



THE RUBRIC

STORIES OF MINISTRY

SAINT MARK'S EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL, SEATTLE, WA

FALL 2021, VOL. 78, NO. 3





SAINT MARK'S

EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL

WELCOME
INSPIRE
TRANSFORM
SERVE

*Wherever you are
on your spiritual journey,
you are welcome here.*

THE VERY REV. STEVEN L. THOMASON
Dean & Rector

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The Rubric is a publication of Saint Mark's Cathedral, Seattle, which celebrates who we are as a community—as a parish, as a cathedral for the Diocese of Olympia, as Episcopalians, and as Christians.

PHOTO CREDITS: All photos are by Kevin Johnson or Gregory Bloch except: cover, Michael Perera; p. 3, Rebekah Gilmore; p. 9, bottom, Emily Meeks; and p. 13, Adam Conley.

GREETINGS

from the DEAN

I think I have used the word “nimble” more in the last year than in the previous fifty. It is the operative word as we move through this pandemic, monitoring and adjusting our communal practices with a keen eye to the safety of all who call Saint Mark's their spiritual home. When the last issue of *The Rubric* was published in June of this year, we thought we were entering a post-pandemic phase, relaxing the requirements to attend worship. Viral variants and surging infection rates instead required adaptive approaches. We were nimble. We remain nimble, even if weary, too.

But that weariness is always ameliorated by the new ways of being community. This issue highlights some of those. The image on the front cover shows a contingent of choristers who returned September 12, 2021 to lead our Cathedral Eucharist once more—eighteen months after closure caused our eight choirs to be furloughed. (Soloists, cantors, and quartets held the space in the absence of full choirs.) Here the choir is on the nave floor joining in the prayer after communion, masked but still making a “joyful noise to the Lord.” Their fragrant offering makes my heart sing, too, and whatever weariness I have in the moment is lost in the invitation to worship with others “in the beauty of holiness.” Our music staff are nimbly adjusting rehearsals, repertoire, and spacing of the choirs to ensure their safety. I am so grateful for them!

I am grateful, too, for all who are exercising ministry during these most remarkable times. A few of those are described in the articles and photos that follow. I hope what you read and



see conveys a clear message of vitality and excitement for the future, uncertain as it may be in any given moment.

We often remark how there is a palpable sense of the Spirit moving in our midst at Saint Mark's. I believe that wholeheartedly. I do not think I would continue serving as a parish priest if I did not believe it to be true. By God's grace, I do believe! And we are here, faithfully pressing forward together, remaining nimble in order to zig or zag as needed.

I also want to reference the excellent article in our *Liturgical Living* series, written by former cathedral canon Nancy Ross, who left in August to be near family in California. We are grateful for her ministry these past five years, and here she captures the meaning behind our burial rites which offer more than solace and strength in the face of loss. There is much grace to be gleaned; hope as well. It is a timely message, not just because the cathedral community has seen more deaths in recent months than is usual (although none due to COVID), but also because these rites offer the blueprint for living in difficult times, where hopefulness and grace are sorely needed to find our way. We need not deny the harsh realities to retain hope. This is at the heart of who we are, my friends, and we make our way together. I am,

Affectionately,

The Very Rev. Steven L. Thomason
Dean & Rector

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

* indicates livestreamed service

SUNDAYS

8 A.M.

The Holy Eucharist

9 A.M.

The Holy Eucharist

11 A.M. *

The Holy Eucharist

4:30 P.M. *

Choral Evensong
(first Sunday of the month only)

7 P.M.

Contemplative Eucharist

9:30 P.M. *

The Office of Compline
broadcast on KING 98.1 FM, and
livestreamed at saintmarks.org
and on Facebook & Youtube

WEEKDAYS

MONDAY-FRIDAY, 6:30 P.M.

Evening Prayer

On Tuesdays only: in person in
Thomson Chapel

Other days: online via Zoom

MONDAY, 6:30 P.M.

Cathedral Yoga

in person in the cathedral nave

WEDNESDAY, 8:30 A.M.

Morning Prayer via Zoom

THURSDAY, 7 A.M.

