



SAINT MARK'S
EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL

August Vestry Meeting
Minutes
Tuesday, August 26, 2025 6 p.m.
Diocesan House

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
Phil Haas, Junior Warden for Finance
Greg Hamm, Senior Warden
Sam Herring
Hannah Hochkeppel (Zoom)
Julia Logan, Junior Warden for Facilities
Mark Lundquist
Sarah McCord (Zoom)
Deborah Person (Zoom)
Peter Snyder, Junior Warden for Stewardship
The Very Rev. Steve Thomason, Dean
The Rev. Gail Wheatley, Diocesan Member

Vestry Members Absent

Becky Kacel, Diocesan Member
Alexandra Thompson

Vestry Member Resignations

Sophie Hager Hume, Diocesan Member
Canon Valerie Reinke, Bishop's Representative

Officers Present

Lynne Cobb, Treasurer (Zoom)
Barbara Erickson, Clerk
Re Knack, Chancellor

Staff Members Present

Erik Donner, Cathedral Administrator
The Rev. Canon Emily Griffin, Canon Vicar

Guest

John Hoerster, Chancellor Emeritus and Affordable Housing Committee Chair (Zoom)
The Rev. Julia McCray-Goldsmith, Stewardship Consultant (Zoom)

Dean Thomason opened the meeting with our Land Acknowledgement and a prayer at 6:00 p.m., which included prayers for former staff member Chris Brown, who is nearing death.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made, seconded and passed to adopt the July 22 Vestry Meeting minutes as prepared.

STRATEGIC CONVERSATION

Stewardship with The Rev. Julia McCray-Goldsmith, board member of The Episcopal Network for Stewardship (TENS). Julia is working with our Stewardship Ministry as a consultant and emphasized the effectiveness and importance of personal touch and stories. The importance of involving more people in giving and volunteer roles and she plans to bring additional ideas for engagement when she visits again in October. Julia also offered insights into the giving pattern, attrition, and the generational differences in giving. Hannah Hochkeppel noted that the language about giving among millennials differs from traditional methods. She suggested focusing on storytelling and highlighting the specific direct impact of their contributions, presenting these interactions as a mutually beneficial relationship.

OLD BUSINESS

Affordable Housing Update

John Hoerster reported that while the July deadline for partnership percentages has passed, we are still on track to finalize the Joint Development Agreement (JDA) by the end of September. The group reviewed the selection of an architect (Perkins Eastman) and general contractor (Rafn), and discussed the ongoing negotiation of the agreement terms, with the goal of presenting a JDA document to the Affordable Housing Committee, and then vestry for approval at the September 23 meeting.

The JDA is complex due to low-income housing tax credit financing and investor requirements, with financial arrangements not finalized until 2027. Our legal counsel, John De Lanoy, commended the JDA draft for its detailed provisions, noting that 90% of the agreement was acceptable, with negotiations focusing on the remaining 10% regarding economic terms. Redwood agreed to provide Saint Mark's with an option to acquire the property after 99 years, along with a right of first refusal, ensuring permanent control for mission use. Key financial terms include a portion of the appraised property value paid at closing and a subordinated loan, with Saint Mark's seeking more certainty on allocation and a higher partnership percentage. John feels we are on track for a potential closing in the fourth quarter of 2027 and construction starting in the first quarter of 2028.

Dean Thomason acknowledged John Hoerster, attorney John De Lanoy, and consultant Tory Laughlin Taylor for their work on this.

NEW BUSINESS: Community-based Organization

Dean Thomason and John Hoerster reported that with an invitation from Trinity Church Wall Street, we have applied for another grant that will fund a consultant to address historic redlining issues. Great interest from Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) consulting firms, proposals are due next week with interviews scheduled for September 15.

OLD BUSINESS, Continued

Capital Campaign

Dean Thomason stated that the parish continuation phase will be paused until the conclusion of the annual stewardship campaign. We currently are at \$7.74 million of our \$9 million goal. The Bishop's Society event and engagement of other congregations in this diocese is under discussion.

ORION Property Management Contract

Dean Thomason announced that property management for the St. Nicholas Building will transition from ORION Commercial Partners to Saint Mark's Cathedral. This includes staff members Subdean Marc Aubertin, Buildings & Grounds Specialists Gerry Boler and Stephen Eddy, and Onsite Caretaker and Security Manager Micah Clark.

NEW BUSINESS

Wisdom School Brochure—Crossing Thresholds

Dean Thomason announced the 2025-26 Wisdom School brochure is available, has been mailed, and that the theme is Crossing Thresholds.

Center for Spirituality and Action

Eighteen individuals have expressed interest and will be organized into two groups of nine participants. The Rev. Carol Westpfahl, part-time director, will facilitate these intentional community groups.

Staffing Updates

Dean Thomason announced that with the departure of Cathedral Sacristan & Head Verger Michael Seewer, David Poortinga and Michael Perera have assumed part-time interim positions for Sunday morning liturgy, and guidance and recruiting for the sound board, respectively. It is desired that Hannah Hochkeppel assumes the part-time position of wedding and funeral coordinator, for which she will be compensated at \$35 per hour. The cathedral bylaws state that as a vestry member, the vestry must be aware and approve. Hannah was excused from the meeting, and the vestry discussed her responsibilities. This will be reviewed again at the end of the year, as it is an interim position.

A vote was taken to authorize Vestry member Hannah Hochkeppel to fulfill the interim staff position of Wedding and Funeral Coordinator. It was approved.

Bishop's Designee to SMC Vestry; Resignation of Sophie Hager Hume from Vestry

Canon Valerie Reinke, Bishop's Representative to the Vestry, has been released from responsibilities due to budget constraints and the reorganization of Faith Formation at the Office of the Bishop. Dean Thomason will be meeting with Bishop LaBelle for a replacement.

