

**SAINT MARK'S CATHEDRAL  
VESTRY RETREAT  
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2024  
DIOCESAN HOUSE**

9:00am: Opening prayer, land acknowledgment

9:05: Check in and introductions

Present: Dean Steve Thomason, Greg Hamm (Senior Warden), Christopher Breunig, Peter Snyder, Wayne Duncan, Doug Thorpe, Scott Hulet, Alexandra Thompson, Re Knack (Chancellor), Lynne Cobb (Treasurer), Martha Craig, Julia Logan, Phil Haas, Tina Blondino (Diocesan Member), Justin Mills, Kristen Kelly, Emily Meeks (Staff Member)

Not Present: Becky Kacel (Diocesan Member), Gail Wheatley (Diocesan Member), Barbara Erickson (Clerk), Valerie Reinke (Bishop's Representative)

9:15am Lectio Divina from Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, Chapter 5. Reflections on word/phrase stands out to you.

**Strategic Conversation #1: Strategic Planning**

9:25-10:50am

Copies of the strategic plan were passed out. Scott Hulet and Emily Meeks led the conversation.

The task of the vestry is to review and adopt the Strategic Plan and to approve a motion to implement the plan through the various ministries at the cathedral. The first page of the strategic plan was read aloud in a rotating manner around the table. Please see the Document "2024 Strategic Plan" in the Dropbox.

The committee created a 2024 Strategic Plan Engagement Guide. Plan to send out a communication to the parish as a whole and then the committee will outreach to the individual ministries. The committee hopes that the ministries will take the themes and form them into questions – i.e., How is our ministry rooted in spiritual practice? The ministries will also receive the original notes that came out of their individual group sessions with the strategic planning committee at the start of the process.

The Dean is hoping that the Vestry will adopt not only the strategic plan but also champion the call to ministries to incorporate the plan into their practices.

Doug Thorpe discussed how many people he met and connected with in the process of creating the plan. It is our task now to "live into it" and to maintain/strengthen the connections that initiated in the conversations. Some ministries have already been enlivened by this process.

Peter pointed out that six items may be a lot for any one ministry to focus on. Emily points out that many of the elements are interconnected. It is important to have these tools at hand to

prompt thinking about whether their activities take into account the elements of the strategic plan. It is intended as a guide rather than

Greg Hamm: important that the parish as a whole sees tangible changes as a result of the strategic plan. We need to get feedback from the ministries.

Emily – some parishes have a quarterly update/review. The strategic plan should strengthen the mutual ministry goals.

Scott Hulet – the themes sound like “vital signs of life”. We should look at this plan and be personal with it. E.g., “Am I rooted in spiritual practices?” As we do this work individually, we will be better equipped to encourage ministries to adopt these practices.

Julia – things may change organically, we will learn together how to implement it.

Phil – how does the strategic plan relate to the mutual ministry goals?

Emily – the strategic plan themes can help inform the work of the various ministries. Notices that the questions about how to implement rather than on adoption itself.

Steve – wonders if any questions/concerns before we move to vote for adoption.

Wayne – wonders if Education for Ministry should be added to the expanded portion of the plan under “expanding regional reach and welcome”. Emily is not opposed to adding this. Julia – I would be leery of adding particular programs because we will leave something out/will not be inclusive. Emily points out that the plan is limited to next 18-24 months. Re – EFM is very specific to our faith and may be more narrow than we intended to be. Wayne offers that given concerns raised, he agrees to retract the request to add EFM. Wayne points out that EFM will be offering more short courses that will allow more people to engage. Emily draws attention to the section on small groups, EFM was considered as an example of similar small group experiences. Julia – as a location that sponsors EFM, we do not have local control over what happens with their scope/curriculum. Group agrees not to modify to mention EFM.

Lynne – wonders if there is anything specific in the document about “feeding our neighbors”. Relationship seems vague and wonders if we need more specific language around outreach, helping our neighbor.

Steve – “I love the energy that is in the room” and appreciates that everyone is very engaged. Suggests that “let’s not let the perfect be the enemy of the good”. We are being asked to trust that this document might be a living one for the life of our community. We will discuss how we can model this document for the community.

Emily – the document should not be a handcuff.

Julia points out that strategic plans in the past have evolved, when we need to change it we will.

Greg – this is a floor, not a ceiling.

