

1 *St. Stephen's Episcopal Church*
2 *Vestry Meeting*
3 *2023 - monthly meeting #10*
4 *Date: October 24, 2023*

5 Draft: Note **text needing clarification is highlighted in yellow**

6 Present (virtually by Zoom):

7 Rev. Nina Pooley, Rector

8 Craig Reynolds, Co-Warden

9 Josephine Ellis, Co-Warden

10 Suzanne White, Treasurer

11 William O'Neill, Assistant Treasurer

12 Dr. J. Christopher Perry, Clerk

13 James Alden

14 John Garinther

15 Christopher Plankey

16 Regrets:

17 Wendy Webster-Coakley

18 David Nevin

19 John Culver

20 Meeting in-person began at 7:05 P.M.

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

22 Scripture: Matthew 10.40

23 *Jesus said to his disciples: "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes*
24 *me welcomes the one who sent me."*

25 *AND THE TABLE WILL BE WIDE*

26 by Jan Richardson, posted on her blog, *The Painted Prayerbook*, Sept. 30, 2023

27 *And the table*

28 *will be wide.*

29 *And the welcome*

30 *will be wide.*

31 *And the arms*

32 *will open wide*

33 *to gather us in.*

34 *And our hearts*

35 *will open wide*

36 *to receive.*

37 *And we will come*

38 *as children who trust*
39 *there is enough.*
40 *And we will come*
41 *unhindered and free.*
42 *And our aching*
43 *will be met*
44 *with bread.*
45 *And our sorrow*
46 *will be met*
47 *with wine.*

48 *And we will open our hands*
49 *to the feast*
50 *without shame.*
51 *And we will turn*
52 *toward each other*
53 *without fear.*
54 *And we will give up*
55 *our appetite*
56 *for despair.*
57 *And we will taste*
58 *and know*
59 *of delight.*

60 *And we will become bread*
61 *for a hungry world.*
62 *And we will become drink*
63 *for those who thirst.*
64 *And the blessed*
65 *will become the blessing.*
66 *And everywhere*
67 *will be the feast.*

68
69 **II. Josie Ellis Co-Warden** Another Field Trip to the Sanctuary

70 Radical Welcoming initiatives (Redux)

71 Welcoming. As Craig Reynolds noted in the Warden's Report: We're going to try
72 Coffee Hour in the East Street entry area on November 12. Josie is the host and will
73 need help.

74 Might also make it our Nametag November and new Coffee Hour test - Nov 12.
75 This will be the beginning of our nametag initiative.

76 Family area in the sanctuary; pros/cons
77 A resource. Josie put together some pictures of how the area would look. To create for
78 children as a welcoming gesture.

79 The group visited the Sanctuary and considered different ways to place the existing
80 pews and related furniture to enable a space for children and families in the front
81 opposite the pulpit. This would require moving the long pew where the current acolyte
82 sits on the non-pulpit side, in order to move the piano back more towards the front.
83 The property committee will look into the arrangements for this further .

84 Motion by: Josie Ellis

85 "That we make a test period of the child and family friendly space, so called
86 "Prayground" .

87 This will entail moving all the necessary pews and piano to make the space. Josie,

88 Discussion:

89 Rev. Nina Pooley: with conversations with Leah Lucinski and Suzanne White, the
90 Treasurer re expenses.

91 Seconded: Jim Alden

92 In Favor: all present

93 Opposed: none

94 Abstained: none

95 **The motion passed unanimously.**

96 **III. Clerk Report Minutes from previous meeting**

97 a. Corrections

98 1. Rev Nina Pooley offered a correction of the minutes regarding John
99 Garinther's term on the vestry and future eligibility. This correction was made.

100 b. Minutes approved (as corrected).

101 Motion to approve, as corrected by: Josie Ellis

102 Seconded by: Suzanne White

103 **Minutes were approved as amended**

104 **IV. Old Business**

105 Action Items from Previous Meeting

106 1. Please give names for potential names for nominations for vestry to Craig.

