



**SAINT MARK'S**  
EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL

**Vestry Retreat**

**Minutes**

**Saturday, January 31, 2026, 9:00am**

**Diocesan House**

**Food: Kathy and Steve Thomason**

*Saint Mark's Cathedral acknowledges that we gather on the traditional land of the first people of Seattle, the Duwamish People, who are still here, and we honor with gratitude the land itself and the life of all the Coast Salish tribes.*

**Vestry Members Present**

Christopher Breunig  
Martha Craig  
Amanda Davis  
John Gulhaugen  
Phil Haas  
Sam Herring  
Hannah Hochkeppel  
Julia Logan, Senior Warden  
Mark Lundquist  
Sarah McCord  
Michael Monnikendam, Diocesan Member  
Deborah Person  
The Very Rev. Steve Thomason, Dean  
Canon Charles Thorne, Bishop's Representative  
Cynthia Tidwell, Diocesan Member  
The Rev. Gail Wheatley, Diocesan Member  
James Wilcox

**Officers Present**

Mary Dickinson, Treasurer  
Barbara Erickson, Clerk

**Officers Absent**

Re Knack, Chancellor

**Staff Members Present**

The Rev. Adam Conley, Curate  
The Rev. Canon Emily Griffin, Canon Vicar

**Guests**

Kendall Clawson, NW Leadership Consulting, LLC

Dean Thomason called the Vestry Retreat to order at 9:00 a.m. with a prayer.

### **CHECK-IN AND INTRODUCTIONS**

*What is something that you are hoping for this year or focusing on (in your life or at Saint Mark's)?*

Dean Thomason opened the first meeting of the 2026 Vestry by asking attendees to introduce themselves with their name, where you attend church or the service you attend at Saint Mark's, and one word for what you are hoping for or focusing on for the coming year. Dean Thomason then provided orientation to the building.

### **OPENING LECTIO DIVINA**

The scripture reading, Matthew 5: 1-12, was done and each person responded to the:

1. Lectio: noting the word or phrase that stood out for them
2. Meditatio: relating how that word/phrase pertains to a specific situation in their life right now
3. Oratio: the text was read aloud again, and each was asked to share their response/prayer to God arising from this passage or the word or phrase.

Dean Thomason noted the key components of this retreat are to get to know one another, be grounded in prayerful action, and spend the better part of the day in strategic conversation that may find its way into our Mutual Ministry Goals for the coming year. The hope is that we have the opportunity as elected leaders of the parish and by extension the diocese, to exhibit the courage to unfold the important work related to Affordable Housing but more broadly, how we might catch the vision to be creative, strategic and enlivening and invigorating in this thing called CBO or Community Based Organization.

### **STRATEGIC CONVERSATION #1**

Strategic Planning: CBO Development as a Missional Goal – Kendall Clawson

Kendall Clawson opened with a thank you to the vestry for doing this work. The vestry is asked to join Steve and Kendall in their agreement that "Fear is not our friend, it is not the thing we get to hide behind, and sometimes we are going to be a nincompoop." Kendall introduced the core of the community-based organization (CBO) as the heartbeat of the building and the importance of knowing the history, the Facts of racial covenants, redlining and urban renewal and our complicity.

Small group discussions involving three topics: 1) Learning While Leading, 2) The Keys to the House, and 3) Our Partnership. As the group reconvened, takeaways from the discussions were shared. Steve, with Kendall's help, registered *CathedralPlace.org* as a placeholder website name. The session ended with Kendall's request for two things:

1. Commitment. Write your commitment as vestry leaders "in stone" (stone provided by Kendall)
2. A reading of the poem "For a New Beginning" by John O'Donohue.

