

*St. Stephen's Episcopal Church  
Vestry Meeting  
Date: February 24, 2026*

Present (via Zoom):

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

Meeting began at 7:06 p.m.

**I. Opening Scripture and Prayer (Rev. Nina)**

*Scripture: Matthew 11:28-30*

[Jesus said,] "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

*Wisdom: Comfort, by Brother Curtis Almquist, SSJE*

One of the greatest comforts in life is being in the presence of someone whom we know loves us, and who understands us, and who gently asks us the question, "How are you, really?" That tender question is Jesus' question for all of us, individually. Our response is our prayer.

*Prayer:*

Compassionate One, help us to hear your question as you gently ask us to check in with our hearts and souls, and to answer honestly. Offering you our fears and vulnerability, our exhaustion and despair, as well as our hopes and dreams. That we may find rest for our souls, Amen.

**II. Clerk Report: Approve Minutes from Previous Meeting**

Approval of previous minutes: Approved by email; see previous meeting addendum.

### III. Old Business

Action Items from previous Meeting:

1. Jim Brennan to contact Andrew Hoffman on free training for our staff and volunteers. Jim is in the process of organizing a training for, potentially, Sunday, April 19th after church.
2. Vestry members encouraged to sign up for VPOD slots. Only a few slots remain.
3. Rev. Nina to share new Basic Brunch date with office. Done.
4. Annual reports to Sarah Morrison by January 29th. Done.

### IV. New Business

a. **Vestry Orientation** (John)

John led a vestry orientation, complete with a slide presentation.

ACTION: vestry members are asked to sign up for VPOD slots, make sure they are happy with their contact info as contained in the contact file, and attend Vestry 101 on March 3, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. put on by the diocese.

b. **"Finding the Gap" Meeting with Community** (Rev. Nina)

Stewardship has organized a discussion on Wednesday, February 25th at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom with leaders from local organizations (ServiceNet, COTB, Zion, BIC, the Sherriff's department feeding program...) about finding the gap! Given the newly opened The First, it's time to follow up on the work we've done with Go and See and our vestry retreat - to establish where there may be a niche we are called to fill for the local community.

To further that conversation the Stewardship team has organized leadership from some of the local service agencies to share their wisdom - their experience in establishing the First, and the remaining gaps from their perspective.

Rev. Nina asked if there was anyone who was interested in collecting questions and acting as a point person on behalf of St. Stephen's after the meeting. John Garinther volunteered. This conversation could dovetail with another question we find ourselves asking: "is there a better use for unused portions of our facility?"

c. **Draft Parochial Report** (John)

John took us through the parochial report, due by Sunday, March 1st.

Chris Perry and Al Symonds will meet tomorrow to look at the numbers and the report will be shared by email with every vestry member.

ACTION: Vestry to vote to approve report for submission asap via email.

## V. Committee Reports

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

The report includes:

- summary of financials for January 2026 including a spreadsheet for the month (and year)
- a detailed look at income for January 2026
- a detailed look at expenses for January 2026

Chris Perry explained why the January numbers look the way they do. In short, income appears higher than expenses, but this is common for January for reasons explained in his report.

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

The property committee meets one week late this month, so they meet tomorrow. Therefore, they did not submit a report in time for the vestry meeting. Chris encouraged vestry members to revisit the January 2026 Vestry folder to read the Property Report which will appear there within one week.

MOTION: by Al Symonds

Move the vestry accept a proposal presented by the property committee for \$22,235.28 submitted by East Coast Refinishing to refurbish the metal structure in the alley leading to the choir room. As recommended by finance, the source of funds will be Real Estate Account 1102.00.

Seconded by: David Nevin

In favor: all

Opposed: none

Abstained: Chris Plankey as a non-voting member.

The motion passes.

### c. **Wardens' Report** (John)

The report includes:

1. Requirements for Safe Church training and dates (if any) for upcoming sessions (none at this time as the training person position for the diocese is currently vacant).
2. A summary of recent and upcoming Parish events
3. A Stewardship Team Update: including details about "Finding the Gap"
4. Horizon's Team update, including a summary of the results of the recent parish survey following annual meeting.

5. A summary of the actions the church plans to take in light of our recent safety/ security assessment including upcoming training for leadership, staff and parishioners which will be announced soon.
6. Information on the recent facility utilization assessment meeting with Haiko Cornelissen, who is a leader at STEWARDSHIP REALTY LLC. This company assesses church properties and proposes actions that can help the church to take advantage of its underutilized space.
7. General Property Information - The following are current or pending projects that the Property Committee is requesting or reviewing:
  - Sound System Upgrade estimate - \$5,000 estimate - **proposal pending**. *Rationale:* The online audio is currently very poor.
  - Exterior staircases repair or rebuild. - \$22,300. *Rationale:* The Choir Room exterior staircase has failed a mandated state inspection due to degraded steel and a significant amount of rust. The alleyway exterior staircase has failed the city building inspection also.
  - Balcony Ceiling Repair **\$4,500 proposal received**. *Rationale:* the ceiling is falling. Property committee is communicating with the vendor with an eye toward accepting their proposal

No questions were asked about the wardens' report.

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

The report includes:

1. Dates and details for: Lent, Holy Week, Easter Sunday, Season of Eastertide, Pentecost Sunday, and Season After Pentecost, including all related ecumenical efforts planned to date.
2. Rev. Nina's personal schedule, including plans to take the week following Easter off. April 6-12. David DeSmith will cover April 12th.
3. ICE and Immigrant Support - We need to have a Community Asset Mapping conversation. What mechanism is best for this asset mapping? Is this a parish-wide conversation? A survey? A small group? Rev. Nina asked us for support for this effort.
4. Information about Adult Ed for Lent - details for in-person and online opportunities thanks to Deacon Margot Page, Louise Penney, and Rev. Nina.
5. Bishop Fisher's farewell and the Consecration of our bishop-elect
6. A request for the removal of ashes from the columbarium

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

1. Vestry members asked to sign up for VPOD slots, to update the information in their contact info file, and to watch Vestry 101 on March 3rd
2. Rev. Nina et. al. to explore reinstating Chris Plankey as a voting member
3. Anyone who is interested can locate and review the vestry handbook on the diocesan website
4. Vestry members are encouraged to reply asap to an upcoming email seeing their vote to approve the parochial report.

**VII. Next Meeting scheduled:** March 24, 2026 at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

**VIII. Closing Prayer (Rev. Nina)**

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. **Amen**

**IX. Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned by unanimous consent: 8:33 p.m.

**End of Minutes.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Christopher Plankey, Clerk

**Addendum**

**APPROVAL OF THESE MINUTES**

Motion by email to approve minutes by David Nevin on 3/4/2026

Motion by email seconded by Christine Furcinite Reynolds on 3/4/2026

In favor: all who replied

Opposed: none

No response: 0 members

Minutes approved by email on 3/11/2026