107 2. Do the Doodle Poll for a 3 hour vestry retreat in October or November (done).

108 3. Submission date for the newsletter is an Oct 16 deadline (deadline passed).

109

110 **V. Committee Reports and New Business**

111 **Financial report** (Suzanne White)

112 Budget review. We are still running a deficit for 2023. However it doesn't look like it
113 will be as big as we projected. Our investment interest is higher, and pledges are above
114 our budgeted amounts.

115 Insurance Policy findings – Bill O'Neill noted an 8% increase for insurance coverage.
116 Bill noted that there were a number of questions he had to discuss with the insurance
117 company regarding the rationale for certain charges. This especially relates to
118 protective features in the buildings, and insurance for the use of the parking lot across
119 the street.

120 Rev. Nina Pooley hoped that the addition of protective plexiglass for the stained
121 glass windows would reduce the charges. There was some discussion about the costs
122 when one of the stained glass windows was broken at its base...may have cost more
123 than 10,000.

124 Josie noted that we do need coverage for the window.

125 Chris Perry asked what the building was worth.

126 Bill said just shy of \$ 15,000,000, and that doesn't fully covered it.

127 Chris Perry asked if we have had the fine art appraised.

128 Rev. Nina Pooley discussed the appraisal process at St. Bartholemew's in Maine.

129 Bill will report back as he continues reviewing the insurance policy.

130 The company is called *Church Insurance Agency, Corporation*.

131 The third quarter giving statement is due. Does anyone have any suggestions for points
132 of interest to mention as we head into the end of the year?

133 **Stewardship** (Wendy Webster-Coakley)

134 Everyone thanked Wendy for her fine efforts at the Stewardship luncheon this past
135 Sunday.

136 As Wendy was not present tonight, some highlights of the Report are noted below.

137 We had a successful pledge card distribution luncheon on Sunday October 22 in the
138 Guild Room.

139 Leah L. designed the pledge card, which Sarah produced in-house, to amplify this
140 year's theme:

141 "Together at St. Stephen's: Refreshed & Restored by the Power of the Spirit."

142 Wendy drafted a long-form article that was reviewed and approved by the committee
143 for submission to the *Fall Offerings* newsletter.

144 During the month-long campaign, we will provide weekly snapshots in the e-blast and

145 bulletin, similar to the Living Green tips, to educate readers on what it costs to keep the
146 church doors open per week. For example, as a not-so-subtle way to encourage regular
147 pledgers to increase their pledge, even by just a few dollars per week, Suzanne is
148 researching income vs. expense data to help us make our case that, indeed, every dollar
149 counts.

150 Jim Alden delivered an inspiring address as the kickoff Stewardship speaker, setting an
151 effective example for the remaining speakers he has recruited:

152 Oct. 29 - Caleb Harmon
153 Nov. 5 - Susan LeBourdais
154 Nov. 12 - Beth-Anne Hamling

155 Bill O'Neill (J.D.) kicked off the Peaceful Planning series on Sept. 17 (Wills), followed by
156 Oct. 1 (Powers of Attorney) and
157 Oct. 15 (Trusts and Estates).

158 In all cases, the audience was engaged, the discussion was lively and the information
159 was easy to understand. And, they were recorded for the folks at home and anyone
160 who wasn't able to attend.

161 Next up: Advanced Medical Directives [and Medical Proxies] on Oct. 29,
162 featuring Bill O'Neill and special guest Chris Perry, M.D., who can discuss related real
163 like issues.

164 Ingathering Sunday will be Nov. 19.

165 To make it more exciting this year (and to encourage attendance) three pledge
166 cards will be pulled and their owners will each receive a beautiful Joan Morrow prayer
167 blanket! These will be blessed on the spot, with thankful prayers for all members who
168 have chosen to contribute time, talent and treasure in 2024.

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

170 John Garinther: We received a first draft of our feasibility study from Michael Laureyns
171 at **Hesnor Engineering**. This draft is incomplete and insufficient to present to the church
172 leadership at this time. Apparently he under-estimated a number of potential costs. He
173 may have used some numbers from a template that he uses for all his proposals. He
174 does outline 4 options, where the equipment could go, whether it provides heat only or
175 heat plus air conditioning.