1st & 3rd Thursdays: Holy Eucharist
in person in Thomson Chapel

2nd, 4th, & 5th Thursdays:

Morning Prayer via Zoom



FALL 2021

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ON THE COVER: On September 12, 2021, a portion of the Cathedral Choir (approximately half of the total number) sang at the 11 a.m. Sunday service for the first time since all choral singing was suspended in March of 2020.

ABOVE: Choir School Director Rebekah Gilmore, along with eight members of the Choir School, took a selfie during the recording of a special Compline liturgy that was premiered on July 17, 2021, as part of the national summer training course of the Royal School of Church Music—America.



Attendance Snapshot

in-person & online worship
at Saint Mark's

On **Sunday, August 22, 2021**, total in-person attendance at the cathedral's three services—the Holy Eucharist at 9 and 11 a.m., and Compline at 9:30 p.m. (the 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. Sunday liturgies resumed later in the fall):

452

Pre-pandemic, on **August 18, 2019**, attendance at those same three services: **643**

In-person attendance was therefore at about **70%** of pre-pandemic numbers

On August 8, 2021, total real-time livestream views of the 11 a.m. and 9:30 p.m. services (the 9 a.m. service is not livestreamed): **246**

Additional on-demand unique views in next 48 hours: **796**

Using a standard 1.5 multiplier (i.e. actual people per screen being viewed), estimated total engaging either via livestream or video-on-demand estimated at: **1563**

Saint Mark's began livestreaming liturgies in 2017. Pre-pandemic, the total number of people who would have seen a Sunday liturgy live or on-demand would have been around 100.

Today, more people join the 11 a.m. Eucharist service online *live* than Compline, but more people view Compline on-demand *later* than the 11 a.m. service.

LITURGICAL LIVING

This is the fifth installment in a series of Liturgical Living articles exploring how the sacraments impact daily life. What does it mean to say Christians are transformed by the sacraments? In this issue The Rev. Nancy Ross considers funeral liturgies and how they shape our understanding and experience of death.

“Even at the grave, we make our song”

by The Rev. Nancy Ross

FOURTEEN years ago, before I was a priest, my son died at only 22, and his beautiful, tattooed body was taken to be cremated, the first time for me that we were having a loved one be cremated rather than buried in a coffin. We planned his funeral for a few days hence, as was the custom in my family, and I checked with the crematorium about his ashes. The director there said they weren't sure they could have the ashes by then, but not to worry, because lots of people didn't have the person's remains at the funeral. I was incredulous. My old school Roman Catholic family could not have a funeral without Patrick's body, his ashes, being present! I made that very clear, and you do not argue with an incredulous grieving mother. He said he would make sure I had Patrick's ashes on time, because our aching hearts needed to have his funeral NOW.

I have learned and experienced much since then, including knowing there are times when there is no body—when having a loved one's body or ashes present is impossible, or is not the desire, or just does not happen. But their life happened, and their death happened, and their life in God's eternal love continues. These are the bedrock of our experience—and of our faith.

Reflecting on funerals for this “Liturgical Living” series is unique in that funerals bring, with intention, a sacred liturgy to the only “life event” that is common to all. Not everyone born will be baptized or receive the Eucharist, or be anointed or confirmed or get married or ordained... but we're all going to die! Much has been written about American culture's adamant denial of death, but deny away—we're all going to cross that threshold. And acknowledging death *is* liturgical living—because when Christians acknowledge death, we also acknowledge that death is not the end of life.



▲ The committal at the funeral liturgy for The Rev. Diane Breslford, July 17, 2021. (At that date, the indoor mask mandate had not yet been re-instated in Washington state.)

Episcopalians are wont to say, *Lex orandi, lex credendi*—what we pray is what we believe. And in the “Burial of the Dead” rite in the Book of Common Prayer, we pray: “And even at the grave we make our song: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.” Those are big words for a gathering of grieving people. Who are we kidding?

