



SAINT MARK'S
EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL

**October Vestry Meeting
Minutes**

**Tuesday, October 28, 2025 6pm
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.

Vestry Members Present

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

Vestry Members Absent

Sam Herring

Officers Present

Lynne Cobb, Treasurer
Barbara Erickson, Clerk
Re Knack, Chancellor

Staff Members Present

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

Dean Thomason opened the meeting with the Land Acknowledgement and a prayer for the departed at 6:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the September 23 Vestry Meeting minutes was made, seconded, and passed.

STRATEGIC CONVERSATION

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.*

Dean Thomason led a conversation about the cathedral's strategic plan, focusing on expanding regional reach and welcome, with various members sharing examples of how their ministries attract non-Saint Mark's attendees, including Education For Ministry (EFM), Evening and Morning Prayer, hospitality group for receptions, Men's Retreat, the music, Cathedral Yoga, Restorative Justice, and Radix. Dean Thomason also shared data showing participation in livestream worship included all 50 states and 21 countries, highlighting the cathedral's reach beyond its immediate congregation.

OLD BUSINESS

Affordable Housing Updates

The Affordable Housing committee is still holding meetings and expects to present design plans at a Wednesday evening parish forum scheduled for December 10.

Community-based Organization

Consultant Kendall Clawson is meeting with a subcommittee from the Affordable Housing committee to work on the Community Based Organization (CBO) development. This will be the managing partner of the project and will have space in Skinner Auditorium to continue its work.

Capital Campaign

The campaign has raised about \$7.8 million with pledges and gifts still coming in during the Diocesan Parish Phase. Dean Thomason is scheduling parish meetings throughout the diocese for first quarter of 2026; with the Diocesan phase to continue over the next year to 18 months. We should hear back from the Norcliffe Foundation about our submission for a \$1 million dollar grant proposal in January 2026. The plan is to apply in January 2026 for another \$250,000 matching grant program.

VRF Retrofit Proposal - Solarc

Dean Thomason reported that the engineers continue to do the design work. The engineers, architects and Marc Aubertin, Subdean, did a comprehensive walkthrough of the facility two weeks ago. They hope to have formal design plans to submit to the city for the permitting process by the end of the year, with approvals in February 2026 and work to begin in April. All is dependent on the aligning of the timeline.

Bishop's Designee to SMC Vestry

Bishop LaBelle has appointed Charles Thorne as his designee to the Vestry. Charles is the Canon for Finance for the Office of the Bishop.

Clean Building Early Adopter Application

The Rev. Canon Emily Griffin reported that with the help of Solarc and Marc Aubertin, the Clean Building Early Adopter application was submitted on October 3. Emily explained that the mandatory application date is 2027, but by submitting this early there is financial incentive in that we could realize a \$11,000 rebate. Emily expressed kudos to Marc and Solarc for their great job.

Falling Stone Thomsen Chapel Window Arch

Dean Thomason provided a recap of the work that was done by the stonemasons to the cracked stone in the arch over the front window of Thompson Chapel. They also checked the north side of the chapel and waterproofed and resealed there as well. The project was finished on budget at \$15,000 and within scope.

Braver Angels Forum 10/22/2025

Dean Thomason reported that there were about 100 people attending in Bloedel Hall with another 65 online. Deborah Waddell, parishioner and co-facilitator, was acknowledged for a fantastic job, and she and Wendy Barrie, and the Dean are in conversation about next steps guided by the Braver Angels methodology in the first quarter of 2026.

Stewardship Annual Appeal

Peter Snyder, Junior Warden for Stewardship, presented his report that included that Ingathering Sunday was on October 26 – a three-week campaign this year – with 194 pledges received for \$827,000. 20 were

new pledges and with a net increase in pledge amounts of \$45,000. There are still many outstanding pledges but given the shortened campaign and the earlier Capital Campaign, it leads to more follow-up work for Steve Thomason and Erik Donner. Steve expressed his gratitude to Peter and the Stewardship committee members, Erik, Alexandra Thompson, Deborah Person, and Greg Hamm who helped guide the campaign.

Nominating Committee Update

Greg Hamm reported that the committee has six candidates interested in running for the Vestry and perhaps seven others who are considering it. The committee will begin seeking convention delegates with a goal of having nominations completed by the first week of December.

