

Saint Mark's Episcopal Cathedral
Vestry Retreat – February 11, 2023 – Diocesan House, Seattle
Minutes

On February 11, the 2023 members of the Saint Mark's Vestry met to plan out priorities for the 2023 year after the February 5, 2023 Annual Parish meeting at which four new Vestry members were elected.

Members Present and Newly Elected

Newly elected Vestry members include Peter Snyder, Alexandra Thompson, Greg Hamm (new Junior Warden for Finance), and Doug Thorpe. Also present were continuing Vestry members Scott Hulet (Senior Warden for 2023), Scott Kovacs (Junior Warden for Facilities), Chris Rigos (Junior Warden for Stewardship and retreat minute taker), Becky Kacel (new Diocesan Member), Kristen Kelly, Wayne Duncan, Canon Arienne Davison, Lynne Cobb (Treasurer), Kathy Minsch, Justin Mills, Re Knack (Chancellor), and Dean Steve Thomason. Not present: Carmen Brady, Katie Prettyman (Diocesan Member), Tina Blondino (Diocesan Member), and Barbara Erickson (Clerk).

Dean Steve Thomason began the session with the land acknowledgment and an opening prayer. He included as a *Lectio Divina* Paul's Letter to the Romans 12: 4-17 for reading and reflection as to the gifts all persons of faith receive.

Vestry Conversation as to the Vision for Saint Mark's Cathedral

Dean Steve read the current Vision for the Cathedral, including the maintenance of a house of prayer, the development of a loving and welcoming community, and the preservation of a sacred gathering place for the Diocese of Olympia and the wider community. The challenges inherent in this mission include fostering a spirit of hope, honoring different values, and eliminating anxiety.

Sacred Reading and Reflection

The Vestry considered a reflection offered by Dean Steve on the writing of Wendell Berry, an author who wrote "The Unsettling of America," (1977), to stimulate thinking as to the pathways ahead for the church. The author described the traits of "exploiters" versus those of "sustainers." The former emphasize extracting, producing, consuming, often at the expense of a sense of character or community. Sustainers focus more on observing, healing, enhancing, and living in balance. The author proposed four virtues needed to sustain the church or any public group:

- Memories of those who came before, to include rituals, a stated creed of beliefs, and a sense of humility.
- Discipline, to include taking time to make real contributions, showing up on a regular basis, and trust.
- Hope, to include things that develop far in the future.
- Bonds of affection, to include an orientation to what is true and beautiful, and an ability to recall and honor memories of prior bonding.

Rules of Respect (10)

Attendees discussed the ten (10) Diocesan Rules of Respect: including honoring of diverse thinking, avoiding triangulation in favor of direct communication, and developing healthy interactions among persons of good will with sometimes divergent views. A task force of Kathy Minsch, Scott Kovacs, Scott Hulet, Justin Mills and Steve Thomason will work on a document incorporating healthy communication patterns for vestry consideration this spring.

Mutual Ministry Goals for Saint Mark's Cathedral Parish

The vestry attendees discussed the three overarching goals (represented by a graphic of a colored triangle) for the Cathedral, which were adopted three years ago. They include Creation Care and Carbon Reduction, Restorative Justice, and Systemic Change, and Intergenerational and Innovative Community.

Breakout Groups

To stimulate deeper thinking as to how the three goals apply, or where we as a vestry might focus in mutual ministry goals for the coming year, the attendees broke up into five breakout groups for deeper discussion and application, as follows:

- Affordable housing and campus development—Scoot H., Scott K., Alexandra, Lynne
- Innovative missional strategies—Doug, Kathy M., Wayne
- Spiritual formation as a relational enterprise—Becky, Kristin, Re
- Financial modeling and stewardship—Chris, Peter
- Hybrid experience of faith community—Arienne, Justin, Greg

