

**Vestry of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church  
Richmond, Virginia  
Minutes of the April 23, 2024 Meeting**

The following Vestry members were present: Jeff Johnson, Andy Luke, Brenda McDowell, Anne Pinion, Whitney Van Der Hyde, Kathy Brock, John Crowder, May Fox, Mary Ashburn Pearson, Bill Davis, Katherine Farley, Greta Kidd, Nan O'Connell, Gayle Royals, Randy Seibert, Chris Smith, Robert Birdsey

**Guests Present:** Brent te Velde, Diana Chou, and Chris Edwards

**Staff Present:** John Rohrs, Fred Staley, Will Stanley

**Opening Devotions** - John Rohrs led opening prayer.

**Approval of Minutes** - The minutes of the March 26, 2024 meeting were approved by voice vote.

**A. Focus Time - Music Ministry Updates**

1. St. Stephen's UK Choral Pilgrimage: Chris Edwards shared a comprehensive overview of the St. Stephen's Choral UK pilgrimage in conjunction with River Road Baptist Church. The pilgrimage, taking place July 20-30, 2024 has been in the works for multiple years and will be the first in ten years. The trip will include St. Stephen's Choir members, four St. Stephen's Choristers, three staff, and one clergy (the Rev. Cate Anthony.) The pilgrimage, based in Bath, will perform at Exeter Cathedral, Salisbury Cathedral, Wells Cathedral and Bath Abbey. The group will have time to tour their performance venues as well as additional trips and time in and around London, Bath and the Wilton House. A very robust chorister program integrating theory and elements of musical education that are very advanced for children.

2. Choral Program- St. Stephens boasts an impressive choral program with multiple adult choirs and a robust and growing junior chorister program. Diana Chou and Brent te Velde highlighted our choral program including an in depth explanation of the growing junior chorister program and its curriculum. In addition, they highlighted the time and preparation needed behind the scenes for the 5 Sunday services (requiring Music). Average tenure of choir is 4-5 years and some with a tenure of 50 years.

3. Overview of 2024/2025 Music Program year: Next year, the music program will continue to integrate new music and hold multiple special events including the Belvedere Series, Three Choirs Concert (St. James), Sanctuary: A Musical Labyrinth, Good Friday Musical Offering. In addition, they will hold the Spring Music Gala May 17, *Musical Bouquet*, a fundraiser for the pilgrimage.

**B. On-Going Business**

1. Executive Director's Report: Update on nursery coordinator and assistant positions search. Fred has offered the position for the nursery coordinator, and has hopes for a good candidate for assistant. Abby Kocher, Director of Children's Ministry, to temporarily cut back to part time through June 9.

2. Junior Warden's Report -Jeff Johnson, no report for Buildings and Grounds. Dogwood Preschool fundraiser, *Blossom Bash*, to be held May 9 to support financial aid, playground improvements, as well as teacher retention

3. Treasurer's Report- Chris Smith shared we are tracking well against budget.

We have started to receive the ERTC refund (2 of 5 filings/quarters). The Finance Committee is starting conversation around reserve funds as it relates to capital/operational function.

Fred Staley presented an overview of the March financials. He has also begun implementing the new policy of monitoring department budget to actuals on a regular basis. In addition, the Endowment Committee has started to move assets to Brown.

Fred will hold a *Finance 101* session for interested Vestry members- May 14th at 5PM.

### **C. Senior Warden and Clergy Reports**

1. Senior Warden: May 19th is the final Sunday of our regular program year. The Vestry Commissioning will be held at the 11:15 service. Also this day, at the 10:10 and 11:15 service the Vestry is to provide food for a joint coffee hour Reception/Outreach volunteer thank you opportunity.

2. Rector's Report - Vestry and Staff Retreat follow up. John will share revised notes/brief analysis of Mission/Values work with staff and Vestry. Thereafter Vestry can discuss next steps. John to share revised notes with Outreach committee/Chair including video with the hope this will help shape outreach coordinator position and website presence. Finally a summer task force to convene to plan for November Outreach week.

3. Vicar's Report- Will shared St. Stephen's attendance trends via a new graphic (courtesy of Robert Birdsey) showing a 14% increase for Holy Week over 2023.

Upcoming Events: Ministry Night: May 2; Next Meeting: September 12

50th Anniversary of Women in Ministry Programming: April 26-28 with a full slate of past and current women preachers

Palmer Hall Summer Transition Logistics- possibly offer a "soft space" for 10AM Service for young families.

Summer program starts May 26

**D. New Business:** John Rohrs presented the 2024 proposed outreach grants on behalf of James Driscoll, Chair of Outreach Grants Committee

Amount requested \$176,200; Amount Approved \$125,000

5 Areas of Criteria for the Committee include:

1- East End Involvement 2- Women and Children Focused 3- State of Financial Stewardship 4- Is there a Spiritual Component? Not necessary 5- St. Stephen's parishioners involvement

Move to approve- Outreach budget was approved.

Sacred Pause- Tuesday April 30 for the Seniors of St. Stephen's- Celebration of seniors

May 5

Respectfully Submitted,  
Whitney Van Der Hyde, Register