



**SAINT MARK'S**  
EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL

**Saint Mark's Cathedral Vestry Meeting  
September 24, 2024 6:00 PM via Zoom**

*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 Member Attendees:** The Very Rev. Steve Thomason, Martha Craig, Junior Warden Julia Logan, Tina Blondino, Wayne Duncan, Junior Warden Phil Haas, Justin Mills, Christopher Breunig, Canon Valerie Reinke, Alexandra Thompson, Senior Warden Greg Hamm, Junior Warden Peter Snyder, Scott Hulet, Kristen Kelly

**Officer Attendees:** Treasurer Lynne Cobb, Chancellor Re Knack

**Vestry Members Absent:** Doug Thorpe, The Rev. Gail Wheatley, Becky Kacel

**Officers Absent:** Clerk Barbara Erickson

**Staff Member Attendees:** Cathedral Administrator Erik Donner

Dean Steve opened the meeting at 6:00 PM with the land acknowledgment and opening prayer.

**August 27, 2024 Vestry meeting minutes were approved as written.**

Status of Diocesan House construction still uncertain. The next vestry meeting in October may be via Zoom again.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Strategic Plan Focus:** revisiting elements of the plan and making sure it is a living document in our ministries. Alexandra Thompson and Greg Hamm led the group in a reflection about the strategic plan. When we went through the strategic plan process, we found that the plan helps identify who are we and what we value as a community. The mutual ministry goals help with identifying what we would like to accomplish.

This evening's focus is on the strategic plan themes. They emerge in 2 directions. In each ministry, these themes should inform what we are doing. In addition, as we work in ministry,

these themes may emerge. Next year a new vestry can review and check on whether these themes are still appropriate.

Alexandra led a discussion about the strategic plan themes. Describes the process of meeting with the various ministry groups as very emotional. Overall, she feels that the strategic planning committee did a good job of capturing the six main themes that resonate with the community, but she finds that the smaller print bullet points are often overlooked. She wonders whether anyone might have an experience of using the bullet points as a “foothold” for applying the themes in a ministry. Scott Hulet reports that Restorative Justice Committee has found it useful to reflect on the themes and bullet points and asking “how does this inform our work in the context of restorative justice”. It has been useful to let members know that the document exists and that it is present to inform our work. Christopher added that reflecting on the themes energizes the ministry. Alexandra wonders if individuals in their ministries have expressed fatigue or need to pull back. Martha Craig points out that the intergenerational committee is a perfect example of a ministry that reflects a wide range of abilities to commit fully to the ministry. Dean Steve encourages the ministry leaders to utilize the six themes in engaging the ministry members; “there is much fruit to be borne there”.

**Affordable Housing Update:** in conversation with Urban League leadership re: community engagement. An article will appear in the Seattle Times this coming Sunday 9/29/24 about the theme of church property being converted into affordable housing. The St. Nicholas property will likely feature prominently in this article. We are working to schedule follow up conversations with the developers despite slowed down timeline. A trained facilitator has been engaged to help with committee training on cross-cultural sensitivities and awareness; will likely do this with the newly seated vestry also that forms in February.

Alexandra comments on an interview in The Daily (NYT) today 9/24/2024 about how the cost of housing became so crushing. She highly recommends this article.

Scott Hulet reviews the plan to do a **Parish Book Study** on affordable housing. He finished reading the book “Evicted” (Author Matthew Desmond); it is a powerful book. A second book by the same author, “Poverty, by America”, is equally powerful. After the murder of George Floyd, the community engaged in deep reflection on systemic racism and bias. Scott feels that these books offer a similar opportunity to peel back ignorance, this time about the impacts of poverty and its effect on housing. The need for secure, safe housing should be a human right; it is not in our country. In “Evicted”, Matthew Desmond reflects on the experience of going into the inner city of Milwaukee and living with eight families; he tells their stories. This book “opens the heart”. Wendy Barrie has selected a book for children (I See You) that focuses on a child who identifies an unhoused woman and will be working on integrating this into life of the children in the church. There are funds to reimburse individuals who would like to purchase these books. The ask/offer for vestry is to obtain the books; we would like to have individuals help us plan what the book study will look like and facilitate the discussion groups. You can send Scott Hulet a text to ask about obtaining these books.

Dean Steve expects that all of vestry (which has endorsed affordable housing as a missional goal) to participate in at least one book study in January/February.

**Capital Campaign & Pre-design update:** Feasibility Study. Campaign consultant Marc Rieke is meeting with select households to discuss the campaign. More will receive questionnaires. All parishioners are welcome to complete the questionnaire. Aiming to get a feasibility range for the campaign and hone the projected work accordingly. Dean Steve is getting more questions from the community about the rationale for the timing and the focus of the campaign. Dean Steve has experienced that the ones he has spoken with come to see the value of the campaign after further discussion.