WE ARE NOT KIDDING. This is our faith that undergirds our lives, prayed out loud in our burial rite, even in the midst of our tears. The liturgy of the dead is no dirge! It is celebrated as an Easter liturgy, a Resurrection celebration. It has a rhythm and a beauty that does give us space to wail our lament, to hold our grief up to God and to each other in community—and to be comforted in the reminder that Jesus himself triumphed over death for us, to move us deeply into the faith and hope of eternal life, for our loved one and for ourselves, “where

every tear will be wiped away.” There is a direct connection between a funeral and the Christian narrative of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

We had a funeral liturgy in church for my son, who had vociferously eschewed religion in his iconoclastic teens. But as his death approached, he talked to me of how he wanted us to do the family rites and rituals—which he knew included religious practices—not as a last-ditch talisman so he would be okay on the “other side” (of that premature entry, we both knew his welcome would be hardy and hearty by the God who is Love), but because of the enormity of the experience of those very “family rites and rituals!” If his experience is that we still hang the Ninja Turtle stockings at Christmastime, and have good snacks during the Superbowl, and go to the early service on Easter Sunday because that’s what our family does—how much more do we gather together in the church when one of us dies and receive communion together and sing *Be Not Afraid*? Because their life happened, and their death happened, and their life in God’s eternal love continues!

Liturgical living is marked by the ongoing practice of “our family’s”—not just the Rosses, but our *faith* family’s—rites and rituals that bless the occasions of our lives with a grace that reminds us physically, viscerally,

▼ For the funeral liturgy of community member Matthew Briggs on September 18, 2021, the family asked all attendees to wear “ocean colors” of blue and turquoise, rather than black, in Matt’s honor.

and spiritually that we are participants in the saving work of Jesus. The first words of the anthems as we begin the liturgy are “I am Resurrection and I am Life.” The theology in this funeral liturgy is the redemptive story of God, the defeat of death. This is no false negation of the abject sorrow we experience at parting with a loved one, no matter how strong our faith that the parting is temporary. Our Holy Scripture is replete with our forebears’ tears, and they are not negated, but honored, and then transformed by the saving action of Jesus which we celebrate in the funeral liturgy.

Church leaders will often hold workshops or suggest a Lenten practice of planning our own funerals, choosing the readings, hymns, participants, and all, and giving a copy to our loved ones and to the church. Of course this is a gift for family and friends, for whom doing the planning when they are grieving may be very difficult. But it is also a spiritual practice of liturgical living, taking time to truly consider our mortality and the redemptive faith celebrated in the words of our burial service.

Acknowledging death as part of life, a threshold of eternal life, is counter-cultural in a material-obsessed society. And it is profoundly Christian, poignantly marking the sacredness of this gift of incarnation, helping keep our priorities on what truly matters, reminding us in the midst of loss that we are a resurrection people.

For “even at the grave we make our song: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.” ♦



Practicing Abundance

The Many Gifts of Planned Giving

by Adam Conley

CHURCH buildings matter. They gather us in community for worship, prayer, formation, renewal, and send us out into the world for shared ministry. They are holy places that give embodied shape and substance to the way we honor and celebrate life's milestones. They contain sacred corporate rituals of becoming, lament, and celebration, forever framing them in our memory. They are touchstones and vessels for the story of our lives' journey with God and they can preserve, expand, and share our stories for generations to come.

A powerful way to reciprocate and perpetuate the life-giving abundance of a cherished faith community is to leave a legacy gift. The Planned Giving Program at Saint Mark's Cathedral is managed by the Office of the Dean and supported by the vestry and the Cathedral Foundation of the Diocese of Olympia, an independent-

ly governed, tax-exempt organization founded in 1995. It is the role of the Cathedral Foundation to:

- ♦ Provide funds to preserve and enhance the cathedral's buildings and ground today and for the future.
- ♦ Support the cathedral's Planned Giving Program to increase endowment funding.
- ♦ Manage restricted offerings to the Foundation in support of the cathedral's buildings and grounds.
- ♦ Provide disbursements to help with unplanned emergency repairs of the cathedral's facilities.
- ♦ Make an annual disbursement of a portion of the investment funds (4%) in ways consistent with gifts.
- ♦ Offer donors an alternative pathway to affirm the value they attach to their faith community and their cathedral.

