

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Vestry Meeting
2025 - monthly meeting # 1
Date: January 28, 2025

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 (Clerk in-waiting)
Wendy Webster Coakley

Regrets:

Meeting began about 7:05 P.M. by Zoom

I. Opening scripture and Prayer offered by Rev. Pooley

Scripture: Luke 6:36-38

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

Opening Prayer:

Hear our prayers, Holy God. Breathe your Spirit over us and all the earth, that barriers would crumble and divisions cease. Make us more fully your co-healers of the broken world. Unite us with all people in bonds of love, that the whole earth and all its peoples may be at peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

II. Clerk Report: Minutes from previous meeting

December 17, 2024

a. corrections: typos

b. Minutes approved (as corrected).

Motion by: Josie Ellis

Seconded by: John Garinther
Approval: unanimous

III. Old Business

Action Items from Previous Meeting

1. Rev. Nina Pooley will figure out the insurance reimbursement issue for the Finance Committee to propose how to handle it next month.
2. Next time we will have a mini meeting to pick directors for the 501(c)3.

The above items were completed.

IV. Committee Reports and New Business

Property Committee (John Garinther, Chris Plankey)
Chris Plankey. See property report.

Stewardship (Wendy Webster Coakley)

Wendy Webster Coakley. Thank you notes are done. Several new pledge cards came in since the end of the year. Letters about to go out.

Wendy has been on Vestry 6 years. Everyone thanked her for her consistent hard work.

We still need one more person on the Vestry.

Financial report (Suzanne White. Bill O'Neill)

Suzanne presented the 2025 proposed budget based on previous 2024 spending, taking trends into account.

Income.

We took in 232,698 last year, and for this year we are budgeting slightly less, 220,000 to be safe, although hoping for better.

Building use income dropped as Berkshire Immigration Center (BIC) left.

There was 60,702 income for St. Stephen's Table with one generous capital donation, so we budgeted 28,000 from pledges only.

The Peek-Bell Fund income is earmarked for the rector's housing.

Expenses.

Salaries & Employee Benefits showed some decrease due to some changes in health insurance for Rev. Nina Pooley and Sarah Morrison.

Utilities showed an increase. Music showed a decrease with the elimination of the choir honorarium. Property expenses were up. The cleaning service is now private and more expensive, although the previous BC Arc cleaners were also planning to increase their charges.

Money not for operating expenses.

Large donations get held in the savings account until sent to an endowment or other designated expense. The Petricca family's donation of 30,000 should be

subtracted from operating income.

Overall.

So, we are estimating expenses of 446,072, including what we anticipate taking from endowment. Our anticipated deficit is 84,436, minus the 30,000 Patricca donation in savings. This is intended for St Stephen's Table, such as upgrades.

Conclusion.

As proposed by Chris Perry, after Sarah clarifies a question about the Petricca donation, we will have a vote by email from Suzanne. Hopefully done by next week.

John Garinther: orientation lunch for new team. Probably the 16th for the date. Josie, Chris Perry and Wendy won't be there. And Christine Reynolds (gluten free) has responsibility for coffee hour on the 9th. She is a new Vestry member. Catered lunch. Jim will bring his lunch due to dietary restrictions.

Wardens' Report (Josie Ellis, John Garinther),

John Garinther, Rev. Nina Pooley, and Josie Ellis are meeting with a stewardship committee, *Stewardship Team*. This includes Jim Alden, Josie Ellis, John Garinther, Susan LeBourdais, Leah Luczynski, Rev. Nina Pooley, Craig Smith, and Al Symonds. David Nevin (Junior Warden) will be ex officio.

Business Arising.

Chris Perry had circulated a draft of a letter he proposed that the Vestry consider endorsing and circulating or publishing to the wider community. The letter highlighted the recent sermon given by Bishop Budde of Washington D.C. and the National Prayer Service after the inauguration. She made a plea for mercy for immigrants, undocumented or otherwise, directly to the President. This was widely seen as a courageous act of speaking truth to power.

The group discussed the pros and cons of the proposed letter, and Wendy Webster-Coakley and Rev. Nina Pooley amended it to widen reference beyond St. Stephens Parish to the larger group of downtown churches.

A letter to the Editor of the Berkshire Eagle was chosen as the best venue for the letter.

Motions:

Motion by: Josie Ellis

Motion: In support of trying to publish the letter on Bishop Budde remarks.

Seconded: Caleb Harmon

In Favor: all

Opposed: none

Abstained: none

Rector's Report (Rev. Nina Pooley)

Action Items from this Meeting:

- 1 Chris Perry will submit the letter about Bishop Budde, with the last line added.
2. VPOD sign up link on agenda
3. Suzanne White will clarify budget questions and meet with Chris Perry, then send the budget around for final approval within a week.

Next Meeting scheduled:

1. Vestry Meeting February 25, 2025

V. Closing Prayer offered by Rev. Pooley

Be our light in the darkness, O Lord, and in your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of your only Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen*

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

Addendum on February 6, 2025

Motions:

Moved by: on February 6, 2025 by Josie Ellis via email subsequent to the January Vestry Meeting.

Motion: "I move that we accept the attached 2025 Proposed Budget via email."

Seconded: Rev. Nina Pooley

In Favor: unanimous

Opposed: none

The Proposed Budget for 2025 is accepted.

End of Minutes.