



January Vestry Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 21, 2025 6pm
Zoom
Dinner hosts: N/A

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

Tina Blondino, Diocesan Member
Christopher Breunig
Martha Craig
Wayne Duncan
Phil Haas, Junior Warden for Finance
Greg Hamm, Senior Warden
Scott Hulet
Kristen Kelly
Julia Logan, Junior Warden for Facilities
Justin Mills
Canon Valerie Reinke, Bishop's Representative
Peter Snyder, Junior Warden for Stewardship
The Very Rev. Steve Thomason, Dean
Alexandra Thompson
Doug Thorpe
The Rev. Gail Wheatley, Diocesan Member

Vestry Members Absent

Becky Kacel, Diocesan Member

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 our Land Acknowledgement and a prayer at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of Vestry Meeting Minutes

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to adopt the December 3, 2024 minutes as written.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to adopt the January 12, 2025 minutes as written.

STRATEGIC PLAN CHECK-IN

The vestry members reflected and shared how they embraced and integrated the Call to Action and Service theme into their ministry group and their own ministry as leaders.

OLD BUSINESS

Affordable Housing Update

The committee continues to meet monthly and do good work. The committee has engaged Donna Moodie, Capitol Hill EcoDistrict and Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle, as our Community Engagement consultant. She is well known in the Central District and with government officials at local, state, and federal levels. Met with Donna, John Hoerster, and a couple other committee members as they look to deepen our relationship with families at Lowell Elementary School and what we might be able to do with affordable housing and families with children at Lowell.

Dean Thomason reported that we are expecting the last installment payment of \$75,000 from the Trinity Church Wall Street grant. Greg Hamm commented on how the committee has done a good job in pivoting with the “perfect storm” situation with the developers not having a path to move forward.

Mutual Ministry Review

Greg Hamm reported that the draft version of the Mutual Ministry Review has been distributed, and minor changes suggested.

A motion was made to adopt the Mutual Ministry Review for 2024, seconded, and carried as presented.

Capital Campaign

Dean Thomason reported that the groundwork continues to be laid. The Capital Campaign co-chairs, Randy Urmston and Eliza Davidson, will be sending the first letter to the parish the week of February 10, and Dean Thomason’s letter will be sent the following week. Advanced gifts, which are not designated to any specific fund, are placed in the Capital Campaign fund as authorized by the vestry. \$400,000 is currently in the fund.

Renderings from the architects were shared thus providing visual material to be able to assist the community to visualize the changes being sought. The campaign’s focus is in three areas:

1. Carbon reduction – replacement of gas boiler system in the Nave and Cathedral House
2. Narthex renovations – improvements in the worship experience
3. Music Ministry elements

Emergency Women’s Shelter—Operation Nightwatch

Dean Thomason announced that a blessing and dedication is being planned for Sunday, February 2 during the 10:10 forum hour. Saturday, January 25, a workday to help setup beds, etc. will be held and the women will arrive the following week. Through the generosity of this congregation, Saint Mark’s year-end appeal successfully raised over \$30,000 for this project and Operation Nightwatch was overwhelmed.

Sanctuary Network

Canon Griffin reported that the Cathedral Commons forum on Saint Mark's and Sanctuary- Responding to the Needs of Our Time was held on January 15 with over 100 people attending and 40 people signed up to volunteer. If you are interested in helping but have not signed up, please contact Emily at egriffin@saintmarks.org. Emily attended a Church Council of Greater Seattle rally where 100 people were in attendance; a letter affirming support for our undocumented neighbors was sent out from Presiding Bishop Rowe and House of Deputies President Ayala Harris. The Dean and Emily will meet with legal counsel to determine what "sanctuary" means for us, as there will be significant changes in how we approach sanctuary, and it is unclear what that may entail. If we do offer sanctuary onsite, we CANNOT identify the location of the person or family; confidentiality is essential. The vestry then engaged in a conversation addressing how they were doing/feeling with this and all that is happening around us.

Annual Meeting Planning

Dean Thomason reviewed the election process to be used this year. The Annual Meeting will be called to order at the beginning of the 8 a.m. service in Thomsen Chapel. Re Knack will be appointed chancellor and will read the election rules. The dean will introduce the 12 Diocesan Convention Delegate nominees, then open the floor for nominations and then close nominations. The candidates for vestry will be introduced, the floor open for nominations and then nominations will close. Monitors will be stationed at tables in the narthex to assist with the voting, which will be in-person only from 8:05 to 12:45. The meeting will be recessed until 12:30 p.m. and reconvened in Bloedel Hall. Doug Thorpe, Justin Mills, Kristen Kelly, Christopher Breunig, and Scott Hulet were thanked for being monitors.

NEW BUSINESS

Gun Education Bill Sign-on Letter

This comes as a recommendation from the Executive Committee, who felt this was non-confrontational enough that the Listening Process was not needed. Dean Thomason provided background on our close work with Temple de Hirsch Sinai and the Alliance for Gun Responsibility to promote gun safety and education. We have been asked to sign a letter of support for this proposed legislation to provide education about gun safety in high schools in Washington State.

