



Annual Parish Meeting
Minutes
Sunday, February 4, 2024
Bloedel Hall and 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.

Call to Order, Prayer, Review of Agenda

.....*Dean Steven Thomason*

The Very Rev. Steve Thomason, Dean and Rector of Saint Mark's Cathedral Parish, opened the meeting with the Land Acknowledgment followed by a prayer at 12:30PM. A second prayer for the election of a Bishop of the Diocese of Olympia was offered. Housekeeping information was provided.

Introduction of Secretary

.....*Dean Steven Thomason*

Dean Thomason introduced Kristen Kelly, Vestry Member, who will take the meeting minutes.

Appointment of Chancellor

Dean Steven Thomason

Dean Thomason reappointed Re Knack as chancellor and offered thank you for her years of ongoing service.

Minutes of 2023 Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes from the February 5, 2023 Annual Parish Meeting were reviewed and approved at the March 2023 Vestry meeting and have been available on the Saint Mark's website.

Nominations for Elected Positions

Election Rules

Chancellor Knack

Summation of the rules: Parish Communicants "in good standing" are eligible to vote. Voting by Parish Communicants in Good Standing will occur by paper ballot for those attending in person and by electronic link in the Zoom chat for those attending virtually. Those with limited access to the internet may vote by phone at 206-323-0300 x217 (Erik Donner) while the voting is open. The ballots will be counted by persons selected by the Chair of the Nominating Committee (and the results reported to the Dean and Senior Warden prior to announcement). The Chair of the Nominating Committee will announce the results of the election. The names, but not the votes, of the four candidates elected to the Vestry will be announced.

Nominating & Leadership Committee Report

John Selberg

Presentation of Candidates

Convention Delegates

John Selberg thanked the members of the 2023 Nominating Committee – Jim Buskirk, Maria Coldwell, Carrie Davis, Scott Kovacs, Michael Perera, John Selberg, and Dean Steve Thomason, ex officio. Julia Logan began as chair in September 2023; however, by the end of December 2023, an insufficient number of candidates were available. With the permission of the Dean, Julia Logan then became a

candidate for the Vestry. Kathy Sodergren, Amanda Davis, and Gretchen Cook will count the ballots. Greg Bloch was appreciated for his work putting together the election brochure.

The names of the Diocesan Convention Delegates were then read and they were thanked for standing for election.

Nancy Beadie
Bob Carter
Sallie Crotty
Wayne Duncan
Sarah Elwood-Faustino
Barbara Erickson

Hamilton Harris
Anneka Herring
Jacquelyn Miller
Gordon Miller
Rollin Salsbery
Jen Younggren

Dean Thomason opened the floor for additional nominations, and no other nominations were made.

A motion was made and seconded to close the nominations from the floor and a vote to close the nominations from the floor was approved.

Motion was made and seconded to elect the 12 persons to serve as the delegation to the Diocesan Convention by acclamation.

Vestry

John Selberg introduced the candidates for the Vestry:

Christopher Breunig
Martha Craig
Nancy George
Phillip J. Haas

Julia Logan
Sarah McCord
Christine Szabadi
David Thompson

Dean Thomason then opened the floor for nominations. No nominations were put forward.

A motion was made and seconded to close the nominations and a vote was taken, passed and nominations were closed. The ballots were then distributed by the ushers. Zoom participants had some difficulties completing the voting and utilized the phone option.

Presentation of Work of Affordable Housing Committee

Emily Meeks and John Hoerster

The committee has affirmed over the last year of work that affordable housing is one of the most important offerings that St. Mark's can make with its land. St. Mark's has supported individuals and families with housing over the years with rental assistance through the Threshold Fund and Tent City in the parking lot; and affordable housing on the property is in line with St. Mark's mission. Several organizations have supported St. Mark's in the exploratory journey: Enterprise Community Partners and Trinity Church Wall Street, for example. Dean Steve, Emily Meeks, and John Hoerster have presented at a national meeting. The committee members have been invited to a conversation about red-lining and racially restrictive covenants to be held at the University of Washington on May 22, 2024. The committee is considering how to strengthen community connections and conversations regarding the affordable housing project. John Hoerster shared that these projects can be difficult, but with prayer and determination affordable housing projects can be successful.

