

*St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Vestry Meeting
2023 - monthly meeting #2
Date: February 28, 2023*

Present (virtually by Zoom):

Craig Reynolds, Co-Warden, Josephine Ellis, Co-Warden, Suzanne White, Treasurer, William O'Neill, Assistant Treasurer, Dr. J. Christopher Perry, Clerk, James Alden, John Culver, John Garinther, David Nevin, Christopher Plankey, Wendy Webster-Coakley

Regrets:

Rev. Nina Polley

Meeting called to order at 7:15 P.M.

I. Call to Order, Opening Prayer offered by Rev. Pooley

The next day, John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and see."
John 1:35-39

Meditation

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?

Prayer: offered by Josie Ellis

Gracious God;

Open our eyes that we may see.

Incline our hearts that we may desire.

Order our steps that we may follow
the way of Jesus. Amen.

Next steps: Josie Ellis

Advanced Scouts initiative

Arrange a tour of St. Stephen's for inventory of space/assets

Outline questions to ask local organizations

Develop list of organizations/businesses/people to address (two by two)

What connections do certain parishioners have in the community? Or people whose investment in a particular aspect of the greater community might share some insight

Craig Reynolds: reported that only a couple of people responded, no one wanted to chair the effort.

Chris Perry: said the overall statement of the mission or aim was missing. What is needed first is to talk with everyone and get buy-in to the basic mission, idea, aim.

Wendy Webster-Coakley: we have some written materials in the *First Order* that could be used to make the idea clearer. Is this development? What specific skill sets are we looking for. Disabuse people that it is an endless commitment, to reassure people. People want to be asked.

Who has connections to groups?

Do we have anyone in the parish who has experience like Erin Sullivan did in advancement, development.

Craig Reynolds: what is an advanced scout? We need a job description. We will need to invite people, in addition to spelling things out.

I Agree with Wendy, we need to repeat this message. Josie Ellis, Craig Smith, Rev. Nina Pooley and I have talked about it a lot, but not to others.

Jim Alden: what is an advanced scout, what skill set, what description?

Chris Plankey: organizations in the community. I'd walk in and say who can I talk to and engage with on meeting the needs of our community. What kind of help could we offer you? That's what I thought. I assumed you (the core group) would already have certain people in mind, and would tap them. I was left thinking someone would come to me. One becomes a liaison of the church.

Bill O'Neill: What do we offer the community. We have a fantastic building? Offer low or reasonable rent for office space? What do we have to offer and how do we offer it and then to whom?

Craig Reynolds. Yes that is right, but we haven't been clear enough about the next steps.

Josie Ellis. We were thinking about 10 people or less, not unwieldy, so it can do work. Are the advanced scouts to come up with the list of questions, organizations? Churches sometimes have cliques. It is said that "20% of the people do 80% of the work." I wanted to open it up to many others, and increase our skill sets.

Craig Reynolds. There is a balance between being open to making sure we get the right people in the right positions and ...[tapping the usual hardworkers].

Description of an advanced scout. Part of this is the core group (of 6-8), whereas others

who could do part of these things. First assemble the core group. Develop the questions and whom to approach, who in the Parish has connections. Others might join if they use their connections in the community. The core team would collect, summarize, discern themes and try to consider potential actions that would flow from those themes using our assets. Then report and present the information and conclusion to the parish.

This serves as a basis for our vision for the next 5-10 years, which may also lead to a capital campaign. Financial and human resources to make the vision a reality.

Our homework is to clarify this: Josie Ellis, me, and Craig Smith

Wendy Webster-Coakley: Scouts go out 2 x 2. We need a visual presentation of the idea.

Josie Ellis. Let's table this work for this meeting and go to other work.

Chris Perry: It would help to have a simple paragraph about the mission of this idea and what it is going to do for the church

Josie Ellis: That's not too much to ask.

Clerk Report

II. Minutes from previous meeting

a. corrections

b. Minutes approved (as corrected), Josie.

Approval of January 24 meeting minutes - Josie

Craig did the minutes for January 24

no corrections

Motion

David Nevin moved to approve the minutes

John Culver seconded

The minutes were unanimously approved.

Approval of Annual meeting minutes - Josie

the format was hybrid with the service and zoom

Craig: Angie Moon finished her term at the annual meeting, but was out due to death in the family. Josie then reconstructed the notes from listening to the recording.

Motion

Josie: Annual Meeting corrections, with additions of January 29

Jim Alden moved to accept

David Nevin, seconded.

Annual Meeting minutes approved unanimously

Annual Meeting Format discussion Josie: do we like doing the annual meeting during the Service? Any feedback on format?

Suzanne said people have told her that they liked the format and the meal together afterward. I agree with the feedback from parishioners.

Josie: important to have a good annual meeting that allows everyone to feel they are participating in the church. Absent any complaints, we will continue with this going further.

Suzanne it puts the business and worship together. And the luncheon! Was done well.

Vestry Orientation - Craig (8:10 P.M.)

Time change?

Roles and Responsibilities

Craig: information is there.

We are a new vestry, when do we want to meet. 4th week of month allows the finance committee to meet the week prior. This timing has worked well.

Wendy. I commute from Williamstown, don't get back until 6, have household duties etc.

6:45 check in social and start the meeting at 7.

Everyone agreed to try it.

