



2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

SAINT MARK'S CATHEDRAL PARISH

I encourage you to live as people worthy of the call you received from God. Conduct yourselves with all humility, gentleness, and patience. Accept each other with love, and make an effort to preserve the unity of the Spirit with the peace that ties you together.

– Ephesians 4: 1b-3

Saint Mark's seeks to honor the varied stages of life and unique gifts of our community to continually deepen *our love of God, our love of neighbor, and our reverence for Creation*. We recognize the Duwamish Tribe as the first stewards of the land on which Saint Mark's stands and commit to the ongoing work of relationship and truth telling with all Coast Salish peoples. As a Parish and Cathedral community, Saint Mark's draws on a commitment since 1889 to be a house of prayer and sacred gathering place for all people as we adapt to a rapidly changing world. The ways in which we live, move, and have our being are shaped by God's love and by our baptismal covenant as we seek to serve Christ in all persons, with God's help.

The 2024 Strategic Plan focuses on six themes to guide our common life in the next 18-24 months:

BEING ROOTED IN SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

We are formed by spiritual practices: prayer, worship, study, acts of justice, pilgrimage, retreat, generosity, Sabbath, and the care of Creation.

EMPOWERING THE CALL TO ACTION AND SERVICE

We support all in discerning and living out their call to ministry and commit to developing healthy ministry leaders.

CULTIVATING DIVERSE COMMUNITY

We actively seek and nurture diverse community through listening, connection, and collaboration.

STEWARDING OUR RESOURCES

We give generously of our time, talent, finances, and property, and care for the Earth as we respond to the world's needs.

EXPANDING REGIONAL REACH AND WELCOME

We welcome all and serve as a gathering place for the Diocese of Olympia, the Seattle community, and interfaith and mission-related organizations.

CONNECTING AND TELLING OUR STORIES

We offer creative ways to connect with one another, navigate ministry resources, and tell our stories as a Parish and Cathedral.



BEING ROOTED IN SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

We are formed by spiritual practices: prayer, worship, study, acts of justice, pilgrimage, retreat, generosity, Sabbath, and the care of Creation.

- We continue to explore and support different forms of prayer that engage our full selves.
- We offer a variety of worship experiences as a principal means of formation for people of all ages through liturgy, preaching, music, and art.
- We incorporate traditional and expansive language and commit to ongoing opportunities for conversation and reflection on language used.
- We create and experience pilgrimage – locally, regionally, and globally – as touchstones to the Holy.
- We will explore and experience different forms of retreat – personal, parish, and in affinity groups – to contemplate God’s presence in our lives and connect with one another.
- We respond to injustices, guided by our gospel mandate, and we seek to bring hope to the world – our spiritual formation is intertwined with service and action.
- We care deeply about our interactions with the natural world and look for ways to ensure the life-giving goodness of God’s Creation.
- We give joyfully and intentionally as a response to the blessings we have received and discern how these gifts may be shared to support the ministry and common life of the Cathedral.

EMPOWERING THE CALL TO ACTION AND SERVICE

We support all in discerning and living out their call to ministry and commit to developing healthy ministry leaders.

- We are all ministers – lay and ordained. We support each other in discerning and living out unique callings and expressions of ministry.
- We honor the body, mind, and spirit in ministry and encourage others to do so.
- We recognize that people have varying levels of commitment and we create a wide range of action and service opportunities to engage and honor their time and interests.
- We encourage actions and service to be formed by prayer and in collaboration with the Holy Spirit. We develop skills to carry out our ministry in sharing the work – ministry is all of us working together.



CULTIVATING DIVERSE COMMUNITY

We actively seek and nurture diverse community through listening, connection, and collaboration.

- We affirm that all are welcome here — whoever and wherever you are on your spiritual journey.
- We reflect on the ways in which we engage with diverse groups of people and will regularly connect with the Newcomers, Hospitality, Intergenerational and Restorative Justice Ministries to reflect on this value.
- We join with the Restorative Justice Council to model a culture where all are encouraged and equipped to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.
- We strengthen and expand small group offerings, informed by the Radix Project, as a way to deepen spiritual journeys through study and action in community.
- We regularly incorporate the “Statement of Lament and Commitment to Action” as a resource to the community and to continue the work of prayerful resistance and action.
- We create safe spaces for life-giving conversation by being fully present with one another, guided by tenets outlined in the Vestry’s “Healthy Communication in Community” guide.
- We work with the Intergenerational Council to build relationships among parishioners of all ages in the ways we gather, learn, and serve to support our shared journeys as we also celebrate and honor unique life stages.
- We seek more opportunities to share meals to foster fellowship and community.
- We build bridges to other ministry groups while remaining flexible for our vision to be changed to consider the needs of the larger community.