The annual report describes the work of the affordable housing committee. Please refer to the full report for details. An overview of the two options for housing on the St. Nicholas property was presented in brief to the attendees of the annual meeting.

- 1) All new construction – 134 units of housing
- 2) Preservation of historic section of St. Nicholas + new construction – 109 units of housing
- 3) Option 1 is more financially feasible but Option 2 is a close second. This offers flexibility in moving forwards.

The vestry has been updated about the committee's work. The Vestry conclusions:

- 1) Confirmed that use of the St. Nicholas site for affordable housing is the best mission-based use of the site
- 2) Approved a set of criteria for identifying and moving forward with a development partner
- 3) Agreed that at this point in the process, both options 1 and 2 are feasible.

Next steps in the process:

- 1) Vestry retreat on February 10, 2024: explore the financial feasibility of the options prior to selecting a developmental partner. The new vestry members will jump into this discussion at the vestry retreat and will aim to finalize this step by the end of quarter 2 of this year. At the end of the feasibility phase, the committee will make a recommendation to the vestry. At that point, the committee will work on the selection of a development partner.

John asked that the community honor the recommendation to pray for this important work.

Reports

Annual Report Booklet

Thank you to Greg Bloch, Director of Communications, and Krista Osborne, Seattle Service Corps member, and to everyone who contributed to the creation of the Annual Report Booklet. It is available on the Saint Mark's website.

Treasurer

Lynne Cobb

Pledged revenue is trending slightly down from last year. 2024 budgeting assumes that this downward trend may continue. Program revenue overall is projected to be up because of increased enrollment in choir school and planned pilgrimages by the choir school.

We have a net surplus for 2023 - \$117,000 because of deferred maintenance projects (nave lighting project, Bloedel and Leffler roof, parking lot bollards and security cameras paid for with FEMA grants. The platform chairs in nave were designated gifts). The 2024 budget shows a slight budget deficit but there are opportunities for savings on staffing. The bill paying function will be in house and this results in lower fees. We are drawing 4% from the endowment for operations.

The investment subcommittee has stayed with Treasury bills; they are getting a return that is comparable to the return on CDs and are relatively safe. Lynne mentioned that it would be helpful to have members of the finance committee that are not on vestry; this would allow the finance committee to maintain a relative independence from vestry.

Dean Steve recognized Bookkeeper Stephen Eddy and Erik Donner for their work on the finance committee as well.

Scott shared that when he was asked to be Senior Warden, he kept feeling that Dean Steve must be referring to someone else. He is very grateful for this year of opportunity to serve our common life. It has stretched him emotionally, spiritually, and physically. He loves the St. Mark's community and all that we bring to each other as we follow Jesus. Vestry strives to serve at the intersection of organizational health and spiritual vitality. Scott reports that we show signs of vitality in both realms:

- 1) Our mission is clear. We strive to be a house of worship for all. We also strive to be a loving, welcoming, inclusive space as well as a sacred gathering place for the broader community and Diocese of Olympia. We practice prayer, welcome, acts of justice and gathering together.
- 2) The leadership is courageous and visionary. The word "courage" derives from the old French word for "heart" and from Latin – the quality of mind to "act without fear". We hear from scriptures to "be not afraid". Perfect love casts our fear. Courage is the fruit of our love of God and neighbor. Scott experiences this in the staff, leaders, vestry colleagues. This courage sharpens our vision for the future. The pandemic may change how we do some things, but it does not stop us. Scott thanked Dean Steve for his courage and compassion. He thanked his vestry colleagues, especially junior wardens (Greg Hamm, Scott Kovacs, and Chris Rigos), along with Re Knack, Lynn Cobbe, and Barbara Erickson. He thanked our canons, our clergy, and Erik Donner, who attends every vestry meeting.
- 3) The culture is inclusive and generous. Every Sunday when we gather around the table, we pray the "Our Father". We live this out in the phrase "wherever you are in your spiritual journey, you are welcome here". Our congregation hosts the full array of humankind, and we are better for it. We are willing to be changed by others' presence among us, and our community together reflects God. We are on this journey together, extending a wide grace-filled welcome. Scott feels that he has experienced the generosity of the St. Mark's culture as he sees that decisions are made in a mindset that looks at what God has provided and what is God asking us to do with the resources granted to us.

