

*St. Stephen's Episcopal Church  
Vestry Meeting  
Date: April 28, 2026*

Present (in the Sears Room):

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

Regrets: Caleb Harmon, David Nevin, (Junior) Co-Warden

Meeting began at 7:01 p.m.

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

*Verse of the day - Hosea 12:6*

But as for you, return to your God; hold fast to love and justice, and wait continually for your God.

*Wisdom - Lorraine Hansberry*

One cannot live with sighted eyes and feeling heart and not know or react to the miseries which afflict this world.

*Prayer:*

Holy One, don't let our awareness ebb. Keep our eyes fixed and our hearts ready to do your will of love. Amen.

Rev. Nina gave us a pastoral update on Caleb Dillon Harmon, with his permission.

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

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

### III. Old Business

Action Items from previous Meeting:

1. Executive team to contact Stewardship Realty. On this agenda.
2. Vestry members to be present at security training after worship on April 19th. The event has passed, the turnout was good.
3. Vestry members to be present at meetings in the Sears Room at 7 p.m. on April 21st and April 30th. Meeting on 21st has passed. Meeting on 30th noted.
4. Vestry members to achieve Safe Church training or recertification. Individual action is required.
5. Vestry members to notify Nina asap if they'd like to attend the bishop consecration on April 25th. Event has passed.
6. Jim Brennan to be in touch with Andrew Hoffman concerning training on April 19th. Done; event has passed.

### IV. New Business

a. **Safety and Security Follow Up - next steps** (Nina+)

Nina recommends we draw on the information (in the recent presentation and in the formal security report) to craft responses/plans for specific groups:

- Sunday Funday teachers (and share the plan with parents)
- Choir: on Wednesdays for rehearsals
- Bell ringers: on Mondays for rehearsals
- Table Teams
- Office Staff
- Sunday morning worshippers
- Saturday evening clergy/lay leaders

We envision bulleted lists of need-to-know information, and a quick training for these groups. After asking for someone to help with this, Jim Brennan volunteered. On a related note, we agreed the property committee's plan to create pew cards for the main worship space (showing exit routes) isn't necessary given the space. Instead, we will examine the exit routes beyond the main worship space to ensure they are clear with proper signage, exit signs, etc.

b. **Stewardship Realty Agreement** (Nina+)

Last month the vestry approved the newly reduced \$7,000 expense to

officially move forward with Stewardship Realty. We are currently processing the service agreement and are ready to make the required first payment of \$4,000.

c. **"Finding the Gap" - next steps** (John)

We met on April 21st with members of Zion Lutheran Church to ask questions about the model they used for planning and development of *The First* and how it might apply to any actions we take to utilize our facility more effectively. It was informative because we now know the roadblocks they faced to complete this huge task.

We meet again on April 30th at 7 p.m. in the Sears Room to discuss what we learned, review action items from our last meeting, and determine next steps.

d. **Pentecost Pop-up 2026** (Rev. Nina)

Pentecost is May 24. We agreed to repeat the Pentecost pop up event Marietta Cawse spearheaded last year. Marietta would like us to invite other churches to join us, and in particular, hopes we could invite one of our local synagogues. Nina explained she spoke to the Rabbi and they agreed this particular ecumenical effort is not a good fit, but they now plan to meet over coffee with the hope of creating one that is.

ACTION: VPODs on duty on May 3, 10, and 17 to announce the Pentecost Pop-up event and encourage parishioners to participate. We still have our signs from last year.

ACTION: John will figure out if we need a permit for this event.

e. **Zion Annual Report** (John)

As part of the reports we reviewed ahead of this meeting, we were provided a copy of Zion's most recent annual report (which is available publicly on their website). We talked about it briefly and John suggested looking more thoughtfully at it might offer us insight into our own budget and even present ideas for reducing our spending. It also offers insight to their construction project, *The First*.

ACTION: John suggested our Finance Team takes a closer look at it.

## V. **Committee Reports**

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

The report includes:

- summary of our 1st three months report on the Operating Budget
- we now have a checking and a savings account established at Lee Bank. The report details the tasks that remain related to this and describes when we will transition away from our Beacon Bank accounts.
- a discussion about book-keeping and bill-paying, including the benefits of having an external service versus in-house personnel
- an update on the March 31st deadline to submit the audit-auditor selection form for Year 2025. We elected an internal audit. Both Al Symonds and Don Phipps are willing to continue this year as internal auditors. Al Symonds will check to see if Stephanie Talanian will continue as well.

MOTION: Chris Perry made a motion the vestry approve an internal audit as well as approve Al Symonds, Don Phipps, and a 3rd person to be named as internal auditors. Christine Reynolds seconded the motion. All in favor. None opposed. The motion passed.

