



November Vestry Meeting
Minutes
Tuesday, November 18, 2025 6 p.m.
Diocesan House
Dinner hosts: Alexandra & Deborah

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

Vestry Members Absent

Sam Herring

Officers Present

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

Staff Members Present

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

Dean Thomason began the meeting at 6:00 p.m. with the Land Acknowledgement and a prayer. Dean Thomason thanked Alexandra Thompson and Deborah Person for dinner.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The motion to adopt the October 28, 2025 Vestry Meeting minutes was made, seconded, and passed.

STRATEGIC CONVERSATION

2026 Budget Draft

Dean Thomason discussed the 2026 draft budget that currently has a \$100,000-plus deficit. A solid budget will be presented to the vestry at its December 9 meeting following the December 8 meeting of the Finance Committee.

Dean Thomason also reported that there has been a dramatic increase in new pledges, reflecting the growth we are experiencing. There were several who also increased pledges; many maintained their pledge amount, presumably attributed to the capital campaign; some decreased their pledges; some pledges stopped due to loss of job or death. It is anticipated that pledges will be up approximately 7% year over year, but what stands out is the generosity and the good energy that exists.

Phil Hass reported the balance sheet for the capital campaign will show everything in one place.

OLD BUSINESS

Affordable Housing Updates

Dean Thomason reported the “massing” design is for 136 projected units with one-to-three-bedroom apartments with a projected cost of \$95 million. The community engagement phase begins with Kendall Clawson meeting with key stakeholders. Plans anticipate permitting in 2026; funding 2027; and groundbreaking in early 2028 with residents potentially moving in midyear 2029. A special parish forum will be held on December 10 with John Hoerster and committee members, Redwood, and our consultants, Kendall Clawson and Uncommon Bridges presenting.

Capital Campaign

Dean Thomason and others continue the work with the major donors in the Diocese of Olympia and the broader community. The capital campaign has reached \$8.1 million in pledges. A couple of grant applications have been submitted with determinations slated for next year, and beginning in January, the Dean will be visiting congregations in the diocese about one Sunday a month as part of the continuation phase of the campaign.

VRF Retrofit Proposal – Solarc

The HVAC retrofit project for Cathedral House and Bloedel Hall is planned for May to August 2026, with permits expected by February. We will also be eligible to apply for a new Puget Sound Energy grant to help offset the cost and rebates upon completion. That grant application will be submitted in December.

Bishop’s Designee to SMC Vestry

Dean Thomason announced that Charles Thorne, Canon for Finance on the bishop’s staff, has been appointed by Bishop LaBelle to be his designee to the vestry. His service begins with the orientation for new vestry members on January 26, 2026.

Clean Building Early Adopter Approval

Canon Emily Griffin reported that the Washington Department of Commerce has accepted our application and stated that we are compliant. We are now in the pipeline for early adopter grant funding.

Stewardship Annual Appeal

Peter Snyder, Junior Warden for Stewardship, reported that all is going well given the capital campaign and the uncertainty of the economy. A summary of the campaign and the minutes from their last meeting with the consultant will be available in the Dropbox.

Nominating Committee Update

Greg Hamm, Senior Warden and Nominating Committee Chair, reported that the committee has eight candidates for the vestry and 12 convention delegates – two weeks early; and that this reflects people becoming more involved and willing to step up. Thank you to the Nominating Committee members.

Ballot Process at Annual Meeting

Re Knack, Chancellor, recommended the 2025 election rules which allowed for the meeting to open at 8 a.m. and close at 12:45 p.m. be used for the 2026 election. It was noted that this process allowed parishioners to vote right after their service and that there was an increase in voters and positive feedback.

A motion was made to adopt the 2025 election rules for the election at the January 25, 2026 Annual Parish Meeting. It was seconded and passed.

Terra Installation

Asking for feedback on the presence of the Terra Globe, Dean Thomason received nothing but positive feedback: it is a God's eye view of the earth, loved the photos taken by Kevin Johnson, spellbinding, breathtaking when you walk in the door, the climate impactive statements are good, amazing addition to Cathedral Yoga – drew 312 yogis in the final week, and the Dean's reflections in his homily that first Sunday addressed Terra.

Greenbelt Trees and Ivy

Dean Thomason noted that the new owners of a triangular house located at the base of the slope near Eastlake Boulevard have expressed concerns regarding the health of nearby trees, which are covered in ivy and leaning toward their house. Very steep slope at the west end of property in the Greenbelt, some trees are on City of Seattle property, some on Saint Mark's property or on property owned through St. Mark's Properties, LLC. To remove the ivy is expensive, the City of Seattle has approved the permits and there is movement now toward a clear path to resolution.

