

**Vestry of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church  
Richmond, Virginia  
Minutes of the September 24, 2024 Meeting**

The following vestry members were present: Jeff Johnson, Bill Davis, Andy Luke, Anne Pinion, Whitney Van Der Hyde, John Crowder, Gayle Royals, Randy Seibert, Robert Birdsey, Chris Smith, Greta Kidd, Mary Ashburn Pearson

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

**Opening Devotions**

John Rohrs led opening prayer.

**Approval of Minutes**

The June 25, 2024 meeting minutes were amended with the removal of Randy Seibert's name from those present. Following, the minutes were approved by voice vote.

**A. Focus Time**

1- Financial Reserves—Treasurer Chris Smith provided background and led the discussion on designated funds and reserves. He shared that the finance committee has begun its discussion and analysis and will provide recommendations for the vestry to consider and vote on (hopefully) by the October vestry meeting. All vestry members are invited to attend the October 17 finance meeting at 4 p.m.

Chris shared that we want to be aligned on key decisions such as how we are thinking about operational and capital reserves over the long-term including sources of funding and time frame. In addition, the finance committee is considering the need for a comprehensive facilities assessment to inform mid- and long-term needs and potential future funding.

2- Outreach Director Job Description—John Rohrs presented the job description and current status on the position. John talked with major stakeholders within St. Stephen's (outreach, etc.) as well as with our nonprofit partners soliciting input on key position attributes. A discussion ensued regarding timing and funding. Vestry members and clergy share support of a long-term commitment to this position as well as desires for a balanced budget.

**B. Ongoing Business**

1. Junior Warden Report—Jeff Johnson provided an update on Dogwood Preschool. They have kicked off their second year successfully with 107 students enrolled. He then provided an update on playground renovation/update needs. A report and a few plans have been proposed and the Dogwood leadership are invited to the November vestry meeting to present and discuss the recommendations. Any renovations would be mutually agreed on by

the vestry and Dogwood with a vestry vote. The lease provides for shared contributions by mutual agreement for anything above \$5,000. Any proposed changes will be vetted by Maintenance/Facilities committee with insight by the Family Ministry Guild. It was stated that the playground is a shared asset and benefits our children and young families tremendously. Some of the playground equipment needs attention and refurbishment.

2. Treasurer's Report—Fred Staley presented the financials and stated that while some items are over or under budget based on timing, we are doing well. July was our highest revenue month which historically is one of our lower months due to summer travel. Some speculated this may be due to the mailed mid-year statement.

3. Executive Director's Report—Fred Staley also shared that Ministry Platform is live and in use. Parish facing integration with the app will begin after the new year.

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

1. Senior Warden—Anne Pinion presented an update on the vestry nominating committee. They are currently working to secure the two co-chairs and ask that the vestry provide names for at-large members. The committee consists of 2 co-chairs, outgoing vestry class (in this year there are 5 members) and 6 additional at large members. The committee will meet during the fall, presenting a slate to the vestry in November with a request for a vote at that time.

2. Rector's Report—John Rohrs provided an update on the new Connect and Serve initiative. The focus was to create a more curated and concentrated process for new and existing parishioners by which they can engage and connect within St. Stephen's. The staff and clergy invested large amounts of time and energy creating Connect and Serve and look forward to working within this new framework through strategically-planned appeals. Already, there is a very positive response from parishioners with over 126 sign-ups for small groups with additional newcomer commitments and additional participation.

John also presented an overview and the plan for the *Week of Compassion* November 9-17. This week provides a host of engagement opportunities and service for all parishioners including carefully planned opportunities for the youngest to the oldest. The committee desires to showcase St. Stephen's outreach efforts and celebrate our partners as well as engage our parishioners in service. Additionally, the week serves as an opportunity for reflection and creates space for us all to come together during what is expected to be a difficult time of strife and anxiety for our country.

3. Vicar's Report—Will Stanley gave an update on the annual giving campaign, *Love in Action*. The quiet phase of the appeal began this week with 120 packets sent to parishioners serving in leadership. The vestry are asked to return their pledge by October 8.

October 20 is the public-facing launch and will actively run through November 24. Many activities will take place including live testimonials during all services, taped testimonials to be sent out over the campaign timeframe as well as a Bar West event for young adult to late 40's age range. In addition a screening of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's video *A Case for Love* will tie into the campaign and will take place October 28. The goal is 875 donors with \$2.75 million.

Finally, the Family Ministry Night was well attended with many new and returning faces.

Next vestry meeting is October 22, 2024.

### **Closing Prayer**

**Respectfully Submitted,**  
Whitney Van Der Hyde  
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