Pre-design work picks up again in the next several weeks. The architect and mechanical engineers in the pre-design have been working on solutions for boilers, electrical systems, addition of solar, and geothermal energy for heating/cooling. This will include updates to the nave and narthex.

Some have commented that it seems like we “just did a capital campaign”; it can be helpful to remind individuals that the last campaign was in 2014 (10 years ago). It is important to message in positive ways. Dean Steve wanted to emphasize that these are time sensitive updates. The Bloedel boiler and the nave boiler are old and are deteriorating. If we wait until they die, we will likely go without heat for a winter. Individuals are tripping on the nave floor. At least 2 women have told him that they do not like to use the bathroom in the narthex because it is unheated. We are on a time clock before more difficult challenges present themselves; hence, the reason for campaign timing (and our carbon reduction goal to be net carbon zero on campus by 2030).

The question was asked how we prioritize the list of “wants” for the capital campaign. We will know more after the feasibility study results. We may have this information at the October vestry meeting. This will help prioritize the list. If the feasibility study points to a lack of ability to raise sufficient funds, the list will need to be altered. The vestry will also need to consider how much debt the cathedral is willing to incur. Elizabeth Antley (grants coordinator) is working on applications for grant funding for the capital campaign goals as well.

**Emergency Women’s Shelter—Operation Nightwatch:** taxation issues are still an issue, but Operation Nightwatch has opted to pay for the property taxes if necessary. The contract has been signed. Operation Nightwatch is going through the city permitting process to upgrade the space. The shelter may open as early as December 2024.

**Accessibility Plan of Action—update:**

Opportunities to be a more accessible and welcoming community:

- Alexandra and Wendy Barrie will co-chair a task force to guide this discussion.
- Facilities Ministry: Julia Logan and Subdean Marc Aubertin are working on pedestrian walk path and signage near the exit driveway.

**Stewardship Plans for Fall:** stewardship “season” kicks off this Saturday evening at the All-Parish Dinner. We have 144 RSVPs; may be a very packed house. Kudos to Erik Donner for his work and support. The Rev. Timothy Dombek will speak at the dinner and preach on Sunday

9/29/2024 (official campaign launch date). Speakers will share at services over the course of October. The ingathering will occur on Sunday October 27<sup>th</sup>. Dean Steve will also be doing outreach to various community members as well. The staff has choreographed a performance. Stewardship packets with pledge cards will go out later this week. Dean Steve reflects that the capital campaign should not result in a redirection of the annual pledges. The ask is that the capital campaign come from alternate sources of money and that it not replace annual pledges.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Budget Planning & Finance Committee Report:** budget meetings are going on now. Ministry groups have been asked to provide their requests by next week. Draft budget will be available in October; we will have a sense of the expense side by October (income will not be available by then.) “Relatively easy” first half of the year because staffing is below goal (this will change as of October 1<sup>st</sup>). Facility rentals are up, gross income is above budget. This next quarter will need to make a decision about the Banner Bank loan (are we ready to close this out/pay it fully); will aim to decide by the November 18, 2024 finance committee meeting. Audit will occur in 2025. The committee requested some bids and discovered that there are advantages to staying with the current audit firm for 2025. We had a review in 2022 and 2023; full audit will occur for 2024. Dean Steve points out that the rationale for current audit is to do it before the launch of the capital campaign; then another one can occur in 2028 after the three-year capital campaign.

**Housing Allowance for Emily Griffin 2024:** Emily Griffin will start next week. She has asked for a housing allowance to be in place for the remainder of the 2024 year. Motion was entertained to approve the housing allowance. **Vestry Resolution #24-FI-04 was approved.**

**St. Nicholas Property Management Change:** Property manager Chase Silver (formerly with Windermere Property Management) is now with ORION Commercial Partners. ORION has been engaged and Chase will again be the property manager.

**Diocesan Convention Exhibit Table (shared w/ CFDO):** critical function for the St. Mark’s table – to provide cookies! In the past years the vestry has contributed. The hope is that all vestry members will provide either home-baked or “nice” bakery cookies (no Costco cookies!) 2 years ago so many people came up and asked for the cookies (vestry did not make them that year). Julia asks that vestry members provide cookies for the convention (Oct 25<sup>th</sup>). Drop cookies at office the week before that Friday Oct 25<sup>th</sup>. Greg and Julia will transport them to Tacoma. How many are needed? “LOTS” (a few dozen per person if possible). If anyone can help staff the table, that would also be appreciated (even if you can only commit a few hours, especially on Friday.) Most of the exhibit activities happen on Friday Oct 25<sup>th</sup>. Get in touch with Julia Logan or Greg Hamm about helping at the table. Phil Haas and Martha Craig can be present on Friday.