Livestream Coordinator Position

Dean Thomason mentioned that a livestream coordinator has been hired, and the name will be announced in a week or two. The interview team consisted of Canon Griffin, Dean Thomason, and David Wild, and they narrowed the 50 applicants to six or seven who were interviewed. This person, who has livestreaming experience in the Episcopal Church, rose to the top. They will be with us in early December.

Mutual Ministry Review

Greg Hamm, Senior Warden, focused the Mutual Ministry Review on the conclusions and the recommendations offered by this vestry.

- *Execute a successful capital campaign in 2025.* Adapt to represent the Continuation phase of the capital campaign, and to begin planning for the construction / renovation activities funded by the campaign.
- *Continue the development of Affordable Housing on the cathedral campus.* Adapt to reflect the active development phase of the project, and to emphasize the establishment of the Community Based Organization.

- *Strengthen the vision of stewardship as a year-round spiritual practice.* Adapt as essentially complete, while continuing to attend to its broader vision of stewardship.
- *Explore an appropriate role for St. Mark's in migrant and immigrant justice strengthen.* Adapt as needed to reflect the various Cathedral responses to the evolving needs of our broader community in troubled times. This might possibly result in more than one goal.

In closing, Greg states the Mutual Ministry goals are the things we track within a given ministry year but are informed by strategic themes which are statements of our core values. The Ministry goals will change more rapidly year to year, while themes, as value statements, will change slowly. The strategic plan themes continue to be effective, and no changes are currently recommended.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to receive the Mutual Ministry Review, and commend it to the next vestry (2026-27).

NEW BUSINESS

Archival Name-Gender Conventions Policy.

Erik Bauer, Cathedral Archivist, recommends adopting the policy to address all archival records with these guidelines—Guidelines for Policy on Amending Church Records for Name and Gender Changes. These guidelines provide the when and how and by whom can name, gender, pronouns be modified in archival records.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to adopt the Archival Name-Gender Conventions Policy as provided.

CLA Financial Review Proposal

Lynne Cobb, Treasurer, supplied an information only report that a Memorandum of Agreement was signed in September, and CLA will perform the Financial Review at the same price with escalators if more work is required.

2026 Vestry Calendar

A motion to adopt the 2026-27 Vestry calendar was made, seconded, and passed.

2026 Clergy Housing Allowance Resolution

A review of the proposed housing allowance resolution, #25-FI-03, was discussed for the clergy members Adam Conley, Emily Griffin, and Richard Weyls.

A motion was made to adopt the housing allowance, Vestry Resolution #25-FI-03, as proposed. It was seconded and passed.

Lowell Elementary Food Appeal

Dean Thomason reported the food appeal made on Sunday to support Lowell Elementary when the SNAP funding was in question resulted in over \$40,000 being raised as well as carloads of food being donated. These generous donations will be used to provide food for the school's food pantry and grocery cards. Children get breakfast and lunch at school, but many go without dinner. They struggle to find meals on weekends and during school breaks.

Consideration of Bylaws Change—Youth Vestry Member

Greg Hamm shared a conversation the Nominating Committee had about involving youth as vestry members:

1. A one-year appointment vs three-year commitment
2. Concern about two or three standing for election and those not selected
3. Vestry pandering to the youth and being dismissive
4. Importance and benefits of the involvement of youth with the vestry
5. 16 years and older are eligible to vote
6. Youth can also be invited to be an observer at any vestry meeting

Clarification of the process to change the bylaws was discussed. The change comes through the Vestry and is approved by vote at the Annual Parish Meeting.

Roofline Water Issues and Safety System

Dean Thomason mentioned problems with water along the roofline and a flooded entryway at the St. Nicholas Building. The drain had become clogged with tree roots and eventually collapsed, which led to flooding in the building's entrance. A new leak appeared on Friday in the nave due to water intrusion from where the gutter and drainage system wrap around the copula. A year ago, the vestry authorized a harness system for attic, but a safety system for accessing the roof was postponed. The quote for a safety system that would enable the staff and vendors to safely access the roof to clean gutters is \$32,000. The funds are available in the reserves, but vestry authorization is needed for this expenditure. **A motion to authorize the purchase of a \$32,000 safety system for the cathedral roof was made, seconded, and passed.**

LEADERSHIP REPORT

Senior Warden

- Several members will be leaving the Vestry come February. As with any change, it is important to bear in mind how to embrace change going forward. For those who are remaining, consider possibly serving as a Junior Warden—reflect on your interest and skills, as these are important positions doing important work.
- Express my profound gratitude to all of you for the work we've had the opportunity and the privilege to do together. I certainly enjoyed all of that and it is a marvelous thing to see how people can come together in the church and do the sort of work that we have been able to do that ends in a successful year.

