

**St. Stephen's Episcopal Church  
August 2023 Vestry Minutes  
Tuesday, August 22, 2023**

Present:

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

Excused:

Dr. J. Christopher Perry, Clerk

7:00 **Welcome, call to order with opening prayer - Nina+**

Nina selected a reading inspired by Creation Season:

**Opening:**

I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit because, apart from me, you can do nothing. You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. - John 15:5, 16a

Let us pray:

Generous Giver, you pour forth your extravagant bounty without measure upon your whole creation: Teach us such generosity, that the fruits of our spirits and the works of our hands may build your commonwealth of blessing. **Amen.**

7:05 **Discussion**

- Marketing ourselves

- How we talk about what is going on inside the building in a way that is legible outside the building. The more we share our concerns and values, the more likely we are to connect with like minded individuals.
- Has to be more than banners. How do we tell the members of the community who use this building (AA, Paint & Sip, etc.) who we are while they are here? Internal hallway signage, for example.
- How do we communicate with folks who are trying out our services but who aren't yet members of the parish? How do we incorporate people in a way that is consistent with our definition (taking communion three times/year) and that encourages them to feel "in" so they feel welcome to share their time and talent?
  - Per a former Roman Catholic: Be mindful that many visitors come from the Roman Catholic tradition, where they want to attend Mass but want to get out as quickly as possible (some right after Communion).
  - Err on the side of generosity, but give them space to get used to our hospitality.
- Newsletter names *Will be conducted via email proxy*
- Welcoming initiatives
  - New seating configuration: Remove pews in the back and host coffee hour at the back of the church.
  - Activate super greeters, like Claudia, Jim and Caleb.
  - Do we make our nametags more personal and fun, e.g. [icebreaker ribbons](#)?
    - Launch as part of post-Creation Season liturgical theme, Belonging to God and One Another (aka Stewardship Season)
- Saturday services - Offered 2x month, better attended than Sunday evening option, still small
  - There has been a desire to go weekly; clergy are willing but human resources on the lay side are stretched, and the Saturday congregants aren't willing or able to serve as lectors or LEMs
    - Stay with 2x month and if there's pushback ask them to volunteer

## 7:55 **Old Business**

Approval of July 25 meeting minutes - *Will be conducted via email proxy*

## 7:55 **New Business**

**Reports** (Please see reports in the August 2023 Vestry folder)

❖ Questions about [Finance report](#) - Suzanne/Bill

- Meeting with Diocesan Auditor on Thursday, August 24

- Elevator issues - Craig will talk to Sarah about terminating the current contract when it expires in December and switching to another provider from whom we have a quote.
- ❖ Questions about [Stewardship](#) - Wendy
  - Bill reports that members of the parish are excited about the upcoming Peaceful Planning adult education series (“brought to you by Stewardship”)
- ❖ Questions about [Property report](#) - John G/Chris PI
  - Vestry is supportive of replacing Allen Street traditional red doors with professional glass doors, as this is the business entrance to the parish building.
- ❖ Questions about [Wardens' Report](#) - Craig
  - Sunday School thoughts - Suzanne and Josie have brainstormed a simpler, more streamlined approach that will focus on
  - Youth Group thoughts - Zion and St. Stephen's will invite downtown area churches to participate in this program
- ❖ Questions about [Rector's Report](#) - Nina+
  - As the leadership of her sending Parish, the Vestry voted unanimously to approve Sharon Billeter as a Candidate for Holy Orders (moving from Postulant, with the Bishop's endorsement).

#### 8:40 **Action Items noted**

- Nina needs speaker suggestions for Creation Sundays
  - Sept 3 (Pray)
  - Sept 10 (Learn)
  - Sept 17 (Act)
  - Sept 24 (Advocate)
  - Oct 1 (Bless)
- In the Clerk's absence, Josie will circulate the July minutes for approval
- Look at newsletter names and suggest your own!

#### 8:45 **Closing Prayer - Nina+**

Source of life and blessing,  
of garden, orchard, field:  
Root us in obedience to you  
and nourish us by your ever-flowing Spirit that,  
perceiving only the good we might do,  
our lives may be fruitful,  
our labor productive,  
and our service useful,  
in communion with Jesus, our brother. **Amen**

**Reminder: Our next upcoming meeting:**

- **Vestry meeting, September 26, 2023 (in person)**