal is on Oct. 17. The Stewardship Harvest Dinner is the 23rd of Oct. The meal will be take-out only like last year. Pledge card theme is: Belonging to God and one another. Stewardship talks will be from Oct.17th to Nov. 21st. (skip Nov. 7th as it is All Saints Day ). Parishioners will talk (briefly during the service-2 min. at the lector stand) about what St. Stephen's means to them. Chris was asked and agreed to do a recorded message for the stewardship dinner like last year.

**Action items:**

1. Leah will check with Sarah about B.I.C. paying rent.
2. Craig and Erin will talk with Nina about who is leaving Vestry and which spots we need to fill so we can talk about it more. We will have a shared Google Doc. to add suggested names.

**Closing:** Nina closed with a prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 by Erin.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Moon