Dean Thomason

- Files of Note – Thank yous were received from the Duwamish Tribe for real rent, Ballard Food Bank, Clear Mountain Buddhist Monastery, and the Lowell School children.
- Dates / Events of Note
 - 11/23 Alternative Gifts Market
 - 11/27 Thanksgiving Day
 - 11/30 O Antiphons
 - 12/10 Special Parish Forum—Affordable Housing
 - 12/17 Pageant of the Nativity
- Terra globe is a wonderful source of joy, saw a similar one in Dublin and to be able to make it happen here has been pure joy.

- When on vacation last month – knocked over by a Mastiff dog on the hiking trail, resulted in a torn medial meniscus in his left knee, MRI on November 21 to see what the next steps are. Bid your prayers.

MINISTRY/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Worship & Prayer

Canon Griffin encouraged participation, presence during the various aspects of Advent. Beginning with ‘O’ Antiphons, leading into the Pageant of the Nativity, then the longest night service which happens to be on the Equinox – creating a space for those for whom this is truly a dark time, leading into Christmas and New Year’s. Thanks were given in advance to David Poortinga, Hannah Hochkeppel, Michael Perera, the staff, and liturgical leaders – “a group that is that committed to doing worship with that kind of integrity and excellence.”

Dean Thomason also shared that Samuel Torvend, a retired priest, is charged by Bishop LaBelle to review and develop alternative liturgies, similar to the ones we use at the 9 a.m. service. After an explanation of our process was given, he was so impressed that he requested we present it to the clergy of the diocese as an example of what a process should look like when developing liturgies.

Finance

With finance covered earlier, Phil Haas says the October financial statements will be available at the next meeting; Lynne Cobb added that the bid for the audit review by CLA was several thousand dollars less than last year.

Facilities

Julia Logan’s updates: the south drive stop sign may be installed by the end of month; met with Marc Aubertin, Subdean, the facilities staff and Pam Gray to select the paint color for Bloedel Hall and Gerry Boler is painting; pothole repair in the south parking lot are underway; our Habitat for Humanity’s team is completing the prayer space and working on an ambo “booster” to accommodate taller preachers; the Greening of the Cathedral on December 11 and 12; and the Terra globe will be removed on November 24.

Stewardship

Peter Snyder reports they are taking time off after the stewardship campaign, with no meetings in December or January.

Creation Care

Deborah Person and The Rev. Gail Wheatley commented on the extraordinary presence of the Terra globe especially when it was lowered and you could touch the globe; the Friday program was very moving; played an important part in this month and was a wonderful expression of our values around creation care.

Intergenerational Council

Martha Criag reported the next council meeting would be in December. She reminds all that the Alternative Gift Market is November 23, and if you are interested in helping with setup this weekend, contact Canon Wendy Barrie.

Restorative Justice Council

Christopher Breunig began his report acknowledging that the first accompaniment of an immigrant occurred this month. Martha Craig accompanied a young man and his aunt to their hearing at Immigration Court and shared her accompaniment experience: ICE was not present, knowing Spanish is helpful if help is needed to complete forms, learnings from this eye-opening experience were passed along to the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network.

Canon Griffin was very excited about being able to put the training to work. Christopher also referenced the December book study, led by Canon Griffin, featuring *The Asylum Seekers: A Chronicle of Life, Death and Community at the Border*.

Communications

Alexander Thompson reported the committee is on hiatus, but the Accessibility Task Force is anxious to continue their work, and is waiting for the new Vestry cohort to begin next year.

CHECK OUT & CLOSING PRAYER

Checkouts were given, and the closing prayer was given by Christopher Breunig. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara J. Erickson
Clerk

Erik Donner
Cathedral Administrator

Dates/Events of note

11/23 Alternative Gifts Market
11/27 Thanksgiving Day
11/30 O Antiphons
12/10 Special Parish Forum—Affordable Housing
12/17 Pageant of the Nativity