The cathedral exists not only for the parish of Saint Mark's, but for every person who crosses its threshold throughout the Diocese of Olympia and beyond. Cathedral Foundation board member and member of Good Samaritan Episcopal Church in Sammamish, WA, Sally Farrell, recognizes the cathedral as her "home away from home." She sees planned giving as a way to practice faithful Christian stewardship, "strengthening God's church for the future."

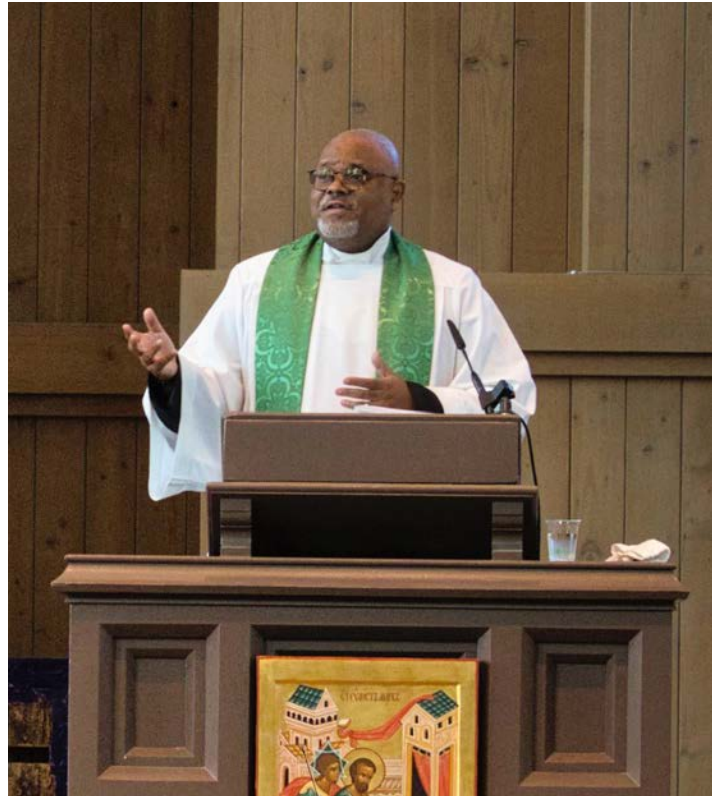
The Very Rev. Steven L. Thomason, Dean and Rector of Saint Mark's, and his assistant Erik Donner, work closely with people as they consider planned gifts that benefit the cathedral. Dean Thomason says, "It is a delight to engage people considering such gifts and to see the joy they have in arriving at such decisions. There is a sense of being blessed to be a blessing in it all."

continued on p. 10

GREAT DAYS IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH



JULY 18, 2021: The Women's Compline Choir
2021 saw the return of the full choir for the first time since their 2019 debut, although the service was not yet open to the public.



JULY 25, 2021: The Rev. Canon Walter Brownridge
After leading events virtually over several months, Saint Mark's Theologian-in-residence for 2021 was at last able to travel to Seattle to preach and teach in person.



AUGUST 8, 2021: The Sacrament of Baptism on the
Feast of the Transfiguration
Due to a "backlog" of those wishing to be baptized, a special baptismal liturgy was offered in August.



AUGUST 22, 2021: A Fond Farewell to The Rev.
Canon Nancy Ross
The community of Saint Mark's sent Canon Ross off to her new position in California with blessings and a handmade quilt.

New beginnings, farewells, & long-awaited returns



SEPTEMBER 26, 2021: Conference of the Vergers' Guild of the Episcopal Church

Vergers from local parishes in the Diocese of Olympia joined the in-person Sunday service at 11 a.m., which also served as the closing liturgy of the online-only national conference.



OCTOBER 2, 2021: St. Francis Celebration and Blessing of the Animals

This beloved annual tradition began with a festive liturgy celebrating God's gift of Creation and all creatures who share the Earth with us. Following the service, individual blessings were offered.