### **STRATEGIC CONVERSATION #2**

1. Thomason Sabbatical Planning (April 6 – July 31, 2026)

The Sabbatical Committee, Senior Warden Julia Logan, Canon Vicar Emily Griffin, Cathedral Subdean Marc Aubertin, Cathedral Administrator Erik Donner, and Dean Thomason have been working in preparation for the Dean's absence. Family Systems will be the focus of the Dean's sabbatical and he invites the vestry and the parish to join him in reading *For Everything a Season* by

Joan Chittister. This sabbatical will provide time for rest, pursuit of personal interests and renewal and opportunity to come back refreshed to benefit the parish.

2. Construction Planning and Community Life

Dean Thomason provided the plans for the Living Stones construction beginning in the second or third quarter of 2027. The selection of an Owner’s Rep is now in progress, HVAC for Cathedral House and Bloedel Hall will begin in second quarter 2026 (permitting is almost done).

Preconstruction planning for the Nave, narthex, electrical, and boiler replacement is underway. Amistad’s lease ends June 30, 2027, opening Skinner Auditorium for worship and livestream services if needed. The staff will most likely also need to relocate to the St. Nicholas Building for about six weeks during the construction period.

3. Creation Care

Dean Thomason led the conversation about the history, status, and future direction for Creation Care. Deborah Person, vestry liaison for Creation Care, offered the perspective that Creation Care has evolved into all parish work, therefore not requiring its own committee; yet concern exists if there is not an organizing committee, how does the work move forward. Could it be an ad hoc committee, a Creation Care summit or a Wednesday or Sunday forum hosted by the vestry?

4. Accessibility

Dean Thomason shared how the ad hoc Accessibility Task Force was formed, and in the spring of 2025 delivered a summation of its findings. Two items to be addressed by the vestry:

- a. Adoption of the 2026 Accessibility Program Items Relevant to the Capital Projects.

**A motion was made, seconded, and passed to adopt the Accessibility Task Force’s document as a guiding document from the Vestry to the Capital Campaign Design Committee.**

- b. Should the Accessibility Task Force remain an ad hoc task force or become a standing committee of the vestry?

**A motion was made, seconded, and passed to have a vestry liaison for the Accessibility Task Force who would report back regularly to the Vestry.**

[Meeting reconvened at 1:15 p.m. after lunch]

### **STRATEGIC CONVERSATION #3**

1. Synergies and Next Steps

Reflections on the morning portion were positive as it was very informative; the extent of redlining and racial restrictive covenants was an awakening; Kendall was “such a welcoming presence.” The small group discussion could have been organized and reported better.

2. Mutual Ministry Goals—a start

Julia Logan lead this brainstorming session to get ideas which will further be discussed with the Executive Committee and then brought to the vestry. Email Steve or Julia with other thoughts also. Julia reviewed the 2025 Ministry Goals and identified their status.

- a. Capital Campaign – successful [good goal, accomplished, remove]
- b. Strengthen vision year-round Steward – successful and continue with the focus [remove from goals]

- c. Rework Affordable Housing goal
- d. Add creation of the Community Based Organization |
- e. Related ways to repair racial injustices and inequities on campus
- f. Preconstruction and design committee around the project
- g. Migrant and immigration justice

Other thoughts...

- a. Injustices incorporated – what can we do without running afoul of the law, show up, network
- b. Accessibility ADA and other accessibility areas
- c. Community supportive (neighbors) may or may not be – concern exists/religious exemption exists
- d. Christian nationalism, genuine and authentic gospel (staff with intention explain more about Christian Nationalism.) Travel writer Rick Steves and his partner, Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee, Northwest Washington Synod of the ELCA. If Edmonds talk goes well, welcome at Saint Mark's. Immigrant justice intersects.
- e. Broader topic of inclusion many categories – education and action – rolled into a broader goal. To broad to act. Frame as “exploratory”
- f. Migrant justice, Accessibility, LGBT – groundwork being done with intentionality and staff support
- g. Julia: CBO, migrant/immigrant justice, Affordable Housing are big goals that we want to ensure the parish, the vestry and clergy and staff are oriented to.
- h. Difference between Mutual Ministry Goals and Strategic Plan and Statement of Lament
- i. James on behalf of broad goals: this year requires special focus on inclusion; broader allows flexibility to shift what the priority is as things develop.
- j. Emily – migrant justice. larger group to help with actions; accessibility within community; how to measure; how to get involved – Rapid Response training; by neighborhood. Locate other community partners to give training...
- k. Christopher – migrant justice is big focus; hasn't kicked off yet, good as a goal.