NEW BUSINESS

Staff COLA 2.7%

A 2.7% COLA for 2026 was approved for the clergy compensation scale at the Diocesan Convention this year. The Executive Committee, as has been the practice, recommends a 2.7% COLA increase for the lay staff except for two staff members whose compensation are being addressed in separate measure by the Dean in consultation with the wardens. The Vestry will go into Executive Session at the end of the meeting to discuss the Dean's compensation.

The recommendation from the Executive Committee to approve the 2.7% 2026 COLA for the lay staff, except for two individuals as noted, was passed.

2026 Budget Timeline

The first draft of the 2026 budget was not available but will be presented at the November Vestry meeting. The challenges of unplanned, but necessary staff changes will all be reflected in the budget presented and approved at the November or December vestry meeting.

Bequest from Amelia Canaday

Dean Thomason shared that Amelia and Nick Canaday identified the cathedral as a beneficiary in their trust. Clear instructions were left for the disbursement of \$200,000+. Half will go to the permanently restricted Century II Mission Endowment and half to the permanently restricted St. Mark's Endowment. The cathedral draws 4% each year from each account. The Gift Acceptance Committee recommends the vestry honor the donor's request. The Dean thanked Nick and Amelia for their generosity.

The motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to accept this gift as the donor requested: half to the permanently restricted Century II Mission Endowment and half to the permanently restricted St. Mark's Endowment.

Livestream Coordinator Position

Dean Thomason mentioned that a 10-hour-per-week position, started by Chris Brown in 2017 with the livestream ministry launch, had been posted. Emily Griffin then shared that the interviews were closed and that she and David Wild did a series of first interviews. Dean Thomason has joined in the second interviews with three strong candidates, and good progress is being made toward the final selection.

Interfaith Prayer Vigil November 5

Dean Thomason mentioned that on November 5th at 7 p.m., an Interfaith Prayer Vigil will be held at Saint Mark's providing an opportunity for expanding our regional reach and welcome. A flyer is in Dropbox.

Emergency Preparedness Workshop (Active Intruder)

This workshop, Active Intruder or Active Assailant Workshop, will be held on Tuesday, November 18 in Bloedel Hall for the staff, vestry, ushers and others who would benefit from this session. There is a \$25 registration fee.

Greenbelt, Trees, and Ivy

Re Knack, Chancellor, provided the highlights on this subject. A home at the bottom of the greenbelt has concerns about the trees growing on the sloped land to the west of the cathedral and St. Nicholas. An arborist has identified trees that are potential hazards. Saint Mark's has legal responsibility, but the land is co-owned with the City of Seattle so permits through the City are required. Along with the expense of

being on a 65 to 70% grade, there are two phases to identifying diseased trees. 1) removal of the ivy and then 2) the complexity of ground erosion around those trees with ivy removal.

Windstorm Damage 10/25/2025

Dean Thomason reported that on Saturday night, October 25, as an event at the cathedral ended, a car was leaving the cathedral, and the windstorm snapped the sweet gum tree near Leffler House in half and landed on the car. Fortunately, the driver was not hurt, but the car was considered a total loss. A tree service was called, and the tree was removed for \$9,000. The big leaf maple, to the right of the entry drive and in front of the St. Nicholason building, was found to be split down the middle. The arborist retained by Redwood had identified this maple and the one next to it as unhealthy and slated for removal. The windstorm just expedited the process as the tree service returned to secure the tree.

TERRA Installation and Events

Dean Thomason reminded everyone that a 24-foot Terra globe will be installed on Saturday, November 1. The TERRA will be suspended from the ceiling in the center of the nave for a period of three weeks. The cathedral will be open to visitors from noon to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, with additional access provided during special events.

Calendar of Vestry Meeting Dates

- November 18
- December 9
- January 20
- Annual Meeting Sunday, January 25
- Saturday, January 31 is the Vestry Retreat

Mutual Ministry Review

Senior Warden Greg Hamm requested we break out into four groups, one for each Mutual Ministry Goal and each with a recorder. Greg will then draft the report for the next meeting.

Group 1 Execute a Successful Capital Campaign.

Group 2 Continue the Development of Affordable Housing on the Cathedral Campus.

