

*St. Stephen's Episcopal Church  
Vestry Meeting  
2023 - monthly meeting #4  
Date: April 25, 2023*

Present (virtually by Zoom):

Rev. Nina Pooley, Rector  
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:

Meeting began at 7:00 P.M.

**I. Opening Prayer offered by Rev. Pooley**

Scripture passage On the road to Ammaus Luke 24:

As we walk together, where might we meet Jesus along the way...

Risen Lord, be present with us...

**Josie Ellis:**

Idea from conversation with Bishop Fisher this past week. How we are trying to create something, outside of our walls. He mentioned Prayer Walks. The Vestry did this several years ago. We went in pairs and in different directions. The observations are really what we are looking for. What do we observe in the neighborhood around us. What is great, what not.

Walk 10 minutes out 10 back. See what you encounter. Meet our neighborhood, a radius around our own building.

Rev. Nina:

We did this in Maine. Walk the neighborhood, pray for them. Push-back: we don't know how to pray. Prayerful waking. Paying attention, be open, where Jesus

already is. What should be, there but it is missing? Prayerful openness, our posture.

Craig: to be present.

Rev. Nina: no agenda, just pay attention. Bring our observations back. Go in pairs. Do it when you can, maybe during the day. Make us curious about the experience, take it in and prompt some great questions. Organizations, places.

Josie: you and your pair decide amongst yourselves when to do it. No rules.  
Try to do this by our next Vestry Meeting.

Multiple comments.

Craig: impetus from the Good Friday walk with the other congregations.

Jim Alden: we were harassed by hecklers, one said "Heil Hitler"

Nina, young boys, we made them uncomfortable.

Jim Alden: they got fired up by the cross. We prayed for them.

Nina they noticed. One kid was so uncomfortable, he had to say something. Very interesting.

Suzanne: our lack of reaction made them react more. Shouting...at us? They are being jerks, but they need our prayers.

Jim Alden: cold, uncomfortable Good Friday, but it was awesome.

Next steps:

Walk and See 2023 - 20 minute walk

Random generated pairs

John G / Chris Perry (down West St.)	Bill / David (down East St)
John C / Wendy (down North St.)	Suzanne / Nina (down South St)
Chris Pl / Craig (down First St)	Josie / Jim (down Fenn St)

## II. Minutes from previous meeting

a. corrections

1. None

b. Minutes approved (as corrected).

Motion by: Craig aye

Seconded by: David Nevin  
accepted unanimously

### III. Old Business

#### Action Items from Previous Meeting

1. Chris Perry will try meet with two agency heads and report back.
2. Other vestry members should contact Craig or Josie if you want to be on the core team.
3. Contact Rev. Nina Pooley if you want to be a LEM or LEV.
- X 4. Rev. Nina Pooley will send out notice about the meeting with the Bishop.
- X 5. Let Wendy Webster Coakley know that we didn't meet with Canon Rich Simpson.

### IV. Committee Reports and New Business

#### **Financial report** (Suzanne White, Bill O'Neill)

Suzanne:

Finance meeting previous Monday. Still under budget 313.00 this month. Good. We received an insurance policy review letter. It let's us know that we can contact the insurance company and change the policy at any time. When is the last time we reviewed the policy and church assets? Don Phipps went back to 2014 report done by the insurance co. back then. Detailed, but 9 years old.

Perhaps we need a new appraisal Looking at in the next month or so to get a new appraisal done. Craig addressed some *pledge* questions, demographics of pledgers, age brackets of people in the church. The older parishioners will age out, do we have younger ones coming in?

Craig: Go and See, a potential capital campaign, all look ahead in time. Where is pledge income coming from? Envision a report by age-decade (age-cohort: 20's, 30.s, etc.). What will church look like in 10-15 years.

We have a data base with people's birthdays. This allows us to miraculously send out birthday and anniversary cards (Wendy laughed).

Suzanne: I like the idea of a spreadsheet on pledging that we can review what is going on by age group.

Rev. Nina: this will help the stewardship committee. The younger people don't know what pledging is. People may not know about this. This spreadsheet could be a useful tool.

Suzanne joked about how exciting Finance was, and appreciated a post-meeting glass of wine.

**Property Committee** (John Garinther, Chris Plankey)

John: we are going to replace the signs and the Allen street doors. Contractors haven't yet responded. Also lot of undergrowth that needs to be removed. Two old lantern lights that will be on all the time, so the door is always illuminated. Also, people loiter on the East St. Steps, so a light on all the time may cut down on potential problems, mischief. Also makes the Church seem more inviting.

Craig: great idea on the lights. Thank you. I want to thank John specifically about cleaning out the area next to the door, where some folks camping out left some stuff. Great job cleaning it out. Heating system time-line?

John Garinther. Michael Lorenz the chief engineer went through with Chris Plankey doing a site visit. No time-line for his report yet. He seems to be closing in on the end.

Craig: there is a link in the Wardens Report to a virtual 3-D tour of the facility. Thanks to Chris Plankey.

Nina. Boiler situation is not a new problem. You (John G. and Chris Pl.) Are doing decades worth of work. You and your committee are extraordinary taking this stuff on.

John G: we have a great team, and I like it.

Josie: thank you, thank you, thank ou.

Chris Plankey. The visual-virtual tour, we stumbled on it by accident. Everyone was expecting us thanks to Sarah. We paid somewhere 3-4 thousand for the virtual tour. It costs money for the guy's company to host this on some server. This could be something to allow people to check us out. It shows all the spaces, tenant-spaces. It would be useful to have the first floor available to everyone. We didn't understand how powerful this is.