SEPTEMBER 12, 2021: Intergenerational Hike to Twin Falls

After morning services on "Homecoming Sunday," community members of all ages joined together to connect, move, and pray together in nature. On the trail, hikers participated in a brief Creation-focused liturgy of prayer and Taizé chant.

Planned Giving, continued from p. 7

Planned giving allows donors to leave legacy gifts across generations, bringing a spacious perspective to the understanding of intergenerational ministry. Legacy gifts are donations that are planned in advance, such as a bequest in your will or a beneficiary designation.

Anyone who leaves a legacy gift to Saint Mark's or to the Cathedral Foundation is enrolled in the Cathedral Legacy Society. With over 250 members, the Cathedral Legacy Society bears faithful witness to the endurance of Seattle's "Holy Box" and "Beacon on the Hill" for years to come.

▼ Generosity in the form of planned gifts helped make possible the cross on the cathedral façade and the labyrinth around which more than 100 attended the recent Blessing of the Animals service.

Two persons who became members of the Cathedral Society a long time ago are Susan Knirk and her late husband Carl Knirk. A deep sense of gratitude for Saint Mark's Cathedral is what prompted the Knirks to reframe their stewardship practice as a highly intentional spiritual discipline. According to Susan Knirk, they decided to "take a first big leap," not only revising their will to include a legacy gift to the Cathedral Foundation, but also increasing their Saint Mark's annual pledge to a tithe.

Knirk is convinced that giving from a place of joy and abundance relates directly to her awareness of the joy and abundance filling her life. This is the blessing of practicing stewardship and planned giving as spiritual disciplines. "As I look back, we never had gone without," she said. "As we subsequently increased our tithe over time and added to the legacy gift in

our will, we became ever more loving, joyful, thankful stewards.

"Saint Mark's Cathedral has given [us] more than we could have ever imagined: community and relationships, spiritual growth, and servant leadership ministry experiences," said Knirk. For Knirk, giving back demonstrates that the fruits of abundance have value beyond measure. ♦

For more information about the Cathedral Foundation of the Diocese of Olympia, visit:

saintmarks.org/foundation

For more information about planned giving, visit:

saintmarks.org/plannedgiving

For more information about how to give, contact Erik Donner at:

206.323.0300 x217 or
edonner@saintmarks.org



MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE



A focus on facility improvements & collective community actions shape strategy to become carbon neutral by 2030

by Emily Meeks

MOST people visiting Saint Mark's spend time in the nave, not boiler rooms or crawl spaces. For Mike Hatten, these unnoticed places are the draw, providing substantial insights as a mechanical energy engineer.

Hatten is president of Solarc Energy Group, the firm engaged by the vestry to develop a comprehensive master plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on campus to net zero by 2030. This means reducing not only the carbon footprint of the cathedral complex, but also the St. Nicholas Building, Leffler House, and Carriage House. Before work began, the old boiler in the St. Nicholas Building alone accounted for 58% of the Saint Mark's natural gas use, and the boilers in the cathedral building itself, 35%.¹

"The path to permanent change is complex and will take time to achieve in a financially sustainable way," said Jim Pannell, Director of Operations and staff liaison to Saint Mark's Creation Care ministry. Pannell, along with David Wagner, Facilities Manager, have worked with Hatten's team on the first step, recommissioning, a period implementing low or no cost reduction strategies.

Key changes have included installing timers on boiler controls in Thomsen Chapel, installing a master thermostat and fixing the water heater system in Bloedel Hall, and recalibrating thermostats in the nave. "The thermostats in the nave were tricky," said Pannell. "Humans and the elevated organ have different environmental preferences. As heat rises, if you make it

warmer on the floor for those attending, the loft can get too warm for the organ."

Facility improvements will generate energy savings, optimize performance, and expand the planning horizon for a capital campaign, but meeting the 2030 goal depends on individual members of the cathedral community. "These facility

improvements and our community actions go hand in hand," said Marjorie Ringness, chair of the Creation Care Committee.