Group 3 Strengthen the Vision of Stewardship as a Year- round Practice.

Group 4 Explore an appropriate Role for Saint Mark's in Migrant and Immigrant Justice.

Feedback from each breakout group was shared back into plenary, and the Senior Warden will capture comments in a rolled-up document.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Senior Warden

Reflections by Greg Hamm on the Architecture and Design subcommittee for Affordable Housing. It feels like we have just signed the agreement and it is astonishing to see the things we have been working on for the past two years and are now starting. Thinking this is model for what we are all about. We are a small group of people, and we can't by ourselves or as a parish carry out large efforts, but we can channel energy, spirit, power. The power of groups, by modeling, by teaching, by doing the work; who have thought a great deal about this, and we can provide a point of cohesiveness and direction. Worthwhile in the world today.

Dean Thomason

- ❖ Dates and events of notes at the end of the agenda, with baptisms this Sunday – All Saints Sunday
 - Wednesday, Interfaith Prayer Vigil, November 5
 - Emergency Preparedness Workshop on November 18
 - Alternative Gift Market, November 23
 - Share Wendy's Sign-up Genus for set-up, planning, or cleaning up at the Alternative Gift Market.
 - 27th Thanksgiving Day with 10 a.m. Holy Eucharist and community potluck after
 - November 30 is the First Sunday of Advent with O Antiphon service at 7 p.m.

- ❖ Prayer Space in the northwest corner – Intention is to honor pieces of our history and invite people into a prayerful orientation. Small restored altar is a gift from St. Paul’s in Port Townsend with Lynne Markova is the Priest-in-Charge. The brass cross sitting on the altar is from the first St. Mark’s in 1891; two stained glass pieces date back to 1897 and the second St. Mark’s; and the repurposed modesty panels were part of the 1931 third Saint Mark’s where we are now.
- ❖ Wednesday, October 29 – Chapel of the Resurrection Eucharist
- ❖ Two concrete benches are memorial benches for the new Memorial Garden.
- ❖ Conversation with social workers from Stevens Elementary School and West Seattle Elementary School. Schools rely on local food banks to supplement kids’ food, especially on Fridays. Stevens: 35% of students have free lunch; West Seattle has 85% free or reduced lunch. Food banks are depleted, and their local school pantries are depleted. Concerned with SNAP funds ending at the end of the week, clergy discretionary fund used for providing grocery cards. Parishioners wishing to help may drop off food - Bread, rice, beans, pasta, canned goods and snacks – or gift cards at Saint Mark’s and it will be delivered.
- ❖ Alternative Gifts Market signup sheet on November 23.
 - Files of Note
 - ” Baptisms and Necrology since All Saints 2024
 - ” Thank You Letter-AFEDJ, Pike Market Food Bank
 - ” Diocesan Convention delegation 2025
12 delegates and clergy

MINISTRY/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Worship & Prayer—Nothing

Finance—Catch up with budget and statements

Facilities—Please thank the Habitat crew and Facilities all work done over the weekend with the storm damage

Stewardship—Thank you to Deborah Person, Greg Hamm, Alexandra Thompson, Greg Simon, and to Erik and Steve for their amazing support.

Intergenerational Council—Itinerant representatives from affinity groups; article discussion on article co-authored by Ken and Wendy; volunteers needed for Alternative Gift Market.

Creation Care—Terra Project; outlook for Creation Care Committee as a ministry for the vestry.

Restorative Justice Council—Minutes in the Dropbox

Communications—On hiatus, but Accessibility Task Force is still meeting and working on a next steps plan for vestry to adopt.

CHECK OUT

Checkouts were given.

EXECUTIVE SESSION & CLOSING PRAYER

Dean Thomason and the staff present were excused as Vestry went into Executive Session.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed for Dean Thomason to receive the same 2026 COLA as other clergy and staff.

Closing prayer was given by Lynne Cobb. The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara J. Erickson
Vestry Clerk

Erik Donner
Cathedral Administrator

Dates/Events of note

- 11/2 All Saints Sunday w/ Baptisms
- 11/5 Interfaith Prayer Vigil
- 11/18 Emergency Preparedness Workshop
- 11/23 Alternative Gifts Market
- 11/27 Thanksgiving Day
- 11/30 O Antiphons