

Church of the Holy Cross
40700 W. Ten Mile Rd., Novi, MI 48375
Vestry Meeting Minutes – In Person
September 18, 2024

+ 6:05pm Rev. Ian Reed Twiss called the meeting to order.

Present: Rev. Ian Reed Twiss, Ed Happ, Tryn Hinkle, Gael Grossman, Pam Janson, Bruce Hinkle, Tim Lovelace, Karen Wang

Absent: Sherilyn Casiano, Chris Jamieson

+ 6:11 Check-in and Opening Prayer – Tryn

+ Gael Grossman made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of 8/07/24 as written, seconded by Ed Happ. A vote was held and the motion carried unanimously.

+ Karen Wang made a motion to approve the 9/18/24 meeting agenda as written, seconded by Tryn Hinkle. A vote was held and the motion carried unanimously.

+ 6:13 Decisions

+ Diocesan Apportionment: This year's amount is \$21,225. New requested apportionment for 2025 is \$22,738. Bruce says that the 2025 amount is based on the 2024 recalculated formula, which does not include the one-time construction bump. The formula is based on the average of three years (2021, 2022, 2023). Karen Wang made a motion to approve the apportionment of \$22,738 for the calendar year 2025, seconded by Ed Happ. A vote was held and the motion carried unanimously.

+ If we're paying this apportionment, we need to take advantage of everything the diocese offers. For example, we might be able to apply for diocese funds to cover some expenses. The College for Congregational Development was also subsidized by the diocese. The diocese publishes its budget, so we can see where our money is going. Teri serves on council, so we have her as a resource to learn more about diocesan programs.

+ 6:24 Discussions

+ Pledge Campaign: Bruce met with the bishop to learn about "Transformative Stewardship." We can be more creative in how we present stewardship - multi-sensory, include photos, more dynamic. Maybe we need a "church photographer" who shows up and takes fun action shots. Karen is making colorful posters with different prompts such as, "I love Holy Cross because..." and "If Holy Cross had a theme song, it would be..." ****Action Item: Bruce, Teri, and Ian will meet to discuss stewardship letter/photos and pie chart on Friday 9/20.****

+ What to do with memorial garden and kid's garden? Most of our dedicated gardeners are now unable to maintain the gardens. Children's garden is next to front door. Memorial garden is part of labyrinth.

Option #1: Keep the bench but replace the rest with sod.

Option #2: ground cover instead of sod.

Option #3: We can research a low-maintenance alternative, and get an expert opinion from Chris and another master gardener. We aren't ready to make a decision.

****Action item: Tryn will discuss with Sunday School team the possibility of making gardening a monthly lesson. Pam will contact a master gardener and ask Teri if our landscaper can do a fall clean-up/weed for us.****

- + 6:55 Inreach/Outreach Team Reports
- + Website team was derailed. Inreach and outreach have been growing organically because of our "awesome adventures." Karen has been developing educational content, scout programming will start in November. We can take a look back at what we've done this year - do a retrospective in January for the annual meeting. ****Action item: Pam and Ian will meet to plan an appreciative inquiry for the January meeting.****
- + 7:07 Financial Report (August) - Bruce
- + We have about \$30K in available funds, and our investment accounts have gone up. August was a low income month, but year-to-date, our expenses are tracking as expected. We are running a deficit budget this year, but the deficit is not as large as expected. Teri and Bruce have been discussing the possibility of a switch from the Flagstar credit card to an Amazon credit card that offers cash back on purchases. We are generally unhappy with Flagstar, and we are still considering moving to a different bank. Financial report accepted by acclamation.
- + 7:25 Ed shared a chart comparing our investments to the S&P 500. Our portfolio is underperforming and has high fees. Those are both reasons to seek a new investment firm. Vanguard has a number specifically for non-profit organizations: 888-888-7064. Vanguard has a reputation as the firm with the lowest fees. We can increase our income just by reducing the fees. Do we want one fund or two funds? One of our investment accounts is an "endowment" that was a mortuary gift. Karen Wang made a motion to transfer the Edward Jones investments over to Vanguard, specifically two accounts (one an "endowment" and the other as a growth investment), seconded by Pam Janson. A vote was held and the motion carried unanimously. ****Action item: Bruce and Ed will work together on setting up the Vanguard accounts.****
- + Pam set up a custom black mini-curtain behind the TV display in the sanctuary. The wires are still a mess, but they are hidden! Thank you, Pam!
- + After the last storm, Gael inspected trees lining the parking lots, and some have loose branches. Trees along west side of property have many dying branches and are unsightly - who owns them? The city owns them. Gael would like get bids on branch removal. Ray Sackett hired the person who took down the tree behind the church. ****Action item: Gael will start getting bids to trim back loose tree branches.****
- + 7:45 Action Items from Last Meeting

- + Ian will send the internship committee document to the Vestry. Pam and Ian will contact possible committee members. Completed
- + Karen will set up board, colorful index cards, pencils by 9/22/24. Bruce and Ian will meet to make a pie chart. Ongoing
- + Gael will contact the SAL Development contractor to begin soffit repair. Completed
- + Karen will discuss scheduling Biblical Greek with Teri and Ian. Ongoing
- + Gael/Teri needs to contact the bathroom contractor to recalibrate the toilets and fix the soap dispenser. Ongoing
- + Ed will investigate the account types at Edward Jones and gain a better understanding of the fee structure. Completed
- + Bruce will take responsibility for finding the items needed for the 2022 audit in past meeting minutes. Ongoing
- + Tim and Ed will supervise a needs analysis for the church website, and they will include Teri in the process. Ongoing
- + Bruce will research options such as a switchbox, Velcro ties, and/or cover. Tryn is interested in selecting fabric for the cover in a neutral off-white. Ongoing
- + Karen and Gael will work together to get the branches removed from the gutter. Completed
- + At the next Vestry meeting, we will discuss what to do with the memorial garden and children's garden. Ongoing

- + 7:47 Action Items going forward
- + Bruce, Teri, and Ian will meet to discuss stewardship letter/photos and pie chart on Friday, 9/20.
- + Tryn will discuss with Sunday School team the possibility of making gardening a monthly lesson. Pam will contact a master gardener and ask Teri if our landscaper can do a fall clean-up/weed for us.
- + Pam and Ian will meet to plan an appreciative inquiry for the January meeting.
- + Bruce and Ed will work together on closing the Edward Jones accounts and setting up the Vanguard accounts.
- + Gael will start getting bids to trim back loose tree branches.

- + **Next Meeting – Wed., Oct. 16, 6pm, online**
- + **Next Prayer – Tim Lovelace**
- + **Closing Prayer – Tryn**

- + Meeting adjourned at 7:59pm.

Appendix

Information from Vanguard.com:

Nonprofit organizations

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