One way to start is to sign up for the Carbon Tracker at www.sustainislandhome.org, a tool the Episcopal Church offers to measure collective and individual carbon footprint. For The Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, The Most Rev. Michael Curry, exploring this

**ACHIEVING NET-ZERO
CARBON EMISSIONS BY 2030
REQUIRES CHANGES TO
THE CATHEDRAL FACILITIES,
AS WELL AS ACTIONS BY
INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE
COMMUNITY.**

information is a spiritual practice. According to Curry, “[pledging to reduce our carbon footprint] guides us to make specific commitments to grow loving, liberating, and life-giving relationship with Creation.”²

The web-based application details actions similar to what Hatten described as low-cost or no-cost recommissioning. “More than 20 percent of fuel savings occur by fixing things that aren’t working and changing how you use it,” said Hatten. “It’s not about having excess money or knowledge.”

Currently more than 100 Saint Mark’s households are signed up for the carbon tracker. “We hope to have 100 percent of our pledging households signed up and zeroing out their carbon footprint by 2030,” said Ringness.

Saint Mark’s continues to take steps to support these actions. In June, an electric vehicle charging station opened to the public, currently offering charging up to two hours without cost to the user.³ A second water bottle filling station was recently installed in the narthex, making drinking water easily accessible and helping to reduce plastic bottle use. More than one million plastic bottles are sold globally each minute and are not recycled.⁴

The water bottle station is a visible example of how this work goes beyond being good stewards of resources and connects to a deeper theological underpinning. “As a kind of ‘font before the font,’ the water bottle station will serve as a tangible expression of our baptismal

commitment,” said Adam Conley, director of Seattle Service Corps, who in his capacity as cathedral grant writer helped secure partial funding from the nonprofit Zero Waste Washington. “It is a reminder that as Christians we are called to respect the dignity of every person by caring for and respecting the dignity of all creation.”



▲ The new water bottle filler in the narthex

It will also honor and remember Henley, Julia Logan’s black Labrador retriever and guide dog who passed away in the fall of 2020. Logan’s memorial gift provided the remaining funding not covered by grants.

Logan has retinopathy of prematurity (ROP), a condition that makes her eyesight fuzzy and out of focus with limited peripheral vision and no depth perception. Henley helped give sight to what she could not see. One of Henley’s early training lessons was navigating Logan, an avid water drinker, to a water fountain at Saint Mark’s. “It was an opportunity to teach remembering a specific thing, not just a place,” said Logan. “I said, ‘find a water fountain,’ and he started walking. I knew it was close by, and when he got there, I praised him, and he knew he had found what was asked and was so excited.”

The location in the narthex will be fitting for Henley where he loved greeting others on Sunday mornings. “Henley was the essence of servant leadership and community,” said Logan. “As you bring your own bottle and fill it up, it’s an opportunity to think about who and what you are helping, and smile for Henley.” ♦

Recommissioning Savings by the Numbers

The following are annual energy savings projections for Saint Mark’s Cathedral and the St. Nicholas Building. Calculations are derived from recommissioning changes and upgrades made between January and September 2021 as compared to 2019 baseline energy consumption.

Gas Savings **23,559 therms/year**
 Gas & CO2 Reduction **34%**
 Energy Cost Savings **\$21,037**
 Energy Cost Reduction **35%**
 Carbon savings equivalent
 to U.S. per capita* . . . **7.81 persons/year**

*Assumes U.S. footprint of 35,280 lb/person

1 Solarc Energy Group, “Allocation of 2019 Gas Use to Equipment and Buildings”

2 The Most Rev. Michael Curry, as quoted on sustainislandhome.org

3 See the article “Building a Charge” in the Spring 2021 issue of *The Rubric*.

4 <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/plastic-bottles>

Getting to Know the Neighbors

Saint Mark's Cathedral & Lowell Elementary

by Adam Conley

SAINTE Mark's Cathedral has framed its vocation as followers of Jesus Christ with three Mutual Ministry Goals for 2021: Restorative Justice and Systemic Change, Creation Care, and Intergenerational Ministry. Sometimes a cathedral ministry partnership engages all three priorities. Such is the case with Saint Mark's relationship with Lowell Elementary School, the only Seattle Public School serving families with elementary-aged children in Seattle's central and downtown core.

