

**Holy Spirit Vestry Meeting**  
**Minutes for Wednesday, April 9, 2025**  
5:30 p.m., Parish Hall

**Present:** Molly Bowler (Sr. Warden), Charlie Swannack (Jr. Warden), Rev. Terri Ann Grotzinger (Co-Rector), Beverley Sherman, Patti Beckley, Rev. Gretchen Strohmaier (Co-Rector), Alice Caplins, Keith Kuhn, Blake Lineweaver (Clerk), Jim Taylor, Jim Wiley, Lance Collister

**Opening Prayer:** Jim Taylor opened the meeting with a prayer from Psalm 69.

**New Rector Search:**

Bill Drummond discussed the current timeline of the search committee, working back from August 2026. The search is looking optimistic – a significant portion of graduating seminarians (~25%) identify as LGBTQIA+ and Holy Spirit's open and affirming position is attractive. Furthermore, seeking a full-time position is also attractive. There are more "searchers" than congregations looking for a full-time rector.

Bill is currently forming a search committee; he is at seven of nine positions filled and is aiming to represent a diverse selection of ages, family compositions, time attending Holy Spirit, etc. He's done extensive research on HSP's previous search committee minutes and process. The committee will be as transparent as possible in its screening process while ensuring healthy confidentiality with respect to candidates. By June 2025, the first step for the committee will be to create a survey of the parish that will help gauge the collective vision and demographics of the congregation. This will be used to build out a parish profile as a recruitment tool. From there, likely this fall/winter, the committee will boost the search through advertising, including but not limited to HSP's website, clergy and parish connections, etc. Once there's a core group of applicants (3-4), the committee will conduct an interview process then provide a recommendation to Vestry by August 2026. Candidates will be pre-vetted by the Bishop before being presented to Vestry.

Canon Day acknowledged that there is no such thing as a "failed search." Conducting the interview process in a condensed timeframe will limit potential attrition of candidates. The cost for the search is still undetermined. Some of the costs will be web design, hotel and meal costs for visits from applicants and Canon Day, printed materials, etc. Jim Taylor asked if the vetting process could happen first when approaching candidates, and Bill will investigate this further. Jim also suggested that the employment offer includes a kind of housing assistance where funds from the Foundation support a mortgage and then HSP would receive that equity back when the house sells. Vestry should consider a plan for an interim in the case of a search falling flat.

**Previous Meeting Minutes:**

*A motion was made and approved to accept the meeting minutes from March 12.*

**Financial Report:**

Income continues to exceed expectations. We had a major jump in Annual Giving during March, possibly the result of economic uncertainty. Annual giving was \$48,400 over plan and through March we have received 46% of Annual Giving compared to 38% in prior years. Plate giving continued above plan as well; we received \$2,800 from the Montana Community Foundation and applied \$2,650 Blair funds to cover repairs and maintenance during the month. Through March, our total Income is \$117,800 over plan. We can be sure that trend will not continue! Expenses were again quite reasonable during the month.

- Compensation expense was on plan and is \$1,300 below plan through March.
- General expenses were above plan in March due to a) Earlier than expected payment of our M.I.C. dues (\$3,500) and b) \$900 above plan spending on Office items (to be investigated). Through March, general expenses are on plan.
- Buildings & Grounds expenses were also over plan for the month, due to the repairs mentioned before, and higher than expected utility and snow removal expenses, due mostly, we feel, to weather conditions. We will examine the utility overage more closely. Through March, Buildings & Grounds expenses are over 20% below plan.
- Payment of the Diocesan assessment is on plan. For March and year-to-date.

Through the first quarter of the year, our operating surplus is well over plan by \$124,700.

Below the Operations line, it will be no surprise that our investments were affected in March. We had Income net of expenses of \$2,850 offset by unrealized losses on investment of \$7,850. Year to date, we are still positive on our investments but will not try to predict how that might end up!

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

**Building and Grounds:**

- The roof maintenance and inside repairs are on track for June. If scaffolding goes up, the contractor will remove them if work extends over a weekend.
- The downstairs bathroom will be fixed the second week of July.
- The new speakers for the chancel have been ordered.
- The courtyard committee has met twice to discern how it will spend its allocated funds, \$17,000. There are two sprinkler bids (full implementation of 128 spray heads for \$13,780 or partial coverage for \$7,480).
- Jim will discuss with Kent if we can have a proposed landscape plan by May 30 or connect the Vestry with a landscape planner he'd recommend. This would include "foundational shrubbery," which would line the outside of the church's buildings.
- When we have a bid for a lawn seeder, Charlie will send the bid via email for a virtual vote from Vestry.

*A motion was made and approved to purchase the partial sprinkler coverage for \$7,480.*

**Easter Hospitality:** Glenn shared the spreadsheet of current food items and prep times covered by Vestry. Current sign-ups are great! Please list common allergens (dairy, nuts, meat, etc.) on your food items.

**Screen Policy:** Molly, Bill, Rev. Terri, and Rev. Gretchen created a recommended policy for screen usage in the worship space. This includes:

- Move the screens against the wall (when not in use) as it makes them less obtrusive
- Pursue a middle-of-the-road usage of the screens
- Prioritize readable, high-quality images
- Encourage thoughtful experimentation with the screens as part of the liturgy
- Use intentionally in targeted situations if they add value to the worship experience
- Encourage use of the screens for appropriate special events outside of worship
- We do not intend for the screens to be a replacement for the service leaflets
- The screens may not be most beneficial when they are used as a teaching tool
- The screens should be seen as one tool among many. We encourage the use of a variety of tools and modalities within the context of worship to effectively reach a broader range of worshipers.

*A motion was made and approved to approve the screen policy as presented.*

**Retreat Follow-up:** Molly sent out the Vestry retreat notes from last week and urged the group to consider what actionable items feel appropriate to address current problems facing our community. The retreat focused on three main areas for focusing parishioners' time and energy over the next year: Soft Landing/Immigrant needs, Missoula Food Bank, or Housing Assistance, potentially through Missoula Interfaith Collaborative.

Rev. Gretchen recommended conducting a "World Café" style discussion to help educate parishioners' on community needs and gauge the appetite for meeting these needs. While individual members are committing their time and treasures widely to community needs, this effort would be synthesizing these efforts in a collective, concerted way through HSP modelling the theme "Act with Mercy and Compassion."

- Jim Wiley will collect information from Missoula Food Bank; Glenn for Soft Landing; and Gretchen will connect with Lucia and Dorcie on Housing Assistance. The goal is to collect this information by the end of April.
- Clergy will aim to initiate this effort with the congregation during the sermon on May 11.
- The presentation of topics and collecting feedback will take place during the service on May 18.
- Attendees can note which need feels most pressing to them, and the Vestry will ultimately decide which need and chosen organization will be engaged for further coordination and partnership development.

**Brief Items & Updates:**

- Fireside Chat: A constructive and vulnerable conversation was had on April 8 with about 35 participants gathering thoughts, feelings and concerns. Clergy will be listening for feedback and interest to see if another opportunity would be worthwhile.
- Women's Retreat: Currently sitting at 16 registrants with a great program ahead!
- Website + New Soundings Blog: The first blog post is up on the website with several other articles in the queue.
- Godly Play: The infrastructure is coming together on who is doing what, what lessons are coming up, and developing materials steadily. Leaders are committed and checking in regularly and will look to presenting during a service in the future.

**Closing:** Rev. Gretchen closed the meeting with a prayer of gratitude for creativity, collaboration, and community at HSP. Meeting adjourned at 7:31pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Blake Lineweaver*

Blake Lineweaver  
Clerk of the Vestry