**Motion made to adopt the 2024 Strategic Plan. This was seconded and adopted.**

Scott recognized Emily and Alexandra for their work. He appreciated that they spoke with so many people and that the document allows us to hear the voices of the community. Scott acknowledged all of the strategic plan committee members.

20 minute break-out sessions, divided into 6 groups. Each group focuses on a specific strategic plan theme. Goal is to jot down ideas, connections with other ministries, and opportunities with mutual ministry goals.

Return to large group:

1. Being Rooted in Spiritual Practices:
  - a. Multifaceted – liturgy, sermons, art, music, gardening. Going for an experience that is transformative and transporting. Aim to leave differently than when you came in.
  - b. What can we do to encourage more personal experiences that have the same effect as retreats/pilgrimages (e.g., sabbath practices) E.g., encourage people to occasionally go to a service they don't usually attend, swap choirs occasionally, etc.
2. Empowering call to action and service:
  - a. Recognizing that all are ministers. Want to have varying entry points
  - b. Theme of people wanting more people to join them in their ministry team
  - c. Opportunities – contours of the Christian life, open to innovative worship experiences, integration of the statement of lament and call to action, more offerings like the racial reconciliation study
3. Cultivating diverse community
  - a. Finding regional calendars or newsletters and add some of our activities
  - b. Increase communications internally
  - c. Offer space to Duwamish/more actively
  - d. Reach out to other churches in the area, more exchanges (e.g., youth choir exchanges)
  - e. Simplified and holistic list of activities
  - f. How do we include people outside of St. Mark's?
4. Stewarding our Resources
5. Expanding Regional Reach and Welcome
  - a. How can we make St. Mark's a welcoming place
  - b. Center for spirituality – how can it invite in those who are less familiar with spiritual practices
  - c. Continue work with Duwamish, Lowell elementary, etc.
  - d. Communications – how can we use technology better
  - e. Greenbelt – may be a good way to engage with the community more, enjoy the space, be part of the maintenance
6. Connecting and Telling our Stories
  - a. Templates for ministry leaders about how to use zoom, how to set up an event, get something in the newsletter, how to create email distribution list, etc.

- b. Resource that helps ministry leaders know how to begin, how to get started
- c. Ministry fair
- d. If we connect and tell our stories better it will help further mutual ministry goals

10:51am Break (during the break put a dot on two activities you would like to prioritize and put your name if you would like to be part of a conversation about expanding these ideas)

## **Strategic Conversation #2: Affordable Housing**

Steve provides a backdrop/brief overview of the project. Big foci for today:

- 1) Where are we on the cost estimates?
- 2) How do we best position ourselves to get the state and city financing?

If everything falls into place, the project is feasible. Possible that March 19 meeting will come forward with recommendation to engage a development partner. John Hoerster is not able to be here today but is integrally involved.

Julia asks who is on the committee: Emily Meeks and John Hoerster (co-chairs), Lynne Cobb, Re Knack, Scott Hulet, Alexandra Thompson, Scott Kovacs, Roberta Nestaas.

1. Financing overview:
  - a. Two options:
    - i. New construction (134 units); parking underneath for 30% of tenants
    - ii. St. Nicholas Adaptive Reuse (109 units); fewer parking spaces but approx. 30% parking
    - iii. Both have some options for two and three bedroom units
    - iv. Did not want it to be maxed out space with no green space; important to have neighborhood feel and also to have some units that can accommodate families/larger groups of people
  - b. Dean Steve reviewed the details of the financing (see document in Dropbox)
    - i. Sources of financing (notes on specific elements):
      1. Tax Credit Equity – 4% bond administered from the state, highly competitive. The project does not work unless we get these bonds
      2. If we do historic option – may be able to get a specific tax credit for historic sites
      3. Public gap sources from the city/local companies – also have to get these grants to make the project work
      4. St. Mark’s would invest \$7 million upfront, then later (around 15 years later) refinance the whole project and get money out
        - a. We would get a proportion of the income from the rentals
      5. We will not sell the land; we will be partners with the developers – we will not relinquish control over the mission. Unclear exactly how this would work (e.g., land lease, etc.)