Located just four blocks south of the cathedral, Lowell Elementary is a wonderfully diverse school with persons of color comprising 80% of the student body. In addition, around 25% of the students are English Language Learners and 30% of the students receive Special Education services. Lowell is one of two schools in all of Seattle serving medically-fragile students from pre-K through fifth grade. Medically-fragile students regularly require medications, treatments, and/or specialized care equipment.

Unfortunately, there are several economic hardships facing the Lowell community. Over half of all Lowell students meet Seattle Public School's definition of Students of Color Furthest from Educational Justice. This



includes African and African American students and other students of color, including Asian Pacific Islander and Pacific Islander, Latinx, and Native American students who have not historically experienced equitable opportunities for all or part of their educational journey.

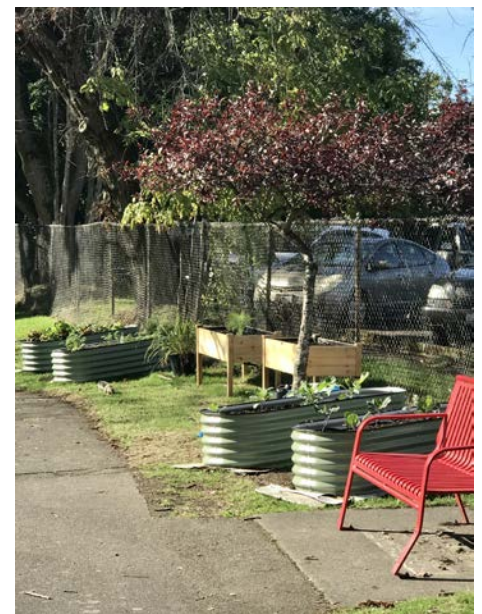
Over one in four students are experiencing housing insecurity with another 23% living in transitional or SHA (Seattle Housing Authority) housing. Additionally, 70.5% of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

Despite systemic and economic hardships experienced by so many students and families, the Lowell community is fiercely resilient. Drawing inspiration from this resilience is what has kept Saint Mark's member Melinda Kmitta returning to volunteer at Lowell for well over two decades. A regular helper in the hallways, lunchroom, and playground

prior to the pandemic, Kmitta knows how to connect with students on their own terms. "I love to see individual successes," she said. "To know that I may have made a difference and contributed to something by just taking time to give my full attention to a child is incredibly fulfilling."

The impact of COVID-19 on the Lowell community has been particularly difficult. Amanda (last name withheld) is a Lowell parent who moved with her son from a shelter to their own apartment last July in the middle of

▼ The raised beds in the gardens at Lowell Elementary were constructed with help from Saint Mark's Habitat for Humanity crew.



the pandemic. Working part time as a security guard, supporting her son has not been easy and she is grateful for how Lowell helps “make sure all families are taken care of regardless of their situation.”

Online school is inconsistent at best for many families with no easy access to WiFi or a space conducive to remote study, even if the school district loans out computer hardware and internet hotspots. Amanda said how disruptive and ineffective online school was for her son, who is autistic, and who essentially lost a year of schooling because he needs constant structure to learn.

“The pandemic pulled back the curtain on the inequality gap, and there is a very wide gap between the haves and the have-nots,” said Lowell School social worker, Tracey Thompson. Throughout the pandemic, Thompson ferried donations supplied by the Saint Mark’s community to Lowell families in need. These included grocery cards, gift cards, board games, art and school supplies, diapers, formula, non-perishable food, and other necessities. “Saint Mark’s is a lifeline,” said Thompson.

Thompson describes her supply runs to many Lowell families during the pandemic as humbling and forever altering her perspective as a social worker. Visiting families who were homeless or in transitional housing in downtown Seattle or in the vicinity of the CHOP (Capitol Hill Organized Protest) near Cal Anderson Park reminded her of a war zone. From graffiti and boarded windows to police in riot gear and lingering tear gas, there were moments Thompson didn’t recognize her own country. “My adult mind was having trouble processing what I was seeing. I couldn’t imagine what this was doing to children.”

