

*St. Stephen's Episcopal Church  
Vestry Meeting  
Date: August 26, 2025*

Present (in person in the Sears Room):

Rev. Dr. Nina Pooley, Rector  
John Garinther, (Senior) Co-Warden  
David Nevin, (Junior) Co-Warden  
Dr. J. Christopher Perry, Treasurer  
Christopher Plankey, Clerk  
Christine Furcinite Reynolds  
Leah Luczynski  
James Brennan  
James Alden  
William Morey

Regrets: William O'Neill, Assistant Treasurer; and Caleb Harmon

Meeting began at 7:07 p.m.

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

*Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5: 17-18*

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:

The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

*Wisdom: New Ways by Kathy Galloway*

God of our lives

You are always calling us to follow you into the future, inviting us to new ventures, new challenges, new ways to care, new ways to touch the hearts of all. When we become fearful of the unknown, give us courage. When we worry that we are not up to the task, remind us that you would not call us if you did not believe in us.

When we get tired, or feel disappointed with the way things are going, remind us that you can bring change and hope out of the most difficult situations.

*Prayer of the day: When the Lights Are On (Iona Abbey 2001 Worship Book)*

Leader: When the lights are on and the house is full  
and laughter is easy and all is well ...

Voice: Behold I stand at the door and knock.

Leader: When the lights are low and the house is still and the talk is intense  
and the air is full of wondering ...

Behold I stand at the door and knock.

Leader: When the lights are off and the house is sad  
and the voice is troubled and nothing seems right ...

Voice: Behold I stand at the door and knock.

Leader: And tonight,  
always tonight, as if there were no other people, no other house,  
no other door ...

Voice: Behold I stand at the door and knock.

Leader: Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest, stay with us for the day is ending. Bring  
to our house your poverty,

ALL: FOR THEN SHALL WE BE RICH.

Leader: Bring to our house your pain,

ALL: THAT SHARING IT WE MAY ALSO SHARE YOUR JOY.

Leader: Bring to our house your understanding of us,

ALL: THAT WE MAY BE FREED TO LEARN MORE OF YOU

Leader: Bring to our house all those who hurry or hobble (hobble) behind you

ALL: THAT WE MAY MEET YOU AS THE SAVIOUR OF ALL.

Leader: Bring to our house your Holy Spirit,

ALL: THAT THIS MAY BE A CRADLE OF LOVE.

Leader: With friend, with stranger,  
with neighbor, and the well-known ones, be among us tonight,

ALL: FOR THE DOORS OF OUR HOUSE, WE OPEN  
AND THE DOORS OF OUR HEARTS WE LEAVE AJAR.

## **II. Clerk Report: Approve Minutes from July meeting**

Chris Plankey explained the vestry did not meet in July but that a set of minutes was produced for July explaining this.

## **III. Old Business**

Action Items from previous Meeting:

1. Nina and wardens to decide time and location for vestry retreat. Done.
2. Vestry members to sign up for VPOD slots for Aug. 2025 through Feb. 2026. Done, although 2 slots remain.
3. Vestry members are asked to suggest bookkeepers they recommend. Contact has been made with The Breezy Bookkeeper in Dalton. BIC used them and they are well-versed with churches, nonprofits, etc.

## **IV. New Business**

### **a. Retreat Working Group Discussion**

Our vestry retreat produced 3 working groups all focusing on one question: "How do we better serve the needs of the community around us?" Three specific areas emerged.

The first group focuses on how we utilize the parish house space, so that it better serves the community. That group has been reaching out to community organizations that serve the greater community and reported back their findings.

The second group's focus is on evangelism. Specifically on how to recruit/support the ministry already happening in our spaces at St. Stephen's. The goal is not to "fill the pews" but in bolstering/expanding current ministry. This group did not report back any specific update at this time. Members of this group may fold into one of the other groups.

The third group's focus is on thinking about St. Stephen's longer-term success. Are there things we should be thinking about and discussing now to put us in a stronger position for where we'll find ourselves in 2 years? 5 years? 10 years? Beyond? The group has met a few times and gave an update on their progress.

### **b. Solar Discussion**

An update was given on the status of our solar project. Costs, engineering, contracts, fees, etc. We discussed whether the project aligns with our long-term goals. Ultimately, we agreed the timing is bad.

