

THE CHURCH OF THE CROSS VESTRY MINUTES

NOVEMBER 17, 2023

The meeting was called to order by Fr. Owens at 12:30pm in the Conference Room of The Chapel.

PRESENT: Fr. Owens, Millard Simmons, Michael Simon, Sallie Brach, Stew Brown, Tom Durston, Linda Laird, and Craig Pelley

I PRAYER AND DEVOTION: Sallie Brach

The meeting was opened in prayer by Sallie. Our devotional was titled “The Power of Prayer.” Sallie included bible verses related to the importance of prayer. She shared how prayer guides us, keeps us from temptation, and demonstrates our gratitude. This devotion was special because it was Sallie’s last devotional as a Vestry member. She led a special prayer time as each of us prayed individually for our fellow members and then received prayer. It was a special time for all of us.

II MINUTES: Linda Laird

The Vestry Minutes for October were reviewed by electronic distribution. Michael made the motion to approve as written, Sallie seconded the motion and all present agreed.

III FINANCIAL REPORT: Michael Simon

Praise God from whom all blessings flow! We continue to be amazed with the generosity and blessings we continue to receive.

Our plate income for October was \$236,770.21 (vs. a budget of \$225,559.70)

Our total Revenue income for October was \$301,378.87 vs a budget of \$274,059.70.

Our total expenses in October were \$336,704.16 vs a budget of \$312,972.46.

These total October income and expenses include the Faith Formation income, Mission Outreach Income and Donations, Cross School Scholarships, Counseling Center, Diocesan Pledge and Diocesan Blessings.

Linda shared the request for November funds for the Mission Outreach Board disbursement. She also shared the joy of meeting Father Nicolas from Zimbabwe. He shared his life story, his work, and his current needs for funding. His financial request will be posted in the December disbursements.

The summary for the November disbursements is as follows:

Net Working Capital: \$75,839.00
Set Aside Disbursements: \$26,469.00
One Time Disbursements: \$39,351.00
Total Disbursements if Approved: \$65,820.00
Remaining Net Working Capital: \$10,019.00

During our meeting, the Missions Outreach Board discussed and approved the following one time disbursements:

a. **Cross Schools Mission Trip to Costa Rica** – The total request was for \$17,000 of which **\$13,000** is required by December 2, 2023, and \$4,000 is required by January 1, 2024. The Board approved \$13,000 to be paid in November and \$4,000 to be paid in December. For the November payment of \$13,000, ***\$8,120 will come from the Mission Trip Reserve set aside fund and \$4,880 will come from general God's Goods funding. This is the first out of country mission trip that Cross Schools is taking.***

b. **Christian Orphan Health International** - The Board approved **\$10,000** as requested for orphan/foster children Christmas gifts to three groups of children, those housed in the Hand of Help Orphanage in Botosani, Romania, those foster children ministered to by Pastor Wally in Chernivtsi, Ukraine, and those foster children housed in the numerous Joshua houses in Lytin, Ukraine...totaling approximately 500 children which is approximately \$20.00 per child.

c. **Harvesters International Ministries, Project Hope 127, DR Congo** – The Board approved **\$7671** to provide the 176 children and youth with new shoes, clothing, and off-site Christmas celebrations/meals.

d. **Diocese of Marsabit, Kenya** – The Board approved **\$5,000** to complete the necessary funding for the first Women's Conference to bring women together from throughout this large diocese in northern Kenya.

e. **TARIRO** – The Board approved **\$8,500** to support higher education for five (5) students for the first trimester of 2024. The funding will be revisited in early 2024 for consideration of assistance for the second and third trimesters.

f. **Cross Schools Scholarship Students** – The Board approved **\$3,300** to provide one time monetary Christmas gifts for 11 Cross Schools Scholarship Students.

The MOB has committed for November funds in monthly allocations equaling \$26,469.

Mission Trip Reserve	\$8,120.00
Anderson Sanchez Peru - End June 2024	\$2,100.00
Bluffton Soup Kitchen - End January 2024	\$833.00
CBC Kenya Monthly - January 2024	\$3,000.00
COTC Faith Formation - End May 31 2024	\$1,250.00
CS CrossSchool Monthly - End May 21 2025	\$2,500.00
DGL - Youn Life - Olena - End June 2024	\$0.00
Harvesters Intl Congo Monthly Orphan care - End March 2024	\$3,000.00
HELP Madagascar - End Jan 2024	\$2,000.00
Saint Simons Anglican Mission (Josh Lake) - End Aug 2024	\$1,000.00
SAMS Missionary Griffin - End Jan 2024	\$1,000.00
UCCD Burundi - End Dec 2023	\$1,000.00
	\$26,469.00

Total disbursements for November are \$65,820.00, if approved. The financial Board reviewed the request and recommended APPROVAL to the Vestry. The Vestry reviewed the request submitted and made a motion to APPROVE funding. All present agreed.

Michael reported that the November PLATE Income MTD (2 weeks) is \$114,903.98 against our PLATE budget of \$225,559.70 with two Sunday's remaining.

The Sweep accounts, under CSB Intrafi Accounts, are now in place and reflect on the Balance Sheets, as current assets, keeping our accounts protected under FDIC guidelines and earned interest in September of \$1,984.66

Streaming daily, we have an average of 200 people visiting our website, of which half are first time viewers. Streaming is extremely important. It is the most important avenue for us to reach our faithful. Just to show you the impact, this past week, our website, and streaming reached an average of 15 countries and 9 states every month. Our blessings do continue to flow for which we say, **Thanks be to God.**

In-person attendance numbers continue to increase. To date, our 2023 PEW attendance was 61,073 vs. 30,723 in 2022. Praise God. Our attendance has doubled!

Respectively Submitted, J. Michael Simon, Treasurer

IV. OTHER

a. Upcoming stewardship outline

- Father Owens shared that he would rotate to all five services this weekend to thank everyone for their generosity and commitment.
- The church will be closed from November 22-26
- We will have a first draft budget for the December meeting.
- We will have the final draft for the January meeting.
- February 13, 2024, will be the date for the pancake supper and the Parrish Annual Gathering.

b. Looking ahead to 2024 staffing/budgeting

- Staffing – We are still searching for two priests and will be interviewing soon.

- Cross Schools– Millard shared that the monthly family worship had 800 participants in attendance, including parents and grandparents. Father Owens did the Homily in 8 minutes. A group explored the swamp area for future use for an athletic complex.
- Millard also shared that there are concerns about students dropping out during the year. When the number of students decreases, the budget is impacted. Tuition Refund Plans are now available so there will not be budget problems when students leave. It benefits the parents and the school.
- Tom expressed concerns about the accidents and danger of exiting left from the church campus. Father Owens explained that there are future plans to add exits on Buckwalter Parkway and the 5B (Buckwalter Extension).
- Father Owens shared that the Historical Society wants to update our informational book, but the prices are much higher, from \$12 to \$15 each. Father Owens suggested a more economical option - an eBook that can be easily accessed by users on our website.

V. CLOSING PRAYER (Sallie)

Sallie led us in our closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Linda Laird

Next Meeting – December 15,2023 – 12:30 – Conference room in the Chapel

Mill has devotional and prayer.

Devotional schedule: January – Joanne; February - Michael