Josie, said that we will try it and revisit in a couple of months.

Craig put together a pdf of roles and responsibilities of vestry for the church. Ultimately we need to speak with one voice, not divided, even if we have debates. We want every voice heard. We are not dysfunctional. We operate well out of love and faith, but able to speak when one has something to say.

Craig: we shouldn't be afraid of controversy, because that promotes creativity. If we have dissension, then we haven't finished our work. Once a decision is made, we all support it. We don't want unresolved concerns to leak out.

Josie. It is important that several of you told us the Scout mission was unclear.

Craig. We don't have to focus on the vestry responsibilities.

Jim Alden noted the Bishops presentation about the value of different personalities contributing to the church. Including having fun doing this! I take it as a job.

Craig: The Bishop is fond of a typology of leadership. He has a presentation.

David Nevin. We were all newbies at one point. Glad you (Jim) went.

Craig: new perspectives are valuable.

Suzanne. I like your thought, Jim that you approach the vestry like it is a job.

Jim: it is so long since I have been at a meeting, I didn't sleep well anticipating it. I'll learn.

Suzanne, making mistakes is part of life, we walk and learn..

Jim: I think this missional idea is full of possibilities and likely mistakes and wonderful.

Old Business

IV. Committee Reports and New Business

Financial Report (Suzanne White, Bill O'Neill)

The Report is self-explanatory. We met last week, went over the parochial report. Came up with answers to questions. Did it as a committee-team. Helpful.

Budget spreadsheet for January. We are under budget, typically for this type of year. On a good track at this point. Hopefully we will stay there for the year. Sarah needs to get the Parochial report out soon.

Organ needs repair, Joy requested. Take funds from the Beatty Fund 8,000+ dollars.

Another fund distributes (Oliver Root Fund) and we will receive 8,300 from that to cover the organ repairs.

Parochial report. Do we approve it as a group?

Josie: we will vote on it tonight. Parochial report is sent to the National Church, due march 1st.

Craig: purpose of report. Determines our assessment from the Diocese. We pay a percentage of our operating income to the Diocese. Second, it helps the diocese set their objectives for the year.

Also there is a revision of the Parochial Report that went out today.

Parochial report

Chris Perry asked about how the size of the parish is determined. Guestimate? Criag. It is rooted in receiving communion, and making a contribution to the size of the parish.

Chris Plankey: talked about problems with our estimate. I would like to tighten up the number.

Craig: canon law about the criteria for membership. 20 years ago we made an attempt, and people got upset if they were asked if still a member. Some got outraged. We should approach this issue as we return to normal, post-COVID.

Chris Plankey: there are two different numbers of communicants in good standing 525 vs total membership 575

Motion

Chris Plankey: Propose to accept the draft Parochial report.

Josie: moves we accept the report as presented/

David Nevin seconds

Unanimous acceptance.

Property Committee (John Garinther, Chris Plankey)

John G. Notional design of church sign.

Chris Plankey. Sign needs to be replaced with underground wiring changed, planting grass. Duplicate old one or re-design? Size, shape, content.

Slats beneath that can be changed out in the future.

Craig then "screen shared: a mock-up of the sign

Suzanne white: slats "future proof: the sign, so that they could be changed out.

Many: discussion about the rainbow.

Rainbow is on flag hung elsewhere near the front of the church.

Chris Plankey: A third slat at the bottom is possible. John took photos of 20 churches' signs.

Wendy. Will we do a smaller version over the Allen St entrance?

Chris Plankey: Not proposing new change for Allen st yet, as we have additional talents.

Chris Perry: the shield shouldn't hit the line toward the top, and perhaps a slight "roof like top: would take care of that. Also a third slat could represent inclusiveness,

Jim Alden the rainbow makes a difference, welcoming.

Chris Perry: Could we see the word "inclusiveness" or "inclusive" somewhere. Like the third slat: "We are an inclusive congregation."

John Garinther: we are pretty close to complete, so we could take it to a sign maker. A third slat for the inclusiveness, a rainbow.

Stewardship (Wendy Coakley)

Nothing major to present. Read the report.

Wardens' Report (Craig Reynolds, Josie Ellis),

Craig: questions, thoughts? This has been an active month for the wardens. Contact me with any issues. Our partnership with downtown Pittsfield and work with a development grant to get more kids in to do Paint and Sip.

Wendy, are we still working with the Afghan families in some ways to help bring in their children?

Craig: our participation with paint and sip was a last minute thing. We can improve outreach to those we would invite and enlarge.

Rectors Report (Rev. Nina Pooley)

Presented in Google docs but not discussed due to Rev. Pooley's regrets.

Action Items:

Craig: Action items are things we have asked a person or committee to follow-up on. Action elements often highlight what happened with the action items. But include it under the minutes.

1. (?Who?): making sure that we need to tighten communication about where we are going in 2023.
2. David Nevin. Age and Race breakdown of the parish's congregation need attention.

Next Meeting:

Next meeting is march 28 at the new time of 6:45 social pre-meeting and 7:00 PM

meeting commencement.

Closing Prayer: David Nevin was asked to close the meeting with a prayer, the theme of which was that may our 2023 scouting mission help us to better find ways to accept all people as Christ accepts all of us. The meeting was adjourned at 9.09P.M.

VI. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned by unanimous consent: __.