

**Holy Spirit Vestry Meeting
Minutes for December 11, 2024
5:30 p.m., Parish Hall**

Present: Terri Ann Grotzinger, Co-Rector; Gretchen Strohmaier, Co-Rector; Molly Bowler, Sr. Warden; Charlie Swannack, Jr. Warden; James Wiley, Treas.; Audrey Murray, Clerk; Alice Caplins; Lance Collister; Mark Dvarishkis; Kara Hanson; Glenn Hladek; Kate Laney

Absent: Bill Drummond; Blake Lineweaver

Guest(s): Casey Dunning, Executive Director, Missoula Interfaith Collaborative

Casey Dunning, Executive Director of the Missoula Interfaith Collaborative (MIC)

Casey said he is currently visiting each of the congregations that partner with the MIC. In an effort to deepen relationships and identify future projects, Casey's office recently sent a survey to congregations asking what service and social justice work they are currently engaged in, what work they would like to be engaged in, and what assets and resources they can share with other members of the faith community. Through the fall, MIC staff engaged faith leaders from diverse congregations in a program called Dialogue across Difference. The goal was to build stronger relationships between partner congregations.

Casey also noted that existing MIC programs—Missoula Works, Family Promise, the Housing Advocate Network (HAN) and Missoula Works Ventures—are ongoing. He complimented Holy Spirit parishioners for their involvement and support of Family Promise and HAN in particular. HAN has reduced the number of people seeking shelter at Family Promise by half! HAN works with families to find alternatives to the Family Promise shelter.

Casey recently met with the Social Concerns Committee. Terri and Jim noted that Holy Spirit is up-to-date with the financial commitment to MIC. Casey invited Holy Spirit Parishioners to the next MIC Action Network Meeting at 12:00 p.m. on January 28, 2025 at the Christian Life Center.

Opening Prayer was led by Lance Collister.

A motion was made and approved to accept the November 13, 2024 Vestry Meeting Minutes with the following corrections:

- Correct the spelling of Kirk Johnson's name. It is Kirk, not Kurt.
- Under Building and Grounds Update, correct the paragraph beginning, Storm damage repair Delete "Legacy won't be able to remove a stain on the sanctuary floor ...". Replace with, "Charlie was unable to tell if the floor was any worse under the damaged roof than it is elsewhere. So, we are not doing anything to the floor."
- Also, under Building and Grounds Update, note that Wade Hoyt will begin the roof repair next week, not "this week" as is written.

Stewardship Campaign Update – Molly Bowler

The stewardship campaign will conclude by the end of the month. While the number of pledges has dropped slightly, the amount pledged is significantly greater than it was last year at this time. A notable aspect of the pledges received so far is the number of newcomers who have pledged. Household variations over last year appear to be normal ebb and flow that comes as individuals' lives change over time. Direct outreach to people who haven't pledged in the past was attempted in this year's campaign. So far, this strategy does not appear to have attracted new pledges.

Financial Report – Jim Wiley

Jim reported that income for November was well over budget. The parish received an unrestricted gift of \$20,000. Plate income and the annual Holiday Market revenue also exceeded expectations.

Operating expenses were over budget. The Social Concerns Committee spent most of its remaining outreach budget during November. There were miscellaneous expenses related to receipt of the new piano and advertising. Building and grounds was over budget due to ongoing maintenance and a slight increase in the cost of insurance.

So, leaving aside the courtyard project, through November we continue to be in very good shape with the operations budget. Through November, again excluding courtyard work, we are doing much better than our revised budget. On the Balance Sheet, the large increase in cash reflects monies received from our insurance claim. These will be invested with D. A. Davidson in a money market fund or similar liquid asset until needed.

Terri shared that the gift described above was an unexpected and very generous memorial made in remembrance of a beloved friend. The giver wishes to remain anonymous.

Jim acknowledged that the new piano needs to be added to our current insurance policy for coverage. The addition may result in a small increase in the policy premium.

A motion was made and approved to accept the November Financial Report.

Budget Presentation and Discussion

The proposed budget was sent to vestry members for review prior to the meeting. The proposal is an estimate based on pledges made for 2025 and trends recorded in 2024. Weekly plate giving is expected to remain strong. The Montessori School has already confirmed they will be at Holy Spirit through 2025. The anticipated Spring and Holiday market revenues are also estimates and are intentionally lower than recent market revenues. Money will be drawn from investments to pay for the planned courtyard improvements, and what remains in the Blair Fund will be drawn down to cover maintenance.

