Vice President Report

September 2025

The Board of Trustees had one of their two yearly in-person meetings in September. Our thanks to the Rev. Christy Laborda Harris and everyone at St. Stephen's in Sebastopol for hosting our meeting and adding the joyful din of families playing to the background of our business meeting.

Our gathering started with dinner with members of the Standing Committee and their spouses. We were able to catch up on issues that are facing both the Board and the Standing Committee in an informal way. Strengthening these bonds strengthens the work both governing bodies do for the Diocese of Northern California.

The Board heard reports on a variety of topics ranging from the recent pilgrimage to Tule Lake, the Racial Justice Audit implementation team, the Lifting Up Lay Leaders strategic team, Bishop Megan's sabbatical, Pathways, Congregational Development, the Curacy Program, and the Migrant Support Network.

The Board approved the 2026 Congregational Range sheet.

Since Church Insurance lowered the diocesan liability insurance offerings for director's and officers' insurance, the board authorized purchasing a supplemental policy that would further protect the diocesan investments.

The Board reviewed the recommendations by the Employee Practices and Benefits Committee and decided not to change the medical/dental plan offerings for 2026. In a cost cutting move, the Board adopted a two-year plan to move the Office of the Bishop staff benefits from the PPO80 plan to PPO70 plan reducing the coverage to the same standard that the rest of the diocese uses.

The Board also approved an addendum to the lease to the River City Food Bank at the Center to extend the lease to December 2040. This longer-term lease will allow the River City Food Bank to apply for larger federal grants to support their work.

The Board of Trustees has approved the 2026 diocesan budget. After listening to congregational leaders across the diocese, the Board voted to reduce the apportionment rate for 2026 by 2% in each tier of the current formula. On average, this change will result in a 13.8% decrease in apportionment for each parish. To make this adjustment possible, the diocese will draw an additional $236,000 from its unrestricted reserves. The Board believes this is a worthwhile interim step as it continues to explore long-term changes to how apportionment is structured. Recognizing the financial challenges many congregations are facing, the Board is committed to partnering with parishes to ease those burdens. Look for

a copy of the 2026 budget at the October 4 Convocation gatherings and Convention in November.

Finally, the Board thanked the members who completed their terms:  Jim Evans,  Bob Hall, Margie Harrison-Smith, Bret Hays and Anne Seed.

Margie Harrison-Smith

2025 Vice President