- 6. Re points out that they will need paid legal assistance as this work is outside the scope of her practice. Three firms have been identified as potential partners.
- 7. There is a document in Dropbox with specific details
  - ii. Option 1: net positive \$58,000. Option 2: neg negative \$58,000
  - iii. There are some inherent values to keeping the historic building. Does have historic landmark status – however, as a church we may have the option to tear down the building. St. Mark’s LLC owns the building and St. Mark’s is the only member of the LLC. Note that may be more cost-effective to keep the historic building, but much depends on what the city thinks and whether we are allowed to tear down the building.
  - iv. Do we have to wait until we know about funding sources before we select development partner – per Steve, no. There is no contingency plan if we do not get the funds.
  - v. Step 1: Vestry approves moving forward. Step 2: find developer who will lay out their own plan. Step 3: apply for grants (earliest would be Dec 2025).
    - 1. Grant applications – possible to apply more than once
  - vi. 4% tax only available if residents have income at 60% of area median income or less
  - vii. Very competitive to get the grants – only about 1/3 of the projects are funded
- c. Scoring to get grants:
  - i. Community-based organization: any organization or group with demonstrated ability to represent communities most harmed (must have a narrow focus on a specific community – one of identity or geography or both). E.g., BIPOC, immigrants, low income LGBTQ people, low-income people with disabilities, low income large families, low income seniors
  - ii. Does our work with tent city and feeding ministries demonstrate our ability to represent communities most harmed? Or do we need to partner with a specific group? Needs to be clear that we are able to authentically represent the needs of harmed groups.
  - iii. Almost every project that received a reward included a meaningful partnership with a community based organization
  - iv. 2/3 of the projects met standards for cost-efficiency. St. Mark’s will have some limitations here.
  - v. For profit developers are offering competitive packages and some are doing affordable housing development well
  - vi. Key takeaway – we need to do this project WITH rather than FOR
- d. Examples of successful projects:
  - i. MLK Mixed-Use and Early Learning Center
    - 1. Close to light rail, 148 units, close to light rail
    - 2. Working with REWA

3. 12.3 million comes from City of Seattle Office of Housing. Amazon has been contributing large amounts to affordable housing projects (\$11.2 million here)
    - ii. Victory Northgate with GMD Development and Northwest Education Access
      1. 154 units, close to light rail, adjacent to grocery store and pharmacy
      2. Partnered with NW Education Access
      3. The CBO partner does not have to have space in the building
      4. City of Seattle \$16 million, Amazon \$6.7 million
  - e. Not a lot of affordable housing in the Capitol Hill area; we may have competitive advantage in this sense.
    - i. Income drives who qualifies for the project first
    - ii. Then specific group identity (project will be open to all, but with preference for the specific identity group).
    - iii. Exploring potential partnerships with groups that could serve as CBO in collaboration with us (looking to do this project WITH, not FOR)
      1. First AME (historically black congregation), Equity Housing Alliance
        - a. Historically redlined cathedral property
        - b. Wealth discrepancies have impact many years later
      2. Multicultural ministry in Diocese of Olympia
2. Discussion of the geography:
  - a. What is around us: trees, houses, mansions, skyline view, water view, park, school, museum, shopping, bus stop, grocery, retail, Cornish College of the Arts, Seattle Central College, Kaiser
3. Activity to generate ideas: all given sticky notes and asked to write down ideas/put in three buckets?
  - a. Who do we need to learn from?
  - b. Whose stories need to be heard?
  - c. Who can we partner with to strengthen our mission and approach?
  - d. Emily will collate the responses and type them up?
4. Open discussion:
  - a. Might be beneficial to focus on groups with which we have had long-term relationships
  - b. Important to document our narrative and the long-term track record working with certain communities
5. Third Place: community use space, an area like the front lawn of the campus where people can exist without needing to have specific ties/relationship with each other. Would not be part of the public funding. “The Great Third Place” – written by a sociologist about where you can congregate on a level playing field.
  - a. If funded by the city, needs to be exclusive to the residents
  - b. What are hopes for how this space might be used?

- c. Ideas: container gardening, dog run, coffee shop, barista training location, library, resource center (printing, technology), study center/tutoring, community information hub, after school care, affordable daycare, senior drop in center, playground, basketball court
- d. Question by Martha: how are common spaces used in successful housing projects?
  - i. What is something you don't have in your apartment that would be beneficial to you? E.g., larger gathering space to have group gatherings/living room type space
- e. Values that you hope to see in the third space: place that drew some people from St. Mark's in addition to residents, draws people from the neighborhood/a way to integrate, intergenerational connections, specific use will depend on who the residents are, good Wi-Fi, warm and inviting, aesthetic quality, exterior seating as an invitation to entering, multipurpose

