

St. Stephens Church Vestry Covenant

The St. Stephens Vestry covenants with the St. Stephens community, specifically the congregation, clergy, lay ministers, and staff that it will be a visible and engaged resource for the entire community.

The Vestry will empower, encourage, openly communicate with, and support the entire St. Stephens's community. Together with clergy and staff, the Vestry commits to enhancing the spiritual growth and the financial health of the parish. By embracing these responsibilities, the Vestry covenants that it will:

1. Focus on Christ's love and listen to the Holy Spirit in the performance of its duties.
2. Solicit input from the congregation, listening with respect and empathy to suggestions and ideas that are raised, and then dealing with them carefully in a timely manner.
3. Practice personal responsibility by:
 - Engaging in the life of the parish, through regular worship, and participation in church ministries,
 - Dealing directly and face-to-face with conflicts and issues,
 - Seeking solutions and being open to compromise,
 - Faithfully supporting decisions reached by the Rector and Vestry,
 - Speaking truthfully, candidly, and without casting blame.
4. Discern the mission of the church for the purpose of empowering its ministries and the people engaged in them.
5. Minister faithfully to the St. Stephen's congregation by:
 - Communicating its decisions,
 - Assessing the spiritual health of the Church,
 - Exercising sound financial stewardship,
 - Setting annual objectives and longer term goals,
 - Seeking broad input from congregants,
 - Prayerfully orchestrating change when necessary,
 - Honoring the time of its members and others,
 - Periodically and in a cooperative manner, assessing clergy and vestry performance,
 - Respecting the work of the church committees, staff, lay ministers, and other constituencies,
 - Reviewing and modifying governance practices as necessary.