

*St. Stephen's Episcopal Church*  
*Vestry Meeting*  
*2024 - monthly meeting # 9*  
*Date: October 22, 2024*  
Minutes approved November 26, 2024

Present (virtually by Zoom):

Rev. Dr. Nina Pooley, Rector  
Josephine Ellis, (Senior) Co-Warden  
John Garinther, (Junior) Co-Warden  
Suzanne White, Treasurer  
William O'Neill, Assistant Treasurer  
Dr. J. Christopher Perry, Clerk  
James Alden  
Caleb Harmon  
David Nevin  
Christopher Plankey  
Wendy Webster Coakley

Regrets: None.

Meeting began at 7:08 P.M. in person (and by Zoom)

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

Rev. Nina Pooley offered a prayer for the policeman *Michael* who died today.

Opening (Inspired by Sojourners, Verse and Voice, October 18, 2024)

Scripture: Romans 12:4-5

For as in one body we have many members and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.

Meditation: by Ram Dass

By acting compassionately, by helping to restore justice and to encourage peace, we acknowledge that we are all part of one another.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, thank you for our unity in the body of Christ. Help us embrace our diverse roles and serve one another with compassion, striving for justice and reflecting your love in all we do. *Amen.*

**II. Discussions:** Josie Ellis, John Garinther:

Wendy Webster-Coakley discussed aspects of the *Stewardship Report* planning for the weekend. Pledge cards distribution will be delayed by 1 week.

This Sunday we will introduce a way to engage the kids in “walk-in love.”

Nov 3, Wendy will introduce our first speaker, and distribute the pledge cards in envelopes with labeled names. Not a coffee Sunday.

There was a brief discussion about updating the Parish list of names who would get pledge cards mailed, if not present.

Nov 10, Bill Fraser will speak, before Veteran’s Day.

Nov 17, to-be-determined

Nov 24: in-gathering Sunday. We will have a drawing for a coffee mug from National Convention.

Stewardship Straight Talk. Many individuals added ideas about how to pose and answer questions about the value of *Stewardship*. One take-away was to put one question and answer per week in the weekly Bulletin.

Rev. Nina Pooley. Zion Lutheran Church is having building renovations. Several organizations that use their space have approached us to use our space during some days. Some discussion of charges ensued tentatively concluding that \$350/half day + Roy’s time (opening, closing, monitoring functions) at \$150. Nina will decide this with the Wardens.

Berkshire Concert Choir’s schedule of possible space usage was discussed

*St Stephen’s Table*: A Fund raising group, what are the next steps?

Chris Perry suggested that the operation of *St. Stephen’s Table* needed a clear management structure and cost center with specific items budgeted as well as some indication of the trajectory of future meals numbers and associated costs. These are the basics to present to potential donors for any *Fund* that we are proposing to create in support of the mission of *St. Stephen’s Table*.

Directors of any *Fund* should include Rev. Nina Pooley, qua Rector, as the Fund’s president. There should be a volunteer at *Table* who isn’t a member of the parish.

Action items:

1. Josie will send an email to Dan Moon + Craig Reynolds regarding *Table* management
2. Chris Perry: will come up with list of questions about management issues for the *Table*.

Josie Ellis queried whether we are ready for a capital or targeted campaign, as suggested by Craig Smith. There is a specific list of things needed, e.g. from the *Property Committee*.

Action item:

3. John Garinther will talk with Craig Smith regarding what he needs for a committee to support this effort.

Chris Perry brought up a proposal to have a Thanksgiving Service Wednesday 6 P.M. before Thanksgiving Day, which could begin at St. Stephens, but annually rotate to any other protestant church wishing to cooperate. He offered the following points.

- Thanksgiving is originally a secular holiday which has been adopted by religions.
- No Thanksgiving Services were held in Pittsfield in last several years (our last one was 2020, the Rev. John Tarrant presiding).
- Closest ones in past several years were: Stockbridge Congregational Church (a Thanksgiving morning prayer service) and Trinity Episcopal-Lenox (regular communion service).
- Recent past services Thanksgiving morning at St. Stephens had attendance varying from 11 to 15+
- Wednesday eve before might be better attended than Thursday morning.
- Including other churches should increase attendance, if advertised
- Evening prayer service with Thanksgiving collects, prayers is short
- If other churches participated, each could use its own Thanksgiving liturgy (to keep things simple).
- The usual Thanksgiving hymns would be great, if organist available.
- Sermon optional, or short, or better, read President George Washington's original eloquent *Proclamation of a day of Thanksgiving* (Rev. Cooper did so her first year, it was a 5 minute reading).
- J. C. Perry grew up with this (in a small town) and it was a well-attended multi-church event.