Sophie Hager Hume, a Diocesan Member of the Vestry, has resigned due to personal and family health reasons.

These appointments to the Vestry are made in consultation with the bishop. It was determined the two positions would be incorporated into the Nominating Committee's search this fall for candidates.

Clean Building Early Adopter Application

Elizabeth Antley has resigned from her role as Climate Justice Coordinator and Cathedral Grant Writer. 80% of the work of completing the Early Adopter Application has been done. The remaining technical piece can be completed with the help of Solarc Energy Group. The Climate Justice Coordinator role will remain unfilled, while seminarian Emily Meeks will fulfill the grant writer role as a contractor.

Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) Retrofit Proposal – Solarc

Solarc Energy Group has been involved in the pre-design work which is aligned with the capital campaign for the replacement of the boiler and the heating system for the Nave and Cathedral House

(Bloedel Hall and offices). Bloedel and the offices will use a VRF system, for which Solarc was asked and provided the Mechanical and Electrical design documents (including the partnering with Cross Engineers for electrical consulting) at a cost of \$94,000. Rationale for the separation of the project is 1) distinctiveness from the rest of the project which orients toward the Nave and Narthex and 2) connection to the replacement of Bloedel Hall windows which may entitle us to Seattle City Light rebates for the windows.

A motion was made to authorize, from the Living Stones II Capital Campaign, the first \$94,000 expenditure, to generate the construction documents leading to the HVAC retrofit project for the Cathedral. The motion was seconded and passed.

Homecoming Sunday Parish Picnic (Vestry support)

Dean Thomason remarked that the Homecoming Sunday Parish Picnic is being repeated, September 7, as last year's event was a success and endorsed by the parish. The vestry was asked to help on that Sunday, and a sign-up sheet was routed.

Bishop's Society Event September 20, 4-6 p.m. in nave

A sign-up sheet was routed to help at the Bishop's Society event about the capital campaign.

Earth Ministry Ceasing Operations

Dean Thomason shared that Earth Ministry has decided to dissolve due to the political climate, funding, and other challenges. Saint Mark's has had an integral role and vested interest in Creation Care, and Dean Thomason welcomed conversation about a future in some way with Saint Mark's.

Gift from Broadview Community UCC Church

Broadview Community United Church of Christ closed, sold their property, and has donated \$55,000 to Saint Mark's, with no stipulations as to its use. The Gifts Acceptance Committee recommends half for the Capital Campaign, and half for the Justice Ministries' endowment.

A motion to split the \$55,000 gift equally between the Living Stones II Capital Campaign and the Church in the World Endowment was made, seconded, and approved.

LEADERSHIP REPORT

Senior Warden

- Greg Hamm reflected on the consecration of the Memorial Garden, and recalled this had been in discussion for many years and now it has happened. Many things in the Cathedral are like that. Beginning as possibilities; then moving forward. A throughline that reflects our values and is connected to experiences. He saw Paul Simon perform, featuring his new album *Seven Psalms*, which differs from his previous work. There is an arc in his career and what he writes about, and his identity can be traced through his career, which is like the cathedral's – many things happen, some are successful, some may not be, but there is this throughline that we are all in some stage of life, and what really matters is who we are along the way and how we treat each other.

Dean

- Evensong Choir pilgrimage of 54 people (39 choristers plus staff and others joining them), led worship at Lincoln and Durham Cathedrals
- Affordable Housing, despite the time commitment, is exciting work.

- Homecoming Sunday, September 7, hospitality and servant ministry by the vestry
- Opening plenary for the Wisdom School on September 17, and teaching the Revelation series on September 14 for three consecutive Sundays
- Amelia Canaday’s funeral is September 5
- Chris Brown is nearing death due to pancreatic cancer, Cathedral Schola members will sing at his bedside tonight – a gift of love to Chris, Sandy Nelson, and Elsie Nelson Brown
- Six people are in discernment with Canon Rich Weyls (not necessarily for ordination). One measure of health of a congregation is the number of people who are raised up into the broader service of the community.
- Budget season is upon us as we orient into the stewardship season
- Files of Note
 - AFEDJ thank you letters
 - CCS thank you letter (Threshold Fund)
 - Rafn Construction Co. note card
 - Lowell Elementary thank you for teacher training day lunch
 - Ballard and St. Mary’s Food Banks thank you letters (monthly Hunger Offering)

MINISTRY/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance

1. No red ink.
2. Discussion on how finances for capital campaign will be tracked. A committee member suggested the need for a high-level project budget report similar to Affordable Housing.
3. Sr. Accountant Barbara Kelley doing well and settling in.

Stewardship

1. The fall appeal for 2026 has been reduced from five weeks to four.

Creation Care

1. Terra ball (20-foot diameter globe) will be displayed in the nave in November.

Intergenerational Council

1. Quarterly meetings are held; seeking people who will commit to be part of the Hospitality Committee. Any suggestions, please send names to Wendy Barrie.

Restorative Justice

1. Rapid Response training
 - a. for 20 people
 - b. Small group interested in Rapid Response team at the cathedral
 - c. Or interest in being a part of a Rapid Response team in own neighborhood
2. Accompaniment Training – going with people for ICE check-in appointments or immigration ports. A two-person team approach with no language requirement, but to provide social power and privilege to walk alongside the individuals.

Communications

1. Published survey results.

CHECK OUT & CLOSING PRAYER

Checkouts were given, and the closing prayer was offered by Deborah Person. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara J. Erickson
Clerk

Erik Donner
Cathedral Administrator

Dates/Events of note

9/7 Homecoming Sunday (Parish Picnic)
10/4 Blessing of the Animals
10/5 Stewardship Launch