John asked two questions about the treasurer's report. The first dealt with a discrepancy Beacon Bank made reconciling a check we wrote. Chris Perry reiterated information in the treasurer's report and his next step to sorting that out. To John's second question, which had to do with onboarding him (as one of our wardens) as a signer for our new Lee Bank checking account, Chris Perry clarified the steps John and David need to take. No other questions were asked of the treasurer's report.

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

The property committee report includes information on:

- tracking our boiler system make-up water, including the creation of a log and a discussion about the data in that log that indicate some anomalous readings and high usage weeks
- the project which brings the metal stairs in the alley up to code is now complete
- the project to fix the ceiling over the balcony has encountered a setback
- the actions we are taking (or will soon take) related to our recent security assessment
- our committee organized a spring work day; only our committee is

needed for this

- the finance committee is working on a formula to calculate rent that could be applied to our various spaces and have been hard at work gathering data, reviewing past utility bills, measuring spaces, crunching numbers, etc.
- we're exploring what it will take to conduct a fire drill
- we responsibly recycled a bunch of unused computer equipment

Chris offered a quick update on the completion of the metal stairs in the alley along with a brief discussion about the removal of some signage related to that project. No questions were asked of the property report.

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

The report includes:

1. information about the new interim Safe Church training
2. a summary of recent and upcoming Parish events
3. a Stewardship Team Update, including: a resignation letter from Jim Alden and plans to fill his position, and plans to focus their 2026 efforts on legacy giving.
4. "Finding the Gap Team" update, including a summary of recent and upcoming meetings
5. "Horizons Team" update
6. Safety/Security Assessment update, including information about the recent training and what our next steps look like
7. facility utilization assessment update
8. 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 steel staircase repair - \$22,300 - **work completed**. *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 also failed the city building inspection. We do not have a cost estimate for these stairs yet.

- Balcony Ceiling Repair - *Rationale:* the ceiling is falling. The project is stalled out after a contractor we met with twice turned out to not be a viable option.

No questions were asked about the wardens' report.

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

The report includes:

- dates and details for: Season of Eastertide, Pentecost Sunday, and Season After Pentecost
- Rev. Nina's plan to petition our newly elected bishop for her permission to utilize the liturgies we're accustomed to pray in the coming months/seasons and to defend our practice of offering Open Communion
- info on the 2026 Pentecost Pop-up event (IV. d. above)
- Nina's recommendations for next steps related to our recent safety and security assessment and training (IV. a. above)
- info on *A Deeper Well*, an ecumenical effort involving us, Zion and Cathedral on Wednesday nights
- a line item discussing the upcoming Labyrinth event and a chance to make sure Anne Williams feels she has all the support she needs for it. We talked about signage, ensuring the auditorium is clean, printing handouts, making sure Anne has all the volunteers she needs, etc.
- Nina's plan for sabbatical during the months of Aug, Sept, and Oct. We agreed this timing makes the most sense given Sarah's retirement before the end of this year. Being the first time the vestry discussed these two things, our conversation ranged from the work we'll do to fill Sarah's position to helping our parish explore special initiatives while Nina is on sabbatical.

ACTION: John to talk to Josie Ellis about creating a job description for our parish administrator.

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

1. VPODs on duty on May 3, 10, and 17 to announce the Pentecost Pop-up event and encourage parishioners to participate.
2. John to figure out if we need a permit for the Pentecost Pop-up event.
3. Our Finance Team to take a closer look at Zion's annual report.
4. John to talk to Josie Ellis about creating a job description for our parish administrator.

**VII. Next Meeting scheduled:** May 26, 2026 at 7 p.m. in person.

**VIII. Closing Prayer:**

*A Prayer for Night*

*(A New Zealand Prayer Book)*

Lord,  
it is night.  
The night is for stillness.  
Let us be still in the presence of God.  
It is night after a long day.  
What has been done has been done;  
what has not been done has not been done;  
let it be.

The night is dark.  
Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives  
rest in you.

The night is quiet.  
Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,  
all dear to us,  
and all who have no peace.  
The night heralds the dawn.  
Let us look expectantly to a new day,  
new joys,  
new possibilities.

In your name we pray.  
Amen.

**IX. Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned by unanimous consent: 8:31 p.m.

**End of Minutes.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Christopher Plankey, Clerk

**Addendum**

**APPROVAL OF THESE MINUTES**

Motion by email to approve minutes by Chris Perry on 5/7/2026

Motion by email seconded by email by Rev. Nina on 5/7/2026

In favor: 10 responded by email

Opposed: 0

No response: 2 member

Minutes approved by email on 5/9/2026