John G: Jim Alden requested a tour so this is what it is about.

Josie + John:: the 3-D component allows engineers to see walls, what is behind walls, ducts, vents, air returns, systems, to know where things go

Josie: it is part of the research on the heating system recommendation.

Wendy: How did they do it?

John G they sent a guy in for the day in every room in the building and spins and takes thousands of picture, then the software pieces it together.

Chris Perry: not available to everyone, right?

Craig: Good idea to have the chapel and sanctuary available on our website.

**Stewardship** (Wendy Coakley)  
more next time.

**Wardens' Report** (Craig Reynolds, Josie Ellis),

Josie: any thoughts, anything to highlight?

Craig: thank you for volunteers at Paint-and-sip. Fifty visitors came, which was slower than Christmas. Good volunteer show-up.

We did receive the Diocesan ministry grant, to support future paint-and-sips. They may apply to expand the number of activities and paint-and-sips, tying them to anchor events, e.g. Arts Walk.

Third thing, Berkshire Pride Festival. We have a Bronze level sponsorship, more so than last year. Maybe we get some publicity. Talking about new ideas at that festival. They are expecting twice as many people at this event compared to last year.

Jim Alden: big planting day for Berkshire Beautiful, same day as Pride Day. Can't be in 2 places at once, and want to be there.

Josie: ideas we have been considering. As a higher level sponsor. We would like more of an interaction. Like a "Selfie Sign" saying St. Stephen's: "Beloved"

Rev. Nina: people would stop by for a photo op and we will take their picture on their phone with our photo taking. Give us a chance to say high, have a conversation.

Josie: we are looking for feedback, too much, too little. How do we engage and invite them in.

Rev. Nina: a couple told us that the rainbow flag was welcoming them to come to our church.

Josie: we still want to represent who we are, St. Stephen's.

Rev. Nina: have St. Stephens on the backdrop of the photo spot. They'll look at their phot and see our reference.

Asked Caleb: what would have helped your young self be recognized?

Jim Alden: was surprised how many gay people there were at the parade last year.

Chris Perry: like Nina suggested. At the booth we want to be able to have a small set of words to convey that we are here because we want people attending to feel welcome

We really want you.

Rev, Nina: we need to be the church that is different from what is so often in people's vision.

Chris Perry; yes, that we are different than what people associate as Christianity, such as the politically conservative evangelicals.

Jim Alden: let's be visible, that is a good point.

**Rectors Report** (Rev. Nina Pooley)

Funeral this Saturday. An individual 100 some years old, moved away years ago, and died in FL. Nina will be going with the youth.

Bike day is a go with the other churches: Sunday May 21: Bike to Church. Meet at the common at the coffee shop, Nick, at 11, then bike to church. Nice with other churches.

*Sacred Ground* had its session 11, last meeting. What we want to do next. Exciting, so we will share it with the congregation.

Other things in the report.

Bill and I need to plan: peaceful planning

Bill O'Neill, end of life planning.

Nina: Confirmation probably next fall will work, no one is graduating right now.

Bishop's visit was fun but poor timing.

We will continue Sunday evening services over the summer. Francie may help out.

David Nevin. A woman suggested that a Saturday night Service would be better attended.

Josie heard from the same woman. Do we have a rotation so that we can offer a Saturday service with other clergy? Saturday is Nina's only day off with her husband.

Craig: the Saturday service had some devotees, but wasn't overwhelmingly popular. Some were avid fans, but not widespread.

Rev. Nina: best reason I've heard for Saturday service: the Cooper brothers have trouble finding a ride to Sunday service. That is compelling, no transportation on Sunday.

Chris Perry, we could survey people about whether they would ever contemplate going to an evening service Saturday or Sunday.

David: evening service could be in the Chapel, now that the windows are repaired.

Rev. Nina: if you send a survey you are implying that you are offering a service.

Something new, in addition to the service. We have some younger folks around now. Would like to talk to them about their interests.

I'll find out what clergy might be available to help.

## **V. Business Arising**

Chris Perry brought up the active shooter issue.

Someone: Chief Wynn, Roy Sutton, and JD Herbert. We walked though the building and thought of our concerns. JD does these for companies. He handed me an 11 page plan. Roy and I went through the document, and would go through it later, then bring it to this group. We need to think about the physical places in the building, and consider a fire drill, so that everyone knows how to get out.

We are actually thinking about it.

Josie: we have been thinking about his. We will have a core group who knows what the plan is.

Chris Perry: I will speak to the parishoner and assure her that we are thinking about his.

Nina: Chief Wynn says pay attention. A symptom of our times.

Chris Plankey. When you get into this conversation the property committee has made sure that you can't wander in the church when you get into the stairwell. You have to be buzzed in. There are exceptions, cleaning crews, but they keep doors closed. We also have expectations for tenants. We have to come up with a written agreement, door held closed vs open. The building is not open the way that you think of it.

Josie: thanks for making the building more secure.

### **Next Meeting scheduled:**

1. Vestry Meeting May 30, 2023
2. Meeting with Canon Rev. Richard Simpson May 23, 2023

### **Action Items**

1. Do Prayer walks in pairs, as assigned.
2. Do a physical tour of the church/parish building

## **V. Closing Prayer offered by Rev. Pooley**

"Lord Jesus stay with us, evening is at hand and the day is passed....that we may know

you the way you are revealed in scripture and the breaking of the bread....”

**VI. Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned by unanimous consent: 8:40 P.M.