12:10pm Lunch

### **Strategic Conversation #3: Synergies and Next Steps, Mutual Ministry Goals**

1pm

1. Synergies and Next Steps
2. Mutual Ministry Goals/Committees:
  - a. Intergenerational and Innovative Change
  - b. Restorative Justice and Systemic Change
  - c. Creation Care and Carbon Reduction
3. Mutual ministry goals highlight particular areas that we want to keep in front of us month-by-month. We are revisiting whether these should continue to be our goals for the upcoming year.
  - a. Last year 2023 discussion led us to the strategic planning committee
  - b. Options: Keep as they are, adapt the tree given the strategic plan, add/replace
  - c. A theme that came up in strategic planning discussions was that the three seemed like a bit of a checkbox at the end of meetings rather than having the goals being a spark for future conversation
  - d. Greg pointed out that they are aspirational as the way they are written
    - i. Creation care has more specific target (e.g., be carbon neutral by 2030)
    - ii. Finance committee changed to talk about mutual ministry goals at the beginning of meetings but did not lead to specific/actionable changes
  - e. Julia agreed that the mutual ministry goals are starting to feel stale/like a checklist. The more we repeat them verbatim, the less impact they have

- f. Scott Hulet – the areas of impact still hold a lot of passion. Ways of following Jesus in the world that are important. Would like to see an additional one in the lines of Stewardship. New life into the language of the other ones.
  - i. Steve reminded us that a Stewardship consultant will be starting in the next month
- g. Steve: laying the groundwork for successful capital campaign.
  - i. If we are to be net carbon zero by 2030, we have been doing low-hanging fruit (\$50,000-\$100,000 per year) that reduce our emissions
  - ii. To get to net carbon zero – need to replace two boilers and some other infrastructure things that need to happen. Frame this in conjunction with aesthetic details (e.g., flooring) as this helps people feel more attached to the idea. To get the work done by 2030, we need to launch the campaign by early 2026 and likely sometime in 2025. Need to start to lay the groundwork at leadership level now. We can capture this in a mutual ministry goal.
  - iii. Doug – being specific about the 2030 net carbon neutral goal helps lay the groundwork for the necessary capital campaign.
  - iv. Scott – start discussing how we steward out individual resources
  - v. Doug – how does not impact my own choices at home, how do I aim for carbon neutrality in my own home. Narrative re: replacing gas boilers should be in the context of mutual ministry goals. Not very sexy to replace two gas boilers but is essential to meet our goals.
  - vi. Phil - Stewarding resources includes time, talent, property, money
  - vii. Greg – some spiritual practices need a place – e.g., the cathedral – bring the practical needs together with spiritual
  - viii. Doug – aesthetics do matter, contributes to the spiritual dimension of their life in the church
  - ix. Peter – stewardship is a spiritual practice
  - x. Steve – should we make affordable housing one of the mutual ministry goals?
    - 1. Julia says that she is hearing message that we need to be careful in the language – people prefer Affordable Housing rather than low-income housing. Some people ask if going to be like the Tiny Houses
    - 2. There is a way to refresh the mutual ministry goals with language from the strategic plan. Draw on the strategic plan to update the mutual ministry goals.
  - xi. Greg – making more transparent the connection between generosity and what the cathedral is able to do. If there is less money, we can do fewer things.
  - xii. Kristen – making sure the Cathedral community is able to engage in the discussion about Affordable Housing.

- xiii. Steve – community members have asked are you all really serious about this or are we just talking? If we are going to say that the leadership of the cathedral was involved in redlining in the past (and they were), then how are we going to act going forward?
- xiv. Phil – do we put the Affordable Housing in the mutual ministry goals now or later? Steve points out that this is bidirectional
- xv. Greg – Affordable housing is a long-term goal, perhaps we should break it down to more time limited steps (e.g., laying the groundwork for affordable housing)
- xvi. Greg asked how capital campaign is different from regular stewardship campaign. Steve answered using the example of the Living Stones campaign
  - 1. Got commitments over a 3-year period, invited people to extend an additional 4<sup>th</sup> year
  - 2. Large committee/many people involved in the planning
  - 3. Separate from and in addition to your annual pledge. Inviting folks to make a stock gift, pledge out of a reserve fund, etc.
  - 4. Consultant can help, never want to do a campaign without a consultant – it is worth the money
  - 5. Thinks that people will get excited about updating nave, trying to get to carbon neutral
- xvii. Back to mutual ministry goals – changing the goals/refreshing may generate some excitement.
- xviii. Justin – in the proposal for the two options for development of St. Nicholas Building, is there any information about the carbon impact?
  - 1. Steve – we have signed onto low carbon emission certification, included in the cost models. Historic rehab is a much lower carbon generator (not having to pour all new concrete, which is very carbon-intensive).
  - 2. Justin wonders whether this information should be quantified and included in the two plans
- xix. Greg – are the consultants worried about what will be found in rehabbing an old building?
  - 1. Seismic and hazmat surveys have already been completed.
- xx. Justin – would like to have a stronger tie between strategic plan and mutual ministry goals. Steve is hoping to have a group of 3-4 people draft something to present to vestry next month.
- xxi. Justin – connecting and telling our stories, wonders if more standardize way of keeping people connected and informed. People go off to their various ministries; how do we connect more as a whole group.
  - 1. Communications has a meeting on Tuesday; there is a real sense of opportunity to think about our staffing, weekly communications, website