Compensation has been increased to allow for the 2.5 % yearly cost of living allowance used by the diocese. Total compensation will be substantially less than in 2024, due to Terri's generous choice to continue serving the parish without compensation.

In terms of operating expenses, there are a few lines worth mentioning. The allowance for PushPay and copier fees are increased over 2024 to reflect needs and usage. We have a church school again, so the proposed 2025 budget shows an increase for the purchase of Godly Play curriculum and materials. Parish Life amounts are increased to provide funds for parish events. At the request of the Co-rectors, their discretionary funds have been reduced, with a balance set aside for the local Helping Hands ministry, which works with area motels to provide reduced rates for emergency housing. Going forward, individuals and families who approach Gretchen and/or Terri emergency housing will be referred to Helping Hands. This change makes the Co-rectors' discretionary funds go further. And, also at the request of the Co-rectors, a fund has been added to cover some delegate expenses for the annual Diocesan Convention. Previously delegates have been expected to pay all of their own expenses, leaving some unable to afford participating in the convention.

As for outreach, support for the Missoula Interfaith Collaborative is increased over 2024. The new amount represents 1% of our budget, *after subtracting the diocesan allocation, any capital expense, and what we dedicate to outreach*. This may serve as a good formula for calculating our MIC obligation in future years.

With the help of an unnamed donor, a further \$2,000 will be added to the line item for advertising.

This proposed budget will be voted on at the January vestry meeting. At that time the final 2025 annual giving amount will be known.

The budget presentation was followed by discussion regarding the ongoing maintenance costs of our heating system (thermostats, boiler, plumbing, etc.). A suggestion was made to table the discussion at this time and appoint a subcommittee of the vestry to explore whether eventually replacing all or part of the heating system could be viable.

Building & Grounds – Charlie Swannack

Replacement of shingles on the west side of the sanctuary has been delayed until spring. The shingles should arrive by February. The repair work will be timed to avoid Holy Week, the spring market and other parish events scheduled in the sanctuary and courtyard. Charlie looked into cost for replacing shingles on the east side of the sanctuary. The estimate for replacing shingles on the east side is an additional \$38,000 and not covered by insurance, as the damaged area is restricted to the west side.

Noise from the heating system continues to disrupt Sunday services. Charlie traced the sound to the on/off valve on the radiator in the organ room. Cost for replacing the valve is \$890.

A motion was made and approved to replace the valve on the radiator in the organ room for the cost of \$890.

The damaged pew has been repaired and returned to the sanctuary. Charlie noted that all of the pews are heavily worn. Cost for refinishing all of the pews would be \$1100 apiece and we would have to deliver the pews to the refinisher.

Glenn reported on his conversation with Ben Wise at Missoula in Motion. The City of Missoula will provide one bike rack for \$25. The fee includes installation. Glenn will work with Bill Drummond and Kent Watson to identify where the bike rack can be located in a new courtyard design.

Bill Drummond submitted a written report on the courtyard redesign project. His report is attached below.

Mutual Ministry Review

Jim Wiley began the review by suggesting these questions guide the discussion:

1. Are the various ministries at Holy Spirit (more specifically pastoral care, welcoming newcomers, community outreach, church administration, upkeep of building and grounds) as effective as they could be?
2. What progress has been made toward the goals set at the 2024 Vestry Retreat?
3. Have we dealt effectively with unexpected situations?
4. Are our co-rectors comfortable with the new leadership model?

Vestry members then discussed topics including impacts on staff; the general sense that worship is going well and recent novel approaches (theater, poetry, visual aids for meditation, etc.) have been well received; status of pastoral care; effects of the co-rectorship on lay involvement and leadership; progress toward Vestry goals; and more.

In addition to preparation of a MMR report, the Vestry discussed several next steps, including:

- A decision by Terri to move her “in office” days to Tuesday and Wednesday to provide more clergy coverage and better align with the meetings of the Children’s Worship group.
- Developing a small group of Vestry people (from Holy Spirit and St. Paul’s) to be a sounding board for Gretchen as she balances the work of the two parishes.

Housing Allowance – Jim Wiley

A motion was made and approved to accept the housing allowances as presented in the document “Housing Allowances for 2025” attached below.