STEWARDING OUR RESOURCES

We give generously of our time, talent, finances, and property, and care for the Earth as we respond to the world’s needs.

- We embrace a countercultural view of giving – all we have been given is from God and we hold it lightly and with consideration of our neighbor.
- We will explore ways to broaden the messaging of “Stewardship” and consider new approaches to an annual campaign.
- We see clear connections among the work of the Finance, Facilities, and Stewardship Committees and encourage additional points of collaboration in engaging the parish in its care for the Cathedral’s resources.
- We utilize campus spaces with purpose and adaptability. Projects of timely focus: renovating Bloedel Hall, retooling Leffler House and Carriage House for creative new ministries, reimagining the St. Nicholas site (potential Affordable Housing), and restoring the Greenbelt.
- We will create a roadmap for our entire campus to be carbon neutral including the Cathedral, Leffler House/Carriage House, St. Nicholas property, and the Deanery.



Stewarding Our Resources Continued

- We join with Creation Care to inspire individual actions that collectively reduce the impacts of climate change and honor the beauty and heritage of our shared Pacific Northwest backyard.
- We will proactively identify facility improvements that are needed to ensure campus buildings are welcoming, hospitable, and functional with a focus on accessibility, safety, security, and sustainability.

EXPANDING REGIONAL REACH AND WELCOME

We welcome all and serve as a gathering place for the Diocese of Olympia, the Seattle community, and interfaith and mission-related organizations.

- We are a resource for the Diocese and will welcome the ninth Bishop of Olympia to their Cathedral, offering support and resources in their transition.
- We develop and expand relationships beyond Saint Mark's including Lowell Elementary School, Lambert House, Casa Latina, Mary's Place, and ecumenical and interfaith organizations to contribute to community vitality through advocacy, engagement, and partnership. We invite all to use our campus for many public events from sacred and secular gatherings to simply enjoying urban green space.
- We offer rich educational and formational offerings including The Wisdom School and the emerging Center for Spirituality and Action.
- We reach geographically diverse participants via livestream and hybrid offerings and regularly check in with these groups to consider their experience.

CONNECTING AND TELLING OUR STORIES

We offer ways to connect with one another, navigate ministry resources, and tell our stories as a Parish and Cathedral.

- We offer and strengthen hybrid capabilities to offer full participation for online participants.
- We will create a toolkit (e.g. templates and resources for planning and training), in collaboration with the Cathedral's Communications Committee, to support ministry groups.
- We will explore channels and tactics (e.g. electronic bulletin board, meal trains, apps) to make it easier to connect and share our needs and gifts.
- We find opportunities to gather feedback after events and share this information with ministry leaders and staff.
- We highlight ministries year-round to expand awareness of skills, gifts, and needs, and make it easy to know how to get started and who to contact.
- We share and receive our stories with respect and humility to deepen relationships with one another as we join in sharing the love of Christ.



ABOUT THE 2023-2024 STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In April 2023, the Vestry recommended convening a Committee to develop a new Strategic Plan for the next 18–24 months as Saint Mark’s envisioned ways of being Church in a post-pandemic world. The Committee launched in July 2023 and engaged the Parish and Cathedral community for input. Over the course of six months, the Committee gathered data and input in a variety of ways including an all-parish survey, interviewing 70+ ministries and hosting three engagement activities in between services. This plan reflects the collective input of these outreach actions.

The Committee approached this work through the lens of **transformation** using a model adapted from the College of Congregational Development—**Sources of Transformation**. This model expressed one of Saint Mark’s guiding principles, “transform” – *we seek to be transformed by the love of Christ and to share this love generously with others*. Transformation is the opposite of “conforming” and instead invites each of us to respond to God’s presence in our lives and community in ways that can continue to take new shape as we follow Christ.

A parish forum on January 31, 2024 introduced key learnings and themes. This collective work of strategic planning is integral to the ways we envision the Cathedral continuing to serve as a house of prayer, beacon of hope, and sacred community engaged in justice and peace in a post-pandemic world.

2023-2024 Strategic Planning Committee: Seyi Akanni, Canon Wendy Claire Barrie, Elli Howard, Scott Hulet, Canon Michael Kleinschmidt, Julia Logan, Emily Meeks (Co-Chair), Kathy Minsch, Michael Perera, The Rev. Canon Linzi Stahlecker, Dean Steve Thomason, Alexandra Thompson (Co-Chair) and Doug Thorpe

Holy and everliving God, creator of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Be present as we discern new ways in which you call each of us into ministry. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

– Adapted from the collect “For the Parish,” *The Book of Common Prayer*, 1979, p. 817