176 We have given him questions and comments.

177 A number of questions were raised to clarify how complete the report was.

178 Josie noted that the delays are disappointing.

179 Here is a summary of some of the main points in the Property Report.

180 1. Both boilers are up and running for the first time in a long time after significant and
181 costly repairs to boiler #1 which was down for both of the last 2 heating seasons. There
182 are still a number of repairs to be made.

183 2. Stained Glass - A lift has been brought in by our contractor, Guarducci Associates, to
184 facilitate the work being done on the big balcony window over our front door. With a
185 significant amount of work that still needs to be done to our Clerestory windows, we
186 doubt they will finish this year.

187 3. John Garinther: Front Lawn Signage - We are in the process of filling out our
188 application for the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) after the initial permit was rejected.
189 John recommended that we make a payment -minus the installation fee - to the
190 sign maker, as we are awaiting city approval. Total cost will be 6,000 overall.

191 4. Foyer and Dining Room Refresh Project. Test for the presence of asbestos. We
192 received the results and there was no asbestos found in any of the samples we sent in.

193 5. Storm Window Closure - With the start of our heating season beginning the second
194 week of October, our committee will go through the building to close and secure all
195 windows and storm windows.

196 6. Allen Street Door With winter approaching, and the doors now functioning as they
197 should, we're focusing our attention on our heating system for now.

198 7. Highlights from this month: a) a Naloxone box has been installed on the outside of
199 the church; b) a faded and illegible sign outside indicating where our handicap
200 accessible entrance is has been replaced.

201 8. Automated External Defibrillator (AED, aka an Automated Electronic Defibrillator) -
202 To best serve everyone who uses our building throughout the week, the unit will be
203 installed in the first floor landing of the main stairwell at the Allen Street entrance.

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

205 1. Upcoming Kids' Paint & Sip Events with Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. (DPI)
206 St. Stephen's has agreed to host and provide volunteers for the following fall/winter
207 family art events run by DPI:

208 Friday, November 3, 5:00 - 7:00 PM (set up at 4:30 PM)

209 Saturday, December 2, 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM (set up at 11:30 AM)

210 **Action:** Sign up here for the November 3 event if you are able. Thank you!

211 2. Safe Church Training. See the Safe Church page of the Diocesan website for Fall
212 2023/Winter 2024 online training sessions.

213 3, Welcoming initiative.

214 We're going to try Coffee Hour in the East Street entry area on November 12.

215 Josie is the host and will need help.

216 Let's take another look at the areas closer to the altar for family-friendly options.

217 Name Tag November. The plan is to try something related to name tags at the 11/12

218 Coffee Hour - New name tags? Decorate and personalize your tag? We'll position this

219 as preparing for the upcoming Christmas season. Also, Advent starts the new church

220 year - a good time to introduce new initiatives.

221 **Action:** Take a "field trip" during the Vestry meeting to view the space again.

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

223 Rev. Nina Pooley talked about the problem with taking time off this fall due to health
224 issues (e.g. getting COVID).

225 Next year there will be a number of days away for attending General Convention and a
226 caucus, events which are unusual.

227 Here are some points summarised from the Report.

228 Nov. 6: All Saints will be celebrated.

229 Nov. 19: *In-gathering Sunday* (plus the last Peaceful Planning session, *Putting the Fun in*
230 *Funeral* that morning at 9am); and perhaps **confirmation (did you mean "Confirmation**
231 **class?)** at 2pm, see the note about confirmation class.

232 Advent December 3 - 24

233 (Yes, this year we'll celebrate *Advent 4* Sunday mornings, the last being Dec 24,
234 and then have the *Christmas Eve Service* that evening... a very busy day!)

235 I'm excited about a collaboration with the Campus of Downtown Churches this *Advent*.

236 We're coordinating our musical offerings and adding a few more, in a series we're

237 calling "*Comfort and Joy*." The first draft of our collaborative series is below.