Brief Items and updates:

- Molly and Charlie recently met with Bishop Stebbins about best practices for parish leadership transitions. As we know, Terri has retired and is serving voluntarily as co-rector. The co-rectorship will dissolve when Terri steps aside in mid-2026, with agreement on this from Rev. Gretchen. Bishop Stebbins recommends the vestry officially begin a transition discernment process in February 2025. Gretchen has significant ties to both Holy Spirit and St. Paul's. The wardens have asked to know by the beginning of February 2025 if Gretchen is interested in continuing her ministry at Holy Spirit. What she feels called to do in terms of her ministry at Holy Spirit will be important to deciding what type of search process is required of us. If needed, a search committee will be formed this spring. The goal is to have a permanent rector in place by July 2026. The bishop was very positive and encouraging about the ability of Holy Spirit to attract new clergy. In terms of the budget, there will be little search expense for 2025. The following year, 2026, will require funds for advertising. Canon Mikayla Dunfee will work with the vestry to guide transition and search efforts, with further guidance from Bishop Stebbins.
- Bishop Stebbins will meet with the vestry on Saturday, Dec. 11, at 4:00 in the Guild Room
- Sunday is the bishop's visit to Holy Spirit. Her visit will include confirmation and coffee hour with parishioners.
- The group that has been discussing issues and options related to the use of screens in the sanctuary has concluded work. Gretchen will summarize the discussions and submit the summary to the vestry at the January vestry meeting.
- Children's worship will be included each Sunday in Advent.

The meeting concluded with a prayer at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Audrey Murray

Audrey Murray
Clerk of the Vestry

Short report on the Courtyard project 12/09/2024 (submitted by Bill Drummond)

Bill Drummond has participated in a several meetings with Kent Watson, individually and with Clergy, to determine what prior planning was completed and to get a sense of how to move forward. The Vestry approved the outline of a plan for the grounds around HSP four years ago, but it was never really acted upon primarily due to COVID. When the recent sewer project took priority, that led to the replacement of the ramp and sidewalks. The loss of the spruce tree in July also greatly changed the planning landscape.

Bill initiated a non-scientific survey over last Sunday and this coming Sunday to get a sense of the Congregation's desired uses of the Courtyard area. He will compile the results and share them with the Vestry and Congregation.

The highest priority items are installing at least part of an irrigation system, changing the lighting, and screening the window- and stairwells. Additionally, we will be investigating how to temporarily treat the courtyard area so it will be useful next spring/summer before the final plan is completed and implemented. Of course, we will have to figure out how to pay for any. Several comments: This needs to be a Vestry-led process with input from the Congregation. It also needs to be a transparent process with regular communication from the Vestry to avoid the fallout we have experienced from the installation of screens in the Sanctuary. Finally, drawing upon the expertise of Kent Watson and other Parishioners, we need additional Vestry members to participate in this effort. Audrey and Mark (and Gretchen) graciously agreed to work on this project earlier this year. While their advice and counsel are deeply appreciated, they are rotating off the Vestry and we will need some new Vestry volunteers.

Housing Allowances for 2025

The Vestry of Holy Spirit Episcopal Church on December 11, 2024, after discussing the amount to be paid to the Rev. Gretchen Strohmaier as a parsonage allowance, on motion duly made and seconded, adopted the following resolution:

Whereas the Rev. Gretchen Strohmaier is employed as minister of the Gospel of Holy Spirit Episcopal Church, Missoula, Montana, Diocese of Montana, which does not provide a residence for her, the Vestry resolves that of the total compensation of \$44,232 to be paid to the Rev. Gretchen Strohmaier in 2025, that \$23,068 be designated as a parsonage allowance within the meaning of that term as used in Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

2025 Housing Allowance approval of the amount specified by the Archdeacon. (According to the Archdeacon, Co-Rectors and Vestry are the ones to set the amount, based on whether they are applying COLA to other clergy housing allowances.). The Vestry of Holy Spirit Episcopal Church on December 11, 2024, after discussing the amount to be paid to the Ven. Dorcie Dvarishkis as a parsonage allowance, on motion duly made and seconded, adopted the following resolution:

Whereas the Ven. Dorcie Dvarishkis is employed as a minister of the Gospel of Holy Spirit Episcopal Church, Missoula, Montana, Diocese of Montana, which does not provide a residence for her, the Vestry resolves that of the total compensation of \$318 to be paid to the Ven. Dorcie Dvarishkis in 2025, that \$318 be designated as a parsonage allowance within the meaning of that term as used in Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.