

St. Stephen's Vestry Meeting

January 24, 2023

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

Present: Rev. Nina Pooley, Leah Luczynski, Chris Plankey, Josie Ellis, Suzanne White, Craig Reynolds, Wendy Webster Coakley, David Nevin, John Garinther, John Culver, and guests Bill O'Neil and Jim Alden

Welcome/Call to order and opening prayer: Nina+ called the meeting to order. Nina+ opened with a reading from John 1:35-39. In preparation for the upcoming discussion, the group engaged in a meditation on the text. Guiding the meditation were the questions: *What are we looking for? Where haven't we yet looked? What does "Come and see" look like for us, in this time and place?*

Discussion & Discernment: Community Engagement (7:15 PM)

Nina, Josie, and Craig led the group through a proposal for community engagement and parish discernment as a prelude to a possible capital campaign.

As noted in the Wardens' report for this month, "Not only does this seem to be an opportune time to hold a capital campaign, it appears to be an ideal time for the parish to be asking the questions such as, "What is God calling us to do in this place and at this time?" and "Who is God calling us to be in this place and at this time?"

All Vestry members and each meeting guest offered their thoughts on the topic. Overall, the proposal was received enthusiastically. The consensus was to move forward with the effort.

Clerk Report (8:15 PM)

Action items from the last meeting (December 20, 2022):

- Ushers needed for Christmas Eve services.

Approval of Minutes: Wendy moved and Suzanne seconded and the Vestry voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the December 20, 2022, Vestry meeting.

Discussion and Discernment: Christmas Eve Services (8:20 PM)

Josie led a discussion about the times of the 2022 Christmas Eve services (5 PM and 8 PM) which didn't work well for everyone. Do we need changes?

Nina noted the following:

- According to our records, the earlier service has always been the better attended. That was true in 2022 as well, though the deteriorating weather on the evening of 12/24 could have depressed attendance at the 8 PM service making direct comparisons difficult.
- Joy has expressed a preference for an earlier time for the later service (at which the full choir has traditionally performed) due to the comfort of older choir members driving home after the service.
- Area churches, including Zion and Trinity Lenox, have seen similar trends - earlier start times and lower attendance at later services versus earlier ones.
- Service times can be moved if there is support. One consideration is keeping enough time between services for Nina and Joy to have a meal.

Financial Report: Leah/Suzanne

- No questions or comments for the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer.

Property Committee: John/Chris

- No questions for the Property Committee.
- John noted that an object was propelled through a window in the choir room earlier today, breaking the glass. Berkshire Plate Glass has boarded up the window and the police were called so a report could be filed.

Stewardship: Wendy

- Wendy noted that standard pledging for 2023 has lagged behind 2022's results, but pledges for St. Stephen's Table have increased significantly. Details are provided in her monthly report and in the 2022 Annual Report

Warden's Report: Craig/Josie

- No questions or comments for the Wardens.

- The Wardens proposed offering a simple meal to parishioners after the Annual Meeting and asked for feedback. Vestry members were supportive of the idea.

Rector's Report: Nina+

- Ash Wednesday: Nina proposed Ashes to Go at noon and an evening service and sought feedback. Vestry members agreed with this plan.

Next Meeting

Our next Vestry meeting will be on **Tuesday, February 28, 2023, at 7:00 PM.**

(**Note:** we can choose to meet at a different date/time. See Wardens' Report for a discussion of our options.)

Action Items

- Please try to attend the Annual Meeting to be held at the 10 AM service on Sunday, January 29.
- Help is needed for the meal after Annual Meeting.
- Social time at Balderdash on Saturday, January 28, 3:00 - 5:00 PM.

Closing

Nina closed with a prayer, The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Craig Reynolds, Clerk (substitute)