2. E.g., Scott Hulet reports that there is so much going on with restorative justice but does not know how to communicate it effectively

## **Organizing Meeting of the Vestry**

1:38pm

Steve reports that Erik Donner will be sending out the conflict of interest form that all vestry members need to sign. Steve explained what needs to be disclosed.

All vestry members need to complete Safe Church Training. Erik Donner tracks this and will notify members if it needs to be updated.

Election of Vestry Clerk and Treasurer (Chancellor was appointed during February 4 Annual Parish Meeting):

- **Barbara Erickson has volunteered to serve again as Clerk. Approved unanimously.**
- **Lynne Cobb has volunteered to serve again as Treasurer. Approved unanimously.**

Election of Junior Wardens (Facilities, Finance, Stewardship)

Dean Steve stepped out of the room for the discussion. There is no prescribed protocol for appointment of Junior Wardens. Greg reviewed who might be interested in the various positions. Lynne Cobb notes that she has five individuals interested in joining the Finance Committee.

**Phil Haas volunteered to serve a Junior Warden for Finance. He was unanimously elected.**

**Julia Logan expressed interest in serving as Junior Warden for Facilities. She was unanimously elected.**

**Peter Snyder expressed interest in serving as Junior Warden for Stewardship. He was unanimously elected.** He asked several questions about logistics of the executive committee, including the timing of the Executive Committee meetings (Peter has a standing meeting on Monday evenings and wonders if the Executive Committee meeting timing is flexible; everyone agreed this could be negotiated.)

Resolution for Check Signers: required by bank to put in Vestry minutes who the check signers are. The main operating account signers are the Dean, Treasurer, Senior Warden, and one Junior Warden. As Julia Logan lives the closest, Steve asked if Julia would be willing to be a check signer and she agreed. **The Operating Account check signers will be Steve Thomason, Lynne Cobb, Greg Hamm, and Julia Logan.**

New practice – will ask for credit report on all check signers.

**Motion to change the signatories on Dean's Discretionary Fund: remove Jennifer Daugherty and add Linzi Stahlecker and Rich Weyls. Approved.**

Resolution for Executive Committee: Vestry needs to authorize the organization and functioning of the Executive Committee composed of the wardens and the dean. **Resolution #24-GO-01 was approved.**

**St. Mark's received a gift from the Estate of Therese Day, just under \$40,000 of unrestricted funding. The gifts Acceptance Committee recommends that this donation be designated for the Cathedral Endowment. This was unanimously approved.**

Vestry Meetings: Dean Steve inquired regarding preferences for meeting location and/or Zoom/hybrid. The group agreed that it prefers to meet in person with hybrid option. Rotating closing prayer and meal preparation.

Upcoming Dates

2/13 Shrove Tuesday

2/14 Ash Wednesday

2/18 Vestry Installation

3/19 Vestry Meeting

1/26/25 Annual Parish Meeting

Vestry Liaisons to Standing Committees

Worship and Prayer: Julia, Wayne

Facilities: Julia, Lynne

Finance: Phil

Stewardship: Peter, Kristen

Communications: Justin, Wayne

Restorative Justice: Tina, Doug, Scott, Christopher

Intergenerational: Martha

Creation Care: Doug

Review of Mutual Ministry Goals was performed. Vestry check-out was performed. Closing prayer was offered by Dean Steve. The meeting was adjourned at 2:23pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Kelly  
Vestry Member

Erik Donner  
Cathedral Administrator