



July Vestry Meeting

Minutes

Tuesday, July 22, 2025 6 p.m.

Zoom

SAINT MARK'S

EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL

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

Becky Kacel, Diocesan Member

Julia Logan, Junior Warden for Facilities

Sarah McCord

Deborah Person

Canon Valerie Reinke, Bishop's Representative

Peter Snyder, Junior Warden for Stewardship

The Very Rev. Steve Thomason, Dean

Alexandra Thompson

The Rev. Gail Wheatley, Diocesan Member

Vestry Members Absent

Sophie Hager Hume, Diocesan Member

Sam Herring

Hannah Hochkeppel

Mark Lundquist

Officers Present

Lynne Cobb, Treasurer

Barbara Erickson, Clerk

Re Knack, Chancellor

Staff Members Present

The Rev. Adam Conley, Curate

Erik Donner, Cathedral Administrator

The Rev. Canon Emily Griffin, Canon Vicar

Guest

John Hoerster, Chancellor Emeritus and Affordable Housing Committee Chair

Dean Thomason opened the meeting with our Land Acknowledgement and a prayer at 6:00 p.m. Adam Conley was welcomed as our new curate. Alexandra and Re were to provide dinner, but internet issues at Diocesan House prevented this.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to adopt the June 24, 2025 Vestry Meeting minutes as presented

STRATEGIC THEME CHECK-IN

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.*

Vestry was asked to respond to the questions: How have you embraced this strategic theme recently?

- Sarah is volunteering at St. Andrews and is receiving questions and positive feedback about Saint Mark's. The "Board" would like to pivot its approach based on what is happening in the world.
- Martha was returning the Eucharistic Visitor's kit, when she met a young couple with an older man interested in visiting Thomsen Chapel. She invited them in and shared information about Compline, the music and invited them to come back. As they were leaving the Dad said, "You are my angel."
- Greg's observations from attending the Newcomers' Coffee are that people come to Saint Mark's for a variety of reasons, feeling welcome is the general theme. Being greeted at the door, the music, the space itself adds to that welcoming feeling. It is no accident this is one of our strategic themes. Important in all we do.
- Peter spoke of Julie Speidel's funeral where the attendees had a connection to Julie and her work, but not necessarily a connection with Saint Mark's, yet we were able to provide a space where she could be honored and remembered.
- Alexandra attended James Wilcox and Molly Porter's wedding, which was also open to the church community and identified as a special place.
- Christopher shared how the 130 – 150 yoga attendees use this space as a gathering place. A sense of community exists not only with yoga but with looking at the art installations, the icons and photographs, the Gaza and Ukraine drawings. They feel the sacredness of this space.
- Dean Thomason shared the following research: a zip code search by Erik reflects our members reside in 112 zip codes across Washington; Greg has metrics that 135,000 people from 16 countries view at least one worship service. Global reach!

To the question: How might this be integrated into your ministry group or your life as a Saint Mark's ministry leader?

- Alexandra feels the Accessibility Task Force could reach out to other parishes or dioceses to see what they have done/are doing with regards to accessibility.
- Martha acknowledged our sacred spaces events and worship reached out beyond the community.
- Phil shared that there are many examples of how we support the diocese and community. Outside the diocese affordable housing is becoming a bigger part of our lives. Within the diocese the work we do with ordinations and with colleagues speaks for itself.
- Deborah reflected on Evening Prayer and how random people who just pop in have become regulars; it creates a welcoming atmosphere; wonders how to spread the word of its existence?
- Gail mentioned she has placed a link to Season of Creation 2025 - September 1 to October 4, 2025 in the chat box.

OLD BUSINESS

Affordable Housing Update

The meeting focused on updates regarding the Affordable Housing Project and its financial arrangements with Redwood Housing. John Hoerster explained that the timeline for finalizing the percentage allocation between Saint Mark's and Redwood has been pushed to the end of August, with the broader financial agreement likely to be addressed at the September vestry meeting. He noted that the selection of an architect and general contractor is moving forward, with estimated costs over \$2.8 million. Steve emphasized that the project is not expected to be completed until 2029, and he reassured us that the current ministries or tenants will not be displaced before then. John also shared that a grant proposal was sent to Trinity Church Wall Street to help form a community-based organization that would be affiliated with Saint Mark's.

Thank you to John for the good work for the benefit of the Cathedral.

Capital Campaign

Dean Thomason announced the Capital Campaign has reached \$7.7 million and gifts continue to come in.

The Continuation Phase. There are still parishioners who have not responded to the campaign. 750 people in the Compline Choir database who are not in the cathedral database, along with the broader music and organ community will be invited to support the campaign.

The Diocesan Phase. Bishop LaBelle and Steve co-signed a letter and materials that will be sent to the parishes in the diocese. David Wild and Lulu Gargiulo produced a video with Bishop LaBelle and Dean Thomason that will also be sent to the diocese. The Bishop's Legacy Society members will be invited to attend a reception scheduled for September.

