

Holy Spirit Vestry Meeting
Minutes for Wednesday, October 8, 2025
4:00 p.m., Parish Hall

Present: Molly Bowler (Sr. Warden), Rev. Gretchen Strohmaier (Co-Rector), Terri Grotzinger (Co-Rector) Jim Wiley (Treasurer), Patti Beckley, Lance Collister, Glenn Hladek, Jim Taylor, Julie Benson, Beverley Sherman, Charlie Swannack, Keith Kuhn, Alice Caplins

Opening Prayer: Bev opened the meeting with a prayer at 4.00pm.

New Rector Search: A written report was provided on key qualities for the new rector, per survey results and feedback sessions with the parish. Molly asked Vestry to consider engaging Kevin Jones, a real estate attorney who works with the Swannacks, to prepare the mortgage assistance documents, for a fee of about \$1,000. *A motion to do so was made, seconded, and approved.*

Previous Meeting Minutes:

A motion was made, seconded, and approved to accept the meeting minutes from September 10.

Spiritual Boost: Gretchen led a discussion on feeling sustained or held by God, not necessarily protected, and explored this through experiences at church and in daily life. Participants shared various ways they feel supported, including tradition, family, music, nature, and physical activities. Gretchen then introduced the concept of "pocket altars," encouraging participants to create a personal reminder of these sustaining experiences and to identify one new practice to incorporate.

“Bad Faith” Response: Regarding the film screening, Gretchen reported that 75 people attended, which prompted some feedback from five parish members about presenting issues they felt verged on political. She emphasized the importance of continuing these conversations while maintaining the church's welcoming nature. The group discussed the need to provide ways to respond in support of core Christian values. We also discussed remembering social justice work is one aspect of our faith, balanced among a range of areas such as music, tradition, liturgy, community, etc.

Diocesan Convention Oct. 3-5: Of note: The diocese conducted a survey in 2018 and recently repeated it in 2025, showing a significant improvement in satisfaction with the diocese over six years. The next steps include analyzing the survey results, communicating them to churches, and holding Zoom sessions with deaneries to gather feedback for developing a strategic plan. The diocese also affirmed a resolution put forward by Holy Spirit addressing immigration, becoming the first in the country to do so.

Financial Report: Through three quarters of 2025 year-to-date financial numbers still look quite positive, with a surplus of \$74,845, which is \$70,436 better than budget. Looking at expected income and expenses for the rest of the year, I see no reason why we should have any major shortfall for 2025. However, looking at the month of September alone, as in August, the financial report doesn't look pretty, as the effects of prepaid annual gifts plus capital improvement spending (explained below) reflected in the month's results, a deficit of \$18,913, versus a budgeted surplus of \$15,011.

Looking at income, Annual Gifts were once again below budget by \$20,175 reflecting the prepayments we saw earlier in the year, and Plate offerings were \$1,983 over budget for the month. Through September, Income is still \$71,073 over budget.

On the expense side, Total Compensation was \$1,290 over budget for the month, given payments for Supply Clergy and Compensation Support (Pastoral Care and Godly Play). Through September, Compensation is \$2,928 over budget and will likely be around \$6,000 over budget by year end (primarily the impact of the same items as this month).

General Operations was above budget, by \$958, due entirely to acceleration of Outreach support to various organizations (including schools in Ramallah/West Bank and Togo, and support for the Al-Ahli hospital in Gaza and the Poverello Center. Through September, General Operations expenses are well below budget (\$10,607).

Buildings and Grounds was \$8,463 above budget for the month, reflecting the Vestry's decision to plant shrubs and flowers and also including, apparently, the \$5,000 deductible from our July, 2024 courtyard incident. We will be doing a thorough examination of all of our maintenance and capital spending to ensure that we have no more surprises this year. However, we know that we have issues with the back stairwell (as on-going problem).

Through September, it would appear that we will likely be around \$12,000 to \$14,000 under budget, but still with a healthy surplus... which will be very helpful as we deal with our new Rector search.

A motion was made, seconded, and approved to accept the financial report as presented.

A motion to approve the Episcopal Church-sponsored health insurance for Judy Parock in 2026 was made, seconded and approved. As well, budget planning for 2026 will take place in November.

Building & Grounds:

Per Charlie Swannack, recent activity includes:

- Rocky Mtn Gutters will look at gutter on west side of office.
- On 9/9 Garden City Plumbing fixed the main faucet in the kitchen \$780.
- Hand-wash sink in kitchen had faucets replaced by Garden City Plumbing after it caused a small flood in the basement.
- Grease trap under main sink in kitchen was cleaned in late August.
- Edward Zavaelle repaired basement bathroom floor for \$2,171.
- Main church ceiling still needs to be done. We are waiting for a special piece of wood that requires a special saw to cut it. Then it will be stained and we can proceed with hanging the chandelier and repairing the last part of the ceiling. That would finish the repairs required for the tree falling.
- A light in the church/chancel is burned out. The light is at the apex of the ceiling; we will ask Hoyt Homes to replace all of these chancel lights that are up on the ceiling. We will replace them with LED so that we will not have to deal with them for years.
- Guild room windows were fixed. They were difficult to open, John Hess oiled them and now they are easier to open.
- Jim Clark fixed the slow-draining sink in the bathroom by the choir room.
- Charlie hung a no trespassing sign and repainted over graffiti over the back staircase. This is at least the third time this year that area has been painted to cover graffiti.
- Metalworks MT gave bid to cover the back staircase: \$11,853. The cost of the window wells is \$2,185 @. (Charlie has sought out a different bid from another fabricator – more info to come.)

Courtyard landscaping follow-up – Parish Development will plan limited fundraising effort in early 2026.

Renewal of covenant with Rio Grande Borderlands Ministry –

A motion was made, seconded, and approved to renew the covenant using the budgeted \$1,000.

Social Concerns/HB 278 legal challenge – This Montana law that allows local law enforcement to support ICE efforts is being challenged. Social Concerns will come back Vestry with recommended efforts, such signing onto an amicus brief with other faith organizations.

Act With Mercy & Compassion/Food Bank – There will be a tour of the Missoula Food Bank at the end of the month. We donated 28 lbs. of food in September and are working to increase that in October. We'll hosting a donation drive in November where parishioners can bring a frozen turkey to give to the food bank. We're also doing letter-stuffing in October that will save the food bank considerable expenses where they typically hire this out.

Vestry Nominations – We have a short list gathered and Molly/Rev. Gretchen will be reaching out.

Stewardship Campaign – Stewardship Sunday is November 3, and speakers are lined up to share their "why" on giving to HSP for the remainder of the stewardship campaign. We are using an "Advent Calendar" to share with parishioners and educate them about day-to-day costs operating HSP. Postcards, emails, and letters will complete our efforts with a thank-you card going out the end of October.

Brief Items –

- Terri's back!
- Inquirers Class is kicking off well and bringing out great stories and rich discussion; these are open to all, not just newcomers.
- Women's Group – Living Our Faith Together has started up again. Similar style to Inquirers, these are open discussions that have been well-received! Still honing a time that works best.
- Parking Lot Clean-up tentatively Oct. 25/Don Gisselbeck,
- Holiday Market Nov. 7 & 8: Vestry members requested to help with clean-up.
- Newcomers Gathering Sunday, Nov. 9: A great way to get to know new faces at HSP and gather information.

Closing Prayer and Adjournment: Rev. Terri closed the meeting with a prayer. Meeting adjourned at 5:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Blake Lineweaver

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Clerk of the Vestry