**Nominating Committee:** Scott Hulet and Maria Coldwell are co-chairing the Nominating Committee for Vestry and Diocesan Convention candidates. Please be in prayer for the parish as we engage in this discernment. We also look to the vestry for nominations; contact Scott or

Maria with any nominations. We encourage the nominees to come to vestry members to ask questions.

## **LEADERSHIP REPORTS**

### **Senior Warden**

- Thank you letter from Emily Meeks is in Dropbox.
- Received request from the Creation Care Ministry about initiatives on the upcoming Nov 2024 ballot (2066 and 2117). They requested St. Mark's imprimatur on these initiatives as these are antithetical to our values. A 2016 vestry resolution prescribes a Listening process prior to putting St. Mark's stamp of approval public communication. This can be omitted if the Executive Committee so recommends, but there is a requirement that there should be "no conceivable objection" in the Parish to do so. The executive committee discussed this issue at length. They could not convince themselves that there would be no one in the community that would object, as much as the initiatives do seem to resonate with our values as a cathedral. In addition, the listening process is probably too lengthy to achieve prior to the election. The executive committee reluctantly informed the Creation Care Ministry that it cannot endorse moving to endorsement of a position opposing the initiative without the listening process. The 2016 Listening Process was created as a result of a similar request that resulted in an acrimonious process.
- Seating of the New Bishop: Greg expresses great gratitude to the staff for their enormous amount of work in creating a meaningful experience.

### **Dean**

- Dean Steve sings with the Compline Choir a few times per year. He feels honored to be named an honorary member of the Compline Choir, which will occur this Sunday September 29. There was an erosion of trust between the leadership of Compline Choir and the previous Deans; Dean Steve feels honored to be part of the restoration of that trust.
- The four diseased trees will come down this week (two on 10<sup>th</sup> avenue east, 2 near exit driveway). Stripes will be painted this coming weekend (8am-1pm Saturday); there will be delays on 10<sup>th</sup> avenue both ways.
- Bishop LaBelle is teaching at Cathedral Commons tomorrow 9/25/2024.
- Currently at 160 attendees scheduled for the gratitude dinner (with children included).
- Emily Meeks letter to vestry is included in Dropbox. She is doing well at Virginia Theological Seminary.
- The Pro Christo et Ecclesia Award recipients were invited to a gratitude breakfast in September. There will be a similar breakfast for former Senior Wardens as well next week.

- Blessing of the Animals: Sat 10/5/2024 in the afternoon; will occur on the portico terrace to avoid the sun. Dedication of the lawn sculpture will occur at that time. The sculptor is not able to attend secondary to poor health.
- Dean Steve and Kathy will be on vacation Oct 7-20. He will be caring for his grandchild for a portion of this. His daughter and her wife have taken in a foster child, T. He asks for prayers for T and his family; he has had a rough time over his 4 years and the transition is sometimes difficult.

## **MINISTRY/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Worship and Prayer:** Wayne Duncan and Julia Logan. Recent discussion on poetics and liturgy.

**Creation Care:** Wayne Duncan gave updates via Marjorie Ringness. Have appreciated prayers during creation care month. Deep time walk very successful. Recology event coming up – bringing items to the cathedral for recycling. They are considering a name change that brings carbon reduction to the forefront.

**Intergenerational Council:** Martha and Valerie. Recent meeting very productive, discussed Intergenerational Guide created by Emily Meeks, reviewed new ideas such as Moveable Feast. Oct 5<sup>th</sup> Blessing of the Animals, Oct 12 Godly Play in a day – in-service on Godly Play. Nov 15<sup>th</sup> Cozy Compline (wear PJs! Cookies and milk!) Nov 24 alternative gift market.

**Restorative Justice Council:** Scott Hulet. Met this last Sunday afternoon 9/22/2024. Book study/see above.

**Communications:** Alexandra Thomson. Communications toolbox is the main focus currently; this was presented to the community last week. New tools are being introduced (e.g., Slack). Will be holding office hours to help explain what the toolkit contains and how it can be useful to the various ministries.

**Facilities:** Julia Logan. “The dog ate the minutes”; Julia has reconstructed them and will put them in Dropbox. Down to one gas hot water heater on campus; heading towards meeting goal. Gave thanks to those who helped with the reception for the seating of the bishop. Fence around Leffler Garden has been stained (Kathy Thomason and Gretchen Cook did the staining).

## **CHECK OUT & CLOSING PRAYER**

Checkouts were given, and Kristen Kelly offered the closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Kelly  
Vestry Member

Erik Donner  
Cathedral Administrator

Dates/Events of note

9/25 Bishop LaBelle teaches at Cathedral Commons

9/28 Parish Gratitude Dinner (for Stewardship Launch)

9/29 Stewardship Launch, Timothy Dombek guest preacher at 9am and 11am

10/27 Stewardship Ingathering