Feedback from Five Groups

Each group reported back as to how their topic was being effectuated in line with the Cathedral's three mutual ministry goals, progress to date, and opportunities for improvement. Notes captured from each included:

- Affordable housing and campus development
 - Memory—contributions of congregation, wisdom and missional commitment
 - Discipline—sit in the tension of the work
 - Hope—no predetermined outcome—seek God's will for our resources
 - Affection—create intersectionality
- Innovative missional strategies
 - Break down boundaries
 - Connections with community groups at large
 - Creation care as platform (svc at SMC, Eucharist at Longhouse, Doctrine of Discovery)
 - Settler colonialism—make the connections
 - Virtual world is an asset
- Spiritual formation as a relational enterprise
 - Building connections in community

- Create opportunities to encourage connections in affinity groups and intergenerationally
- Story-sharing (memory)—like StoryCorps
- Active invitation to all/not exclusive
- “space” as spiritual experience—not always programming
- Make participation easier
- Financial modeling and stewardship
 - Forecast is rather dire—how shall we address this with hope?
 - Disciplined transparency
 - Pledges, rentals, planned giving—gratitude and sense of joy
 - Giving as spiritual practice
 - Hope—create life-giving experiences through giving
 - Celebrate the bonds of affection in community
- Hybrid experience of faith community—Arienne, Justin, Greg
 - Different than in-persons
 - Transitional?
 - Inherent dangers, especially if interactive (zoom bombers)
 - Use modalities to meet needs of those served
 - Memory—this is not our first disruption as the Church
 - What relationship is being supported by hybrid/virtual

Key take-aways/Next Steps

- Campus asset/missional focus
- Relational mission
- Communication strategy
- Deepening connections and new opportunities
- Innovative communities
- Transformational stewardship (hope)
- Change from fear with money
- Hybrid modeling

Selection of Junior Wardens and Liaison Representatives

After due reflection and discussion, the Vestry approved the selection of

- Scott Kovacs as Junior Warden for Facilities,
- Greg Hamm as Junior Warden for Finance, and
- Chris Rigos as Junior Warden for Stewardship.
- Senior Warden is Scott Hulet, by appointment by the Dean.

As officers of the corporation, these wardens will serve as check signers along with the Dean and the Treasurer. Former wardens and vestry members Emily Meeks, Clara Berg, and Walter Stuteville are no longer check signers.

The following Vestry members agreed to serve as liaisons for the following standing committees:

- Worship and Prayer – Kathy Minsch, Peter Snyder, Carmen Brady
- Finance – Greg Hamm (Junior Warden), Chris Rigos, Scott Kovacs
- Facilities – Scott Kovacs (Junior Warden), Justin Mills, Lynne Cobb
- Stewardship – Chris Rigos (Junior Warden), Peter Snyder, Wayne Duncan
- Creation Care – Doug Thorpe, Kathy Minsch
- Intergenerational Council – Alexandra Thompson, Kristen Kelly
- Restorative Justice – Doug Thorpe
- Communications – Alexandra Thompson, Wayne Duncan

Cathedral Business

Conflict of Interest forms were signed by each vestry member present.

Julia Logan was re-appointed by the vestry to serve on the Board of the Cathedral Foundation.

Dean Steve provided an update on the project to replace the Thomsen Chapel Boiler with a dual mini-split heat pump. Donors have underwritten the cost of this project, except that two electrical panels (in the chapel vestibule and in the Flentrop gallery) will need replacement as well. The additional cost leaves approximately \$15,000 of the project uncovered by donor-designated gifts and carbon reduction budget line. The vestry unanimously adopted the motion to authorize this project, pending a second quote by electrical contractor.

Vestry members were invited to sign up to offer the land acknowledgment at Sunday services.

Finally, the vestry decided to resume meeting in person monthly with hybrid connectivity for those who cannot attend due to illness or travel. Dinner will be served each month as per our tradition.

Reviewed by

The Very Reverend Steven L. Thomason, Dean and Rector