Scott listed signs of spiritual vitality that he sees at St. Mark's:

- Worship and prayer – liturgical ministers that serve every week. Almost all vestry members are involved in some liturgical work
- Affordable housing exploratory committee – this is driven by our mission.
- Work of the strategic planning team – on Wednesday, January 31, approximately 60 people gathered to hear about the findings of the Strategic Planning Committee, after hearing multitudes of conversations across the community. We found that among the hundreds of responses were 6 (six) common themes; these are listed on the St. Mark's website. Scott asks us to think about these as the "vital signs of the spirit's life among us". We will be designing more plans around them at the vestry retreat this weekend.
- Creation care – reduction of carbon on our campus. Thanks to the work of the creation care committee, St. Mark's has seen an 11 % decrease in use of fossil fuels, and a decrease of 30% at St. Nicks.
- Restorative justice – the committee sponsored a retreat of 60 people in September. The committee is in the process of drafting and adoption of new guiding principles.

- Intergenerational committee – one immediate gauge of the robustness of the community is that we now have two carpets in the nave and new grandparents sitting on the rug with their grandchildren.

The community has also shown its willingness to embrace change. Scott thanked the community for its willingness to let Canon Jennifer Daugherty go. We trust in God for the future.

In summary, there are signs of health and vitality in our community. We are a resilient and hope-filled community. Thank you for your “yes” to the spirit’s transforming work in our community.

Dean Thomason’s Remarks

Dean Thomason acknowledged those who stood for election. There are no winners and losers, just those who are called to this particular ministry at this time. He also acknowledged Chef Marc Aubertin and thanked him for the snacks on the tables.

1. The annual meeting was moved to the first Sunday in February in the last few years; this was done because of the change in the Superbowl scheduling and we did not want to compete in case the Seahawks were in the Superbowl. However, next year the plan is to have the annual meeting on January 26, 2025 so as not to compete with Choral Evensong. Dean Thomason comments that “I’m not interested in looking for our savior on the football field; the swaddled baby in the church is a better way to go.”
2. Dean Thomason commented on the “occupy movement” on the rug in the nave – the frenzy of little ones on the carpet and frenzied parents chasing them. The area is so full that it requires two rugs. This is a sign of Christ being presented to us in the temple. It is life-giving, joy-filled and a sign of vitality. Note, however, that although intergenerational ministry is one of our missional goals, it is not defined by having kids present. Kids are not tokens; rather it is a statement that they are welcomed and cherished and that they are spiritual souls in their own right. We are all the richer for their presence. Ancient elders Simeon and Anna looked upon the baby Jesus. We trust that the little ones represent some sacred message. They bridge the distance between those who have gone before and those who are holding the torch in this generation and those who are yet to come – to be a light to all the people. The children share in the common legacy of grace and presence here.

Announcement of Election Results

John Selberg

At 1:25PM, the election was certified, and the new Vestry members were announced: **Christopher Breunig, Martha Craig, Phillip J. Haas, and Julia Logan.**

Dean Thomason’s Remarks, continued

1. Annual report – We embody the story, we become the story. Sometimes people need a narrative of meaning. It takes courage to make our way in the world these days, to avoid “weak resignation”, a “crusty cynicism”. This community provides the nourishment to find our way. Our attendance is up over the year but we are focusing on touches throughout the week. Connecting over zoom is still active engagement. Livestream and zoom are important and lasting touchpoints of our community life. Other marks of life include Radix groups, affinity groups, creation care, and community non-profits that use our campus each month. The Cathedral demonstrates a particularity of place – as a Cathedral campus in the midst of the city, it touches 10,000 lives each year. He cited Cathedral Yoga, which meets at 6:30 on Monday evenings – so many come and claim the cathedral in a way

they would not otherwise; Greg Bloch has helped to recreate this out of the pandemic. He also mentioned Clear Mountain Monastery, a Buddhist group that gathers 100 people every Saturday morning on our campus, principally in Skinner Auditorium.