Thompson said that many of the parents told her how this was a confusing and frightening time with threats all around. For Thompson, Saint Mark’s was a reliable and unquestioning ally during the height of the trauma and challenges of 2020. “To partner with a faith-based organization that shared

“TO PARTNER WITH A FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION THAT SHARED COMMUNITY OUTRAGE AND STOOD IN SOLIDARITY WITH US—THAT WAS HUGE.”

—Tracey Thompson,
Lowell School social worker

community outrage and stood in solidarity with us—that was huge,” she said.

Now, as the Lowell School community regathers in person this fall, it does so buoyed by strength and hope. A tangible sign of this hope is a community garden being developed on the Lowell School campus. The garden is the brainchild of fourth and fifth grade teacher Summer Jupin, who envisions the garden as a tool for teaching students about their connection to the earth, plant life cycles, self-reliance, and cultivating and eating healthy produce. She notes how a garden is much more about “show” than “tell,” teaching students to engineer solutions and solve problems via the scientific method while “getting their hands deep into the soil.”

An elementary school is a place with many hands eager to create, explore, and discover. When it is deemed safe to do so, neighbors like Saint Mark’s will be invited to lend their helping hands to the garden effort on scheduled community volunteer days. This summer, prior to school being in session, Saint Mark’s Habitat for Humanity crew built and installed

the seed beds, demonstrating the promise the garden holds for fostering intergenerational connections while prioritizing care for the environment.

Saint Mark’s member Cherie Bradshaw offers another perspective on volunteering at Lowell School. She tutors individual students in reading and writing. As someone who has volunteered at Lowell School for over four years since retiring from Seattle Public Schools as a Special Ed teacher, she acknowledges the importance of being a consistent, one-on-one presence for students wherever possible. She hasn’t done much

tutoring during the pandemic, citing the limitations of Zoom for many students. She did attend a masked and outdoor sidewalk graduation for one of her former students this spring, which was a tremendous moment of pride both for Bradshaw and her student. “The joy of tutoring is building a relationship of trust and seeing a student’s progress over time,” she said.

When the garden at Lowell School begins to flourish in the spring, it will do so because it has been loved and nurtured. The same is true for the students themselves, who even in the face of great barriers thrive with the love and support of their families and teachers. Restorative Justice and Systemic Change, Creation Care, and Intergenerational Ministry are urgently needed fruits of shared ministry. The harvest begins now: it’s time to roll up sleeves and get hands dirty. ♦

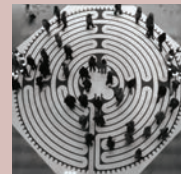
To hear more personal volunteer stories from Lowell Elementary School, readers are welcome to e-mail Melinda Kmitta at tjkmitta@hotmail.com, or Cherie Bradshaw at bradshawcherie@msn.com

2021 MINISTRY FAIR

After morning services on Sunday, September 12, 2021, the Saint Mark's Ministry Fair returned as an in-person event, after being offered virtually in the fall of 2020. It was held in the cathedral nave to allow for better ventilation and distancing. Ministry leaders were on hand to introduce themselves and their work to newcomers and to anyone interested in getting involved. From bread baking to yoga, the astounding breadth of ministries in this cathedral community was on display. Here are just a few...



THE
WISDOM SCHOOL
AT SAINT MARK'S CATHEDRAL



Now entering its sixth year, **The Wisdom School at Saint Mark's Cathedral** was created with a broad vision to invite people on diverse spiritual journeys to listen to and learn from each other in a vital practice of collaborative engagement. The 2021–22 program year schedule is now available. Highlights include:

- ◆ a Saturday gathering on our “Post-Pandemic Normal” led by **The Rt. Rev. Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows**, the first Black woman to be elected a diocesan bishop in the Episcopal Church
- ◆ a two-part workshop on Christian mystics and the beauty of nature led by theologian and best-selling author **Belden C. Lane**
- ◆ a capstone pilgrimage to Iona and the ancient missions of Britain in the summer of 2022

Learn about these and many other Wisdom School special events, as well as regular and seasonal offerings at: [**saintmarks.org/wisdom**](https://saintmarks.org/wisdom)