

Holy Spirit Vestry Meeting
Minutes for Wednesday, November 12, 2025
5:30pm, Parish Hall

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

Opening Prayer: Lance opened the meeting with a prayer at 5:30pm.

Motivations for Church Attendance: In some spiritual exploration, Gretchen presented six, often-cited reasons that promote parishioners attending church: 1) tradition; 2) ritual; 3) evangelism; 4) meaning and purpose; 5) social justice; 6) experience divine presence. Vestry members expressed their “why” for attending church.

New Rector Search: Bill Drummond gave an update on the Search Committee’s progress. A draft of the parish profile was created on October 31. The committee is working on publishing a parish profile that will be posted on the church’s website and used for marketing the church to potential applicants. The goal is to complete this by December 1. There will also be letters drafted to deans of seminary schools for them to distribute to graduating seminarians. Another letter will be sent to the parish, aiming for December 15.

The job application will be open the second week of January and remain open for six weeks, closing February 15. The bishop will then screen applicants through a background check. There will then be a week to winnow applicants down to a top five, then scheduling in-person visits for the top three. The goal is to schedule visits for the first three Sundays after Easter (which lands on April 5, 2026). Vestry discussed keeping the application window brief with quick response as to keep motivated applicants “on the line.”

Interim Discussion: Keith and Jim shared a proposal regarding a prospective interim for the summer months. There are two options: 1) engaging Summer Rector for June 1 through August 31, 2026; and 2) creating a schedule of supply clergy for the same period and/or after a summer rector.

Some considerations:

- The most significant cost for a summer rector would likely be housing; \$22,000 for a summer rector *with* housing.
- We would want to find an individual who would take on being both a homilist and celebrant for our service.
- Pastoral care in either case would be limited; lay involvement would be crucial here, though clergy is still needed for administering last rights.

Vestry advised Keith and Jim to further explore Option 1 for a Summer Rector.

Previous Meeting Minutes:

A motion was made, seconded, and approved to accept the meeting minutes from October 8.

Financial Report: Through October 2025, year-to-date financial numbers still look quite positive, with an operating surplus of \$84,100, which is \$76,000 better than budget. In addition, we have positive results

from our Investment/non-operating account, both in terms of interest earned net of fees (\$24,730 year-to-date) and of unrealized capital gains/appreciation (\$36,240 through October). Financially, we are in as positive a position as we could be prior to the changes we know are coming (and given recent difficult years).

Looking at the Income for the month of October alone, Annual Gifts were once again below budget by \$8,700 reflecting the prepayments we saw earlier in the year, and Plate offerings were \$1,600 over budget for the month, but what really impacted income was an unexpected and unrestricted gift of \$15,000. Through October, Income is \$72,760 over budget.

On the expense side, Total Compensation was slightly (\$345) over Budget due to Vestry-approved Compensation Support (Pastoral Care and Godly Play). Through September, Compensation is \$3,273 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 slightly (\$280) under for the month, with accelerated Outreach gifts offset by over-budgeting of copier expenses. Through October, General Operations expenses continue well below budget (\$10,890). Buildings and Grounds was almost \$4,000 under budget for the month, but you will notice some strange numbers here. We carefully reviewed all of the spending on repairs, improvements and reclassified some spending.

Year to date, we have spent over \$12,000 on what are essentially routine repairs – toilets, carpeting in the basement, kitchen sinks, the furnace and such (accounts 62062 and 62067). And, we have spent \$29,354 on Capital Improvements (account 62063). The second of these is over budget (approximately \$10,000). Nearly all of the over budget items were approved by the Vestry, including security cameras, improved speakers for the chancel area of the sanctuary and Courtyard landscaping, but the largest item (\$5,384 was an adjustment made to our insurance for last year's storm event, related to expected depreciation – I am investigating further).

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 for the new Rector search.

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

Jim has also prepared a preliminary 2026 budget that Charlie, Molly, Connie, Judy, and Nancy are reviewing. Once they've approved, Jim will send a draft to Vestry for review ahead of the December Vestry meeting.

Stewardship Campaign – The stewardship campaign is moving along with personalized outreach in the coming weeks; current pledges are healthy reflect our supportive and generous parish community.

Building & Grounds – Molly gave an update for Charlie on several small fixes in the last month. There will be future consideration of bids for a cover over the back stairwell.

Social Concerns/HB 278 legal challenge – This Montana law allows local law enforcement to support ICE efforts is being challenged. There is a countersuit in Helena. After further investigating ways HSP can support the challenge, supplying an amicus brief with other churches and organizations would be helpful. No financial considerations would be needed for HSP to join or help foster such an amicus brief.

A motion was made, seconded, and approved for HSP to pursue the proposed amicus brief.

Act With Mercy & Compassion/Food Bank – The Food Bank Committee has created several ways of supporting Missoula Food Bank this month. HSP will host a turkey drive ahead of Thanksgiving. There will be two events for HSP volunteers to stuff donation letters that will save the Food Bank roughly \$1,000 in staff time; there will also be education events hosted by Creation Care on food waste, food insecurity, and theology related to food.

Jim Taylor shared an update on a coordinated effort to support the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes' Food Sovereignty program. HSP members helped assemble boxes for the Tribes' self-financed food security program in response to SNAP benefits being cancelled. There will also be a need for volunteers to help put together food boxes ahead of Thanksgiving, and Jim will send an email to organize volunteers.

Vestry Nominations – Two people, Anne Geiger and Mary Beth Journonnais, have agreed to serve in the new Vestry class and Patti Beckley has graciously said she will continue. We have one more candidate to meet with – more on this to come.

Brief Items –

- Holiday Market raised an impressive \$15,156.85 – this is always a big and fun effort by the parish; many thanks to the organizers, volunteers, and customers for making this fundraiser possible!
- There is a Newcomer's gathering on November 16
- Bishop Marty is visiting on Sunday, December 14 and will meet with Vestry on Saturday, December 13, at 4:30pm in the Guild Room
- Rev. Terri is lining up Christmas Services – there will be an outdoor service this year
- Marketing efforts continue with Roxy ads promoting Advent and Christmas services
- Dorcie is recruiting storytellers and doorkeepers for Godly Play
- Connie Gerke is leaving her role at HSP on February 1; HSP is looking for a replacement, hopefully with existing knowledge of QuickBooks and office assistance experience
- Lance will send information to Judy, and Molly about alternative, eco-friendly toilet paper options for HSP to consider
- The Montessori school at HSP gave a notice to Terri that they will move into a permanent home next fall 2026.

Closing Prayer and Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 7:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Blake Lineweaver

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Clerk of the Vestry