2. Dean Thomason put up a view of the cathedral from overhead and demonstrated for the community where affordable housing could be located.
3. He discussed needed upgrades/changes to the Cathedral grounds and buildings.
 - He noted that the chapel doors, circa 1930/31, may not make it to 100 years old. They are decaying and are weathered; the veneer will need to be replaced. A donor will underwrite the restoration at Easter this year.
 - Dimmable LEDs were placed in the nave at a cost of \$100,000 – they will pay back over 7 years in reduced electricity costs. St. Mark’s received a \$24,000 rebate from Seattle City Light because they felt this was an important project – it helped with bottom line surplus.
 - Platform chairs are new and given in memory of Hyde Tennis.
 - Efficient drip irrigation system will reduce water use in the gardens.
 - New roof was placed on Bloedel Hall and Leffler House – both much needed work. The shingles on Leffler House use a carbon reduction technology and absorb carbon.
4. Dean Thomason then reviewed additional activities and improvements that occurred in 2023. He mentioned the first annual Thanksgiving Day meal held in Bloedel Hall – “let’s do it again”. He showed pictures of sunrise and sunset views from the Cathedral site. The Labyrinth is used seven days per week by many. The parking lot striping has been redone and many potholes have been patched (now more appeared!) He commented that we are “putting Band-Aids” on a parking lot system that needs to be replaced (\$250,000 to re-lay it). Parking lot lighting has been upgraded; you can now walk to your car and not feel “like you’ve gone out into desolate darkness”. The EV charging station has seen 1500 total charging sessions on the 2 units and has saved 13 tons of carbon. The Leffler garden fence has been replaced after Emily Meeks took this on as the special projects coordinator; the area feels much more open. The children’s carpet area has doubled.
5. Finance and stewardship: Many churches have experienced decreased attendance and income. Our attendance is up but giving is flat. We are about \$100,000 under the pledge base and we are budgeting a \$60,000 deficit for 2024. We think there are more households out there that might pledge, and some that might find ways to increase their commitment. We will live within our means and adjust midyear as necessary. Dean Steven notes that it is never too late to add to your commitment because it is a good cause.
6. Affordable housing project: No decisions have been made yet, but we are approaching a key decision point as discussed by John Hoerster.
7. Strategic plan: It will be shared with the community after the upcoming the vestry retreat and it will guide us in the upcoming year. Dean Steve recognized Strategic Planning Committee co-chairs, Alexandra Thompson and Emily Meeks, along with the other members of the committee.

Staff introduced: Jason Anderson, Marc Aubertin, Canon Wendy Claire Barrie, Erik Bauer, Greg Bloch, Chris Brown, Micah Clark, Erik Donner, Stephen Eddy, Rebekah Gilmore, Canon Michael Kleinschmidt, Laura Loge, Emily Meeks, John Stuntebeck, Michael Seewer, Jim Van Horn.

Priests introduced: The Rev. Canon Linzi Stahlecker. The Rev. Canon Rich Weyls will join in February 2024.

Deacons introduced: The Rev. Earl Grout. The Rev. Emily Austin has departed.

Priest Associates were acknowledged: The Rev. Steve Garratt, The Rev. Mark Miller, The Rev. Canon Marda Steedman Sanborn, The Rev. Edie Weller. The Rev. Dennis Tierney has departed.

Habitat for Humanity Crew was asked to stand and be recognized for their work around the cathedral.

Seminarians: Kelly Moody, Lynne Markova, Adam Conley, Karla Koon, Alison Estep, and John Achee. Lisa Graumlich was ordained in October 2023 and is now serving at Trinity, Seattle.

Recognition of Retiring Vestry Members

Chris Rigos, Scott Kovacs, Carmen Brady, Kathy Minsch, and diocesan member Katie Prettyman. He recognized diocesan members of the vestry: Tina Blondino, Becky Kacel, and The Rev. Gail Wheatley (new). He expressed gratitude for Chancellor Re Knack, Treasurer Lynne Cobb, and Secretary Barbara Erickson. He recognized Erik Donner for the array of work that he does, including support of the vestry.

Acknowledgments

Cathedral Foundation of the Diocese of Olympia: Julia Logan, Phillip Haas, Marc Aubertin, and others who serve on the board.

Appointment of Senior Warden

Greg Hamm is appointed as our new Senior Warden for 2024.

Pro Christo et Ecclesia Award: Scott Hulet

Cathedral Cross Award: Emily Meeks

Closing Prayer and Blessing

The Dean led the closing prayer and gave the blessing. The meeting was adjourned at 2:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Kelly
Vestry Member

Erik Donner
Cathedral Administrator