MOTION: "Does this body wish to pursue a solar installation at this time?" Made by John Garinther. Seconded by Chris Perry. 2 in favor. 6 not in favor. Abstained: Chris Plankey as a non-voting member. The motion does not pass.

## V. **Committee Reports**

### a. **Treasurer's Report** (Chris Perry)

The report explains:

- the group did not meet in June or July and offers a catch up report for a three month period
- on July 10th, Bill O'Neill, Assistant Treasurer, resigned due to ongoing health issues
- where we stand with our natural gas contract
- a summary of income and expenses through July

Chris would like to look at 5 year trends for natural gas. He aims to separate operating from non-operating/capital expenses in our budget.

No questions were asked of the treasurer's report.

### b. **Property Committee** (Christopher Plankey)

The report contains updates on:

- our heating system upgrades
- our sanctuary sound system upgrades
- the safety inspections of our exterior staircases
- the balcony clean up and ceiling repair
- the sanctuary roof leak
- the solar roof load analysis plan
- the plan to repair the wall behind the crucifer station
- John's vacation schedule
- the acolyte room clean up

No questions were asked of the property report.

### c. **Wardens' Report** (John Garinther, David Nevin)

No questions were asked about the wardens' report.

The report includes:

1. vestry housekeeping reminders, including sign ups for VPOD assignments and information about upcoming Safe Church training
2. a summary of recent and upcoming Parish events including the confirmation ceremony, Bishop visitation, and the vestry's meeting with the Bishop Fisher on Sept. 21st
3. Stewardship Team Update:

The Stewardship Team is currently meeting every 2-3 weeks. Susan LeBourdais is the Chairperson. The team is working toward the launch of a capital campaign to raise funds for specific projects:

- \$70K – Dining Room/Foyer refresh (recover endowment draw)
- \$60K – Boiler Condensate Tank and Boiler Digital Control System
- \$15K – Steinway piano refurbishment
- \$5K – Sanctuary sound system upgrade

The newly focused (and reduced) campaign goal is \$150K.

4. An update on our 2024 Financial Audit. Report artifacts were reviewed ahead of the meeting and the vestry voted to approve the report. See item IV. b. (above).
5. General Property Information - The following are current or pending quotes that the Property Committee is pursuing:
  - Boiler BFT quote - \$37k - COMPLETE
  - Boiler Control System upgrade quote - \$25k - COMPLETE
  - Sanctuary Ceiling Fan installation quote
    - Cross Beam Load Analysis - \$5,500 - APPROVED
    - Ceiling Fan Material - PROJECT CANCELLED
    - Ceiling Fan Installation - PROJECT CANCELLED
  - Steinway Piano Back Action Overhaul (dampers) quote - \$2K - PROJECT IN PROGRESS
  - Steinway Piano Keyframe Action quote - \$11K - PROJECT IN PROGRESS
  - Sound System Upgrade estimate - \$5k - QUOTED PENDING

d. **Rector's Report** (Nina+)

The report includes information on:

1. Nina's upcoming schedule and other liturgical events
2. the Bishop's visitation on Sept. 21st

3. Nina's vacation from September 23 through October 13th (returning to work on Sunday, Oct. 14th) and details on clergy coverage for those 3 Sundays
4. pastoral care coverage for that time period
5. Zion's request to join us for a few Sundays should Pastor Joel and Ryan become parents this fall
6. an update on Nina's sabbatical plans
7. Details about Nina's desire to create an alternate worshipping experience similar to the Crossing in Boston, including details about an encounter and subsequent conversations with a woman she met years ago who recently reached out to discuss her experience as a part of that worshipping community and what it might look like to form something similar in Pittsfield. Information about discernment grants was included.
8. The need to update/refresh our website and consider using Facebook as a tool in order to up our Facebook presence

**VI. Action Item from this Meeting:**

1. none

**VII. Next Meeting scheduled:** September 23, 2025 at 7 p.m. in person.

**VIII. Closing Prayer**

Blessing : by Jan Sutch Pickard  
The blessing of Martha's welcome,  
the blessing of Mary's listening;  
the blessing of action,  
the blessing of reflection  
the blessing of a God who is in each of these,  
and in each one of us,  
be with us all.  
AMEN

**IX. Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned by unanimous consent: 9:03 p.m.

**End of Minutes.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Christopher Plankey, Clerk