A motion was made to endorse the proposed legislation using Saint Mark's Cathedral name, in support of its passing was approved by the Vestry.

Credit Cards

1st Security Bank, a local bank, has replaced Bank of America as our bank. The Bank of America credit cards are no longer being used by staff, and per the bank's policy, a motion is needed from the board to close the cards.

A motion to close the Bank of America credit card account was made, seconded, and passed by the Vestry (Board).

Deanery Remaining Windows Replacement

Julia Logan reported the Facilities Committee and wardens endorsed the completion of the window replacement project in the deanery with the recommendation to authorize the funds to replace the windows. Half the windows were replaced in 2022 with the idea the rest would be replaced later. A revised estimate for the 10 remaining windows is now \$16,026.08. The Facilities Committee, with the

endorsement of the Wardens, made a recommendation to authorize the use of funds from the Carbon Reduction Initiative account as the deanery is included in the Carbon Net Zero objective by 2030.

A motion to replace the remaining windows in the deanery was made, seconded, and carried.

Housing for Lowell

Dean Thomason shared that one-fourth of the student body at Lowell Elementary School is unhoused at any given time. A real time crisis exists. Few resources are available to help families with children get into safe housing. The proposal being brought forth is to repurpose part of the Threshold Fund (or part of the Clergy Discretionary fund) to allow one week of motel lodging for families with children. Discussion and various ideas were presented about the terms of use of the Threshold Fund and the alternatives available.

Amistad Lease Issues

Dean Thomason reported that Seattle Amistad School is experiencing financial and staffing challenges and is requesting a reduction in their rent of the St. Nicholas Building. A meeting is scheduled to gather more information before this is brought before the Vestry.

Employee Handbook

Dean Thomason reported the principal revision to the Handbook is in the remote work policy. The other updates were proposed by the employment attorney in Re Knack's firm who has addressed updated legal and statutory compliance, changing a few terms for consistency, and reformatting the document for easier use by employees.

A motion to adopt the revised Employee Handbook was made, seconded, and passed.

Thomason 2026 Sabbatical Planning

Dean Thomason spoke about planning his sabbatical for 2026 and that he will be applying for a grant to the Lilly Endowment which supports clergy wellness and specifically sabbatical grants. Recent significant events in the dean's life have him looking at the dynamics of family systems, congregational systems, and a healthy transition leading to the retirement of a dean. The vestry was asked to share their thoughts.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Dean Thomason, Erik Donner, and Emily Griffin were excused.

A motion was made to adopt Dean Thomason's performance review as part of the Mutual Ministry Review, seconded, and adopted.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Senior Warden

- An amazing year with so many positive things happening.
- Reminded of the beginning of the year, people come with many different gifts. Great honor and privilege to serve with you.
- Special thanks to those who are leaving this vestry for their service and support to me as senior warden.

Dean

- Dave Harms' funeral is January 25 1:00.
- Scott Cochrane's funeral is February 1 11:00.
- Jonie Pritchard's funeral is February 22 1:30.
- Diocesan clergy retreat February 3-5
- Bishop LaBelle will place a curate (newly ordained priest, internship, for a two-year appointment) with us this summer.

- Acknowledged last meeting for several vestry members, gratitude to all.
 - Files of Note—Emily Meeks’ Ember Day report and financial aid
 - TY Letters—AFEDJ, General Seminary, Christmas worshipper, E. Meeks
 - Threshold Fund Report 2024

MINISTRY/COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Worship & Prayer: Participated in liturgical planning meetings; services are well attended, good feedback; no Worship & Prayer meeting since September.
- Finance: 2024 was a good year, expected a deficit, ended with a surplus; explained the motion in their minutes to keep a break-even budget.
- Stewardship: No meeting in December or January; will be meeting after the new vestry members join.
- Creation Care: Forum on February 5th reflection on Creation Care and in a letter from Bishop LaBelle. No new leadership has stepped forward.
- Intergenerational Council: Quarterly meeting minutes in Dropbox; March 4 Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper – jambalaya is needed; Episcopal Church Province 8 conference will be held in Seattle along with three other dioceses; Accessibility subgroup is gearing up for an accessibility audit; accessibility for apparent and non-apparent.
- Restorative Justice Council: Evited and Poverty book discussions continue; Council meeting on February 16; Hunger and Housing Summit on December 4 had 80 – 90 attendees, effective and good energy with seven different groups presenting; gratitude expressed to Christopher Breunig as the convenor for the Restorative Justice Ministry.
- Communications: Quick survey of social media use in congregation will be taken at the Annual Parish Meeting; seeking new avenues for learnings.

CHECK OUT & CLOSING PRAYER

Checkouts were given, and the closing prayer was offered by Tina Blondino. The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara J. Erickson
Clerk

Erik Donner
Cathedral Administrator

Dates/Events of note

1/26 Annual Parish Meeting
1/27 Vestry New Member Orientation
2/1 Vestry Retreat
2/8 Capital Campaign organizing meeting
2/9 Capital Campaign Consecration