John Garinther and David Nevin suggested that there was too little time to pull it together. Rev. Nina Pooley was concerned that we do not know if enough people would come to warrant the effort, and wondered how we could know. J.C. Perry suggested that we could do a survey regarding parishioners interest in a Thanksgiving eve service.

Action item:

4. Next summer or September we will consider designing and implementing a survey of potential interest in a Thanksgiving Eve service
5. Next time she meets with the ministers, Rev. Nina Pooley will inquire about potential interest in such a service for next year.

## **II. Clerk Report: Minutes from previous meeting**

August 24, 2024

a. corrections

1. Bill Loutrel spelled incorrectly in line 139
2. line 140: Nina's name misspelled.

b. Minutes approved (as corrected).

Motion by: Josie Ellis

Seconded by: David Nevin  
Approval: unanimous

### III. Old Business

#### Action Items from this Meeting:

- x 1. articles for the newsletter needed.
- x 2. Wendy will start a Google Doc for questions and answers re: stewardship.
- x 3. Wendy will orchestrate asking individuals for stewardship presentations.
- x 4. Rev. Nina Pooley and the Wardens will review potential vestry persons.
- x 5. Bill O'Neill and Chris Perry: more information on creating a 501c3 to support St. Stephen's Table
- x 6. Finance should have a conversation to develop recommendations for relating specific funds to thematically related budget items..

As noted by an "x" all items were begun or completed.

### IV. Committee Reports and New Business

#### Financial report (Suzanne White. Bill O'Neill)

Suzanne White detailed a summary of our finances and where we stand. Sarah (office administrator) noted that we need \$115,000 from endowment to our balance budget through December this year. This included both the anticipated budget deficit plus the *Refresh Project* and extra *Property* expenses that came up this year. We have already taken some 50,000 and planned another 67,000 left. We have identified the *Marsha Humphry Fund* for the *Refresh* project.

Total to take 115,147 from endowed funds.

#### Motion:

"The Vestry has approved the withdrawal of \$115,147.00 from our endowed funds, held by the trustees of the *Diocese*, to cover approved capital expenditures in 2024, and the approved budget deficit."

Motion by: Suzanne White

Seconded: John Garinther

In Favor: unanimous.

Opposed: none

Abstained: none

Suzanne White will be rolling off of the Treasurer position this coming year.

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

Ongoing issues listed in the Property Report included the following: fan installation in the Sanctuary and related engineering estimate, boiler control box,

refresh of the foyer, restroom refresh, acquisition of front lawn plot from the City, new security cameras, donation of computer networking equipment, repairing the forced hot air system at south of sanctuary.

No questions were raised.

**Stewardship** (Wendy Webster Coakley)

Was discussed at the outset above.

**Wardens' Report** (Josie Ellis, John Garinther),

There is another Pop-up Potluck dinner this Friday.

No questions were raised

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

The Rev. Nina Pooley outlined her schedule over the next 2 months. Stewardship Straight Talk was reviewed and discussed. Several Vestry members had offered suggestions to the document.

Efforts to decrease Parish expenditures were briefly noted, including music expenses, space use (including renting surplus space), and computer and office expenses.

**Action Items from this Meeting:**

1. Josie will send an email to Dan Moon + Craig Reynolds regarding Table management
2. Chris Perry: will come up with list of questions about management issues for the *Table*.
3. John Garinther will talk with Craig Smith regarding what he needs for a committee to support this effort.
4. Next summer or September, we will consider designing and implementing a survey of potential interest in a Thanksgiving Eve service
5. Next time she meets with the ministers Rev. Nina Pooley will inquire about potential interest in such a service for next year.

**Next Meeting scheduled:**

1. Vestry Meeting Tuesday November 26, 2024 per zoom

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

*May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace...the spirit of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.*

**VI. Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned by unanimous consent: 8:50 P.M.