238 Advent-1: Dec. 3 - We'll gather with Cathedral of the Beloved on the lawn of St.
239 Joe's at 1pm, and say a few prayers, then head out together to carol at the
240 following locations:

241 Berkshire Medical Center's ED;

242 Mt. Greylock nursing home;

243 the House of Corrections;
244 and the Shelter (hopefully at FUMC),
245 then we'll enjoy a reception at *Zion Lutheran Church*. Matt Beneke has agreed to
246 be our song leader for this event, fantastic news!

247 Nina,

248 Advent-2: Dec. 10: New England Bell Ringers Concert at St. Stephen's (3pm)

249 Advent-3: Dec. 17: Zion Lutheran's Yule for Fuel concert (3pm), and Youth
250 Caroling through YPF

251 Advent-3: Dec. 20, Zion's Beer and Carols, 7pm.

252 Advent-3: Dec. 22, Cathedral of the Beloved will host a Longest Night service
253 (location TBD)

254 Dec. 24, Advent-4 - celebrated at 10am, spoken service;

255 Dec. 24, Christmas Eve - two services, times TBD (likely to be similar to last year
256 - 5pm Family Service, and a choral service at 8pm).

257 December 31, Christmas-1 (New Year's Jan 1): Joint worship hosted by St.

258 Stephen's - a Eucharistic service with carols. Given the choice, Joy has decided to
259 play for this service and take the following Sunday off.

260 Diocesan Convention is this Saturday. I'll be presenting the Beloved Community
261 Commission's Resolution on Racial Reconciliation and Atonement. And I'm running for
262 a spot on the Diocesan Deputation to General Convention (I'm serving on the
263 Secretariat as the Voting Secretary for the House of Deputies again this year, and hope
264 to be an alternate deputy for our diocese.

265 Confirmation Class is a blast! (Just saying - you're missing out:)

266 I'm looking into switching our 2024 Bishop's visitation with Trinity, Lenox, so we
267 can move confirmation to a service that will include more of the congregation. Now
268 ours will be in the Spring (April), which we can do during a normal Sunday Service,
269 before some of the seniors graduate.

270 Question - I'm pondering Winter and our 5pm Saturday Eucharistic service.

271 - Do we want to put that on hold until it starts getting light earlier in the evening
272 again, and the weather is more predictable?

273 - How should we handle it if there is bad weather when it is dark.

274 - What if the service is called due to bad weather. How do we communicate this.

275 This past Saturday there were 4 people 2 of whom had to be there, pus the Lector
276 and the Priest.

277 Jim Alden wondered if we should skip it for the winter, e.g. until March, Ash
278 Wednesday (per Nina's suggestion).

279 **Action Items from this Meeting:**

- 280 1. Action: Sign up here for the November 3 Paint & Sip event if you are able. Thank you!
281 2. The property committee will make a plan for the moving of the furniture for the
282 "Prayground"
283 3. We took a field trip during the meeting to the Sanctuary to view areas to be
284 potentially altered.

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

286 Rev. Nina Pooley closed with a prayer:

287 "Let the Day End" - Wild Goose Resource Group

288 *Let the day end,*
289 *The night fall,*
290 *The world move into silence,*
291 *And let God's people say Amen.*
292 *Amen.*

293 *Let minds unwind,*
294 *Hearts be still,*
295 *Bodies relax,*
296 *And let God's people say Amen.*
297 *Amen.*

298 *But before the day is done,*
299 *Let God's holy name be praised,*
300 *And let God's people say Amen.*
301 *Amen.*

302 The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 P.M.

303 **Next Meeting scheduled:**

- 304 1. November 28, 2023 in person
305 2. Vestry Retreat: Friday November 10: 6 - 9 P.M. (pizza, beer/wine/soda)
306 3. December meeting could be December 19 by zoom
307 4. Planning the annual meeting(Sunday January 28 or Feb 4th?) Next time.

308 **VI. Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned by unanimous consent: ___.