When asked about a process for determining where to spend money if there was a surplus or if our goal is not met, the Dean responded that Vestry would be asked to determine where the surplus would go and that money would be borrowed to close any financing gaps.

Bloedel Renovations

Dean Thomason reports that the flooring has transformed the entire Bloedel Hall space. Photographs of the installation of the new wood flooring have been sent to the donor. Other projects in the works are bids for acoustical tiles to dampen the sound and Marc Aubertin, Subdean, is researching window covering options. This project is outside the budget so the vestry will be asked to consider funding for this project.

Accessibility Task Force Report

Dean Thomason acknowledged the incredible work of the Task Force in creating a document – a masterplan for campus accessibility projects – that will be brought before the vestry in September.

NEW BUSINESS

Memorial Garden Ad Hoc Committee

The Ad Hoc Committee has proposed the site and a policy for a Memorial Garden for the Vestry to consider. Vestry would authorize the area of south end of the churchyard around the Deodar Cedar tree to become a perpetual garden where ashes would be placed into the ground (unmarked graves) and

sacrosanct in perpetuity. The policy identifies guidelines for burials as well as the transfer of cremated remains from the Chapel of Resurrection to the Garden. A discussion was held regarding the various alternative locations that had been considered and since the area would be sacrosanct.

Steve outlined plans for a separate area for pet ashes and discussed the legal process for transferring ashes from the Columbarium to the Memorial Garden, with Re requesting the contract details for review. The group agreed to create a distinction between the Memorial Garden for humans and the pet ashes area, with no plaques for pets to maintain the spatial separation. This subject will be addressed separately.

The motion to approve the two recommendations from the Ad Hoc Committee to identify the location and the policy on burials in the Memorial Garden was made, seconded, and approved.

Financial Audit

Lynne Cobb presented a positive audit report with increased cash reserves and a clean opinion from the auditors. Greg Hamm thanked Lynne, among others, for all of her work on it.

The Finance Committee recommended accepting the 2024 financial audit as presented, and the vestry approved the recommendation.

Housing Resolution for Adam Conley

A motion was made and passed to adopt Vestry Resolution #25-FI-02 as presented.

Proposed Apse Chapel in the Northwest Corner

Dean Thomason proposed the creation of an apse chapel in the northwest corner of the nave, which would include a restored altar from St. Paul's, Port Townsend, and two backlit stained glass light boxes. The vestry expressed support for the idea, though some members questioned whether the peace shrine in McCaw Chapel should be moved as part of the project.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Senior Warden

Greg Hamm just returned from a six-week trip to Europe. Greg shared his recent experience visiting European cathedrals, particularly the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona and the old and new cathedrals in Salamanca, Spain. He highlighted how these long-term construction projects, funded by donations, reflect the ongoing nature of cathedral building. Greg was moved by the old cathedral in Salamanca, where the Apostles' Creed is depicted in 12 paintings around a cloister, emphasizing the emotional impact of sacred spaces. He drew parallels between these experiences and the mission of creating a cathedral space to move hearts and inspire faith.

Dean Thomason

- The Affordable Housing project is in full swing
- Visiting Vancouver, WA to see his sister and will make a Capital Campaign visit to the Church of the Good Shepherd
- Joining the Evensong Choir Pilgrimage
- A copy of the 2025 Building Decarbonization Grant application from City of Seattle
- Thank you letter from the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem
- A representative list of community organizations who use Saint Mark's and this includes over 60 non-profit organizations.

- Cathedral Sacristan & Head Verger Michael Seewer is leaving to be the Executive Assistant to Bishop LaBelle. A transition plan is being developed by Emily Griffin and Steve. A staff lunch honoring Michael was held on June 22, and on June 27 there will be receptions celebrating Michael after both the 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. services.
- A charitable giving graphic was created by The Rev. Julia McCray-Goldsmith, Stewardship Consultant

MINISTRY/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance

The May financial statements have been provided, and June will be reviewed at the August meeting.

Stewardship

Peter Snyder reported the raw materials (images and text) for the 2026 campaign have been sent to Greg Bloch; committee met with consultant Julia McCray-Goldsmith in July and came away with great ideas.

Creation Care

Dean Thomason highlighted Sacred Spaces events on July 26 and September 1, and Wendy and Steve talked about a fall program with Timi Vann about the Elwha River restoration project. Gail Wheatley, who lives in Port Angeles, reported about a tragic environmental incident involving a tanker spill into the Elwha River; the community was asked to pray for the river's restoration.

Intergenerational Council

Martha Craig reported the two Sacred Spaces days have multiple hosting opportunities (contact Wendy Barrie). There are also Meal Train opportunities (contact Wendy).

CHECK OUT & CLOSING PRAYER

Checkouts were given, and the closing prayer was given by Julia Logan. The meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara J. Erickson
Clerk

Erik Donner
Cathedral Administrator

Dates/Events of note