Julia recommends the vestry keep informed of what is happening by reading the Annual Report, familiarize yourself with the Ministry Directory. Vestry members should know what is happening within the church. Steve thanked everyone for their ideas which will be reviewed and brought back to the March meeting.

The dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, Boston contacted Steve regarding a Super Bowl wager for the Seattle Seahawks v. New England Patriots game. The Seattle donation organization will be Advocates for Immigrants in Detention Northwest (AIDNW).

## **ORGANIZING MEETING OF THE VESTRY**

### **1. Conflict of Interest Forms and Safe Church training**

Dean Thomason reported that all Vestry members are current on their Safe Church certification. Conflict of Interest policy was routed and then everyone to sign the form and return to Steve.

2. Election of Junior Wardens, Clerk, and Treasurer

Dean Thomason explained the three junior warden positions, and that the junior wardens, the senior warden, and the dean comprise the Executive Committee. The dean then excused himself from the room, and Julia and Mary led the voting.

Facilities – **A motion to accept the nomination of Martha Craig as Junior Warden for Facilities was made, seconded, and passed.**

Finance – **A motion to accept the nomination of Amanda Davis as Junior Warden for Finance was made, seconded, and passed.**

Stewardship – **A motion to accept the nomination of Deborah Person as Junior Warden for Stewardship was made, seconded, and passed.**

3. Resolution for Executive Committee

**A motion was made, seconded, and passed to adopt Vestry Resolution #26-GO-01.**

4. Resolution for Check Signers

Dean Thomason stated that submitting a letter on official letterhead is the preferred method of specifying the names of individuals being removed or added as bank operating account signers. Therefore, Greg Hamm and Lynne Cobb will be removed, and Julia Logan, Emily Griffin, Mary Dickinson, and Amanda Davis will be added.

**A motion to authorize the change in bank account signers was made, seconded, and passed.**

5. Seattle Amistad School

Dean Thomason reviewed the situation with Amistad and their difficulty in finding a new location. Amistad submitted a letter to the Vestry expressing their interest in being an anchor tenant in the St. Nicholas Building. Vestry discussion took place, with the reality that we are not in a position to consider their request, as their space requirement is more than we are able to allocate among other things.

**A motion made, seconded, and passed to decline Seattle Amistad School's interest in remaining as a tenant of the St. Nicholas Building.**

6. Vestry Liaisons to Standing Committees

Worship & Prayer – James Wilcox, John Gulhaugen, Michael Monnikendam, Mark Lundquist, Sarah McCord

Finance – Amanda Davis, Sam Herring, Charles Thorne, Deborah Person, Mary Dickinson

Facilities – Martha Craig, James Wilcox, John Gulhaugen, Mary Dickinson

Stewardship – Deborah Person, Hannah Hochkeppel, Christopher Breunig

Creation Care – Deborah Person, Gail Wheatley

Intergenerational Council – Sarah McCord, Cynthia Tidwell, Mark Lundquist

Restorative Justice Council – Christopher Breunig, Phil Haas, Hannah Hochkeppel

Communications – Michael Monnikendam

(Accessibility) – Gail Wheatley, Hannah Hochkeppel

7. Vestry Meetings

- In person/hybrid option/virtual?
- There will be a special meeting on February 24 via Zoom to address the annual parochial report.
- Gumbo & jambalaya for Shrove Tuesday on February 17, plus gluten free and vegetarian. It's the tradition for vestry members to bring gumbo or jambalaya for the meal.
- Presentation of vestry at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. services on February 1.

**CHECK OUT**

Checkouts were given, and the meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, `

Barbara J. Erickson  
Clerk

Erik Donner  
Cathedral Administrator