

Approved 10/28/2025
St. Mark's Episcopal Church
Vestry Meeting Minutes
September 23, 2025
In Person & By Zoom, 7:00PM-9:00PM

Attendance

- *Vestry Members Present:* Michele Morgan (Rector), Jim Brooks (Senior Warden), Martha Huizenga (Junior Warden), Doug Padgett, Kristina Keenan, Ben Flowers, Elizabeth Becker, Todd Thorpe, Travis Beaty
- *Vestry Members Absent:* Meg Platt, Mary Ellison, Katherine White
- *Officers:* Randy Marks (Clerk), Ryan Baugh (Assistant Clerk), Doug Ammon (Treasurer), Frank Nickerson (Assistant Treasurer for Bequests and Special Gifts), Rosemary Harold (Counsel)
- *Clergy:* Caitlin Frazier (Assistant Rector)

Actions

- [W Vestry Minutes,7-22-2025](#) approved unanimously, the Rector abstaining.
- The Vestry appoints Randy Marks as a Diocesan Delegate for the 2026 Diocesan Convention. Motion: Elizabeth; Second: Todd; approved unanimously, the Rector abstaining.
- The Vestry approves the [Proposed September Amended Budget](#) and use of the non-budgeted Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC) income for non-budgeted expenses. Motion: Todd Second: Elizabeth: approved unanimously, the Rector abstaining.
- The Vestry approves the transfer of Building Reserve funds (up to \$50,000) for the lighting project design in recognition of the request from Kitty Donnelly. Motion: Elizabeth; Second: Doug; approved unanimously, the Rector abstaining.
- The Vestry continues to authorize the St. Mark's Endowment Board Treasurer, Michael Summey, to undertake financial transactions on behalf of the Board. Additionally, the Vestry authorizes Karen Wiedemann, Co-Chair, to undertake financial transactions for the Endowment Board within the Endowment

Board's accounts at Vanguard and to transfer any monies as needed to St. Mark's Episcopal Church accounts at National Capital Bank in Washington, DC. Motion: Doug; Second: Kristina; approved unanimously, the Rector abstaining.

Reports

Rector

- Michele Morgan submitted a [report](#) in advance of the meeting.
- Bishop Mariann has recruited her to support congregational development, working with St George's (in Shaw) and St Luke's (15th Street, NW). The Diocese will pay her as a contractor.
- She noted that the church's increase in attendance means that the church now has four Diocesan Delegates. That means the Annual Meeting will elect a delegate. As that meeting is after this year's January 30 Diocesan Convention, the Vestry has to appoint a delegate to serve at that meeting. She recommended that the Vestry appoint Randy Marks and the Vestry agreed (see above in Actions section).

Stewardship

- Caitlin Frazier reported that she and Todd Thorpe have been meeting about this year's campaign.
- She requested that Parish leaders [pledge](#) as soon as possible.
- Time line October 12 to November 19 .
- The Vestry discussed how to frame the campaign.
 - Theme will empathize peace in stormy times.
 - The focus could be on:
 - Program successes — such as increase in members, attendance, youth, SJ, music — and the need to raise money to sustain them.
 - Need to increase pledges to cover the pledges of those in parish who can't give as much this year because of employment stresses.
 - Information on accomplishments and cost of building.
- There was agreement on the need to recruit parishioners to work on the canvass this year and in future years.

Senior Warden

- Jim Brooks thanked Vestry members for the success of the Parish Picnic and celebration of Michele's 10 years of being our Rector.
- He recognized the leadership of the Membership Committee (particularly Amber McDonald) in reserving Claggett Retreat Center for a Parish Retreat Friday-Sunday 6/26-6/28. Amber & Louise Walsh will chair the design committee.

Junior Warden

- Martha Huizenga submitted a [written report](#) in advance.
- Three large projects (improved Nave lighting, a better sound system, and replacement of a stained glass window) are being funded by a variety of sources.

Treasurer

- Doug Ammon submitted a written [report](#) in advance.
- He noted that bequests and an employee retention tax credit payment have resulted in an increase in net assets of about \$350,000.
- Although pledge payments in July and August were above budget, we are still running a \$111,000 deficit for the year.
- He offered three motions, all of which the Vestry approved (see above): to adopt budget adjustments, to approve the use of Building Reserve funds for the lighting project, and to authorize Endowment Board signature authority for Vanguard-held Endowment Funds.

Children Youth & Family Ministries Director Search

- Travis Beaty reported on the work of the Children Youth & Family Ministries Director Hiring Committee, which consisted of him, Caitlin Frazier, Michele Morgan, Mary Miller, Rita Ossolinski, and chair Denise Olivera.
- The Committee considered several external candidates and one internal candidate, Lisa Ramish. The Committee determined that Lisa was the best choice and Michele has hired her.
- Michele noted the benefits of having a director who knows us well.

Choir

- Doris Burton submitted a report about the summer choir tour and information about our sister congregation Litchfield Cathedral.
- Michele will write to Doris to express the Vestry's appreciation.

Nominating Committee

- The Nominating Committee consists of the Rector, Wardens, Vestry members completing their terms (Meg, Todd, Travis), and two parishioners not on the Vestry (who need to be identified).
- Nominations must be posted on website and bulletin board by January 8, 2026.
- The Parish will be electing Senior Warden (two year term) , Junior Warden (Martha will seek a third year), three Vestry members, and a Diocesan Delegate.

Discussions

Strategic Planning

- Jim reported that the process has been on pause. Time frame is uncertain.
- Next step is to create the survey on google forms.
- Jim will convene the planning group to move forward.

Annual Meeting

- Jim submitted a [discussion](#) of options for improving member engagement at the Annual Parish Meeting.
- He asked that Vestry members indicate by email whether this project is worth pursuing. If there is agreement to pursue it, Vestry will take it up in October.

Respectfully submitted
Randy Marks, Vestry Clerk
Ryan Baugh, Assistant Vestry Clerk