



ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH
FORWARD IN FAITH
CAMPAIGN

2024-2027

A MESSAGE FROM OUR RECTOR

Dear St. Thomas Church Family:

The world was recently reminded of the power of knowing “your why”. In Simon Sinek’s book, turned Ted talk, *Start with the Why*, Sinek reminded the world of the power of knowing “your why”, and living from “your why”. He wrote, “People don’t buy what you do: they buy why you do it. And what you do simply proves what you believe.”

Here at St. Thomas Church, we know our why.

Our why is Jesus Christ, who embodied God’s love for the world, a love told through the story of the Holy Scriptures.

Here at St. Thomas, we live from our why each time we gather in God’s name. We live from our why when we hear God’s Word proclaimed and are reminded of a story that is truer than the stories we so often hear.

We live from our why when we celebrate the Eucharist and feast on the abundance from God’s table, a generosity that invites our thanksgiving. When we host unhoused men in July, visit the sick, bless the dying, sing from the core of our beings, and form our young people in the faith, we live out our praises for our why: the God whose love cannot be numbered.

During this stewardship season, we have heard parishioners share their why with us as part of our **Forward in Faith** campaign. Parishioners have shared what St. Thomas Church means to them and why they give to St. Thomas Church. Their reflections have offered us all fodder to think about why we give.

So, I wonder, why do you give to St. Thomas Church? What does St. Thomas Church mean to you? Why do you want St. Thomas Church to flourish in the future? As Simon Sinek said, what you do simply proves what you believe.

May our giving be a way for us to live out our why, as we prayerfully consider how God is calling us to give to the **Forward in Faith** campaign.

In Christ,

The Reverend Elizabeth (Liz) Costello
Rector of St. Thomas Church



AN INVITATION FROM OUR CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIRS

Dear Members and Friends of St. Thomas,

It seems every day there is a torrent of news about loss, rapid change, bitter conflict, and chaos from around the world and here at home. The headlines can be hard to take, and easy to turn away from. But for people of faith, they can also remind us of our grounding in God's unceasing love, and to think about ways we can make a positive difference in our lives, and the lives of others.

St. Thomas Episcopal Church is that touchpoint for so many of us - a faith community where we are rooted, that supports our journey to move closer to Jesus and opens avenues for us to share our blessings with our neighbors. Can we even imagine a place without communities of faith, bringing us closer to one another and our Creator?

In this time of rapid change, our annual stewardship season has an added focus this year. We're asking everyone who loves St. Thomas to prayerfully consider their role in keeping our parish strong by pledging financial support to both the annual budget and the Rector Housing Fund. This new housing fund is dedicated to helping our current and future rectors find an affordable place to live on the Eastside.

Both efforts are pro-active steps that will keep us moving toward eliminating any annual deficit while enabling the support that sustainable housing brings to our top-notch clergy.

The path forward requires diligence as we manage our financial resources. It also requires a vision to look beyond our own needs toward the importance of our faith community and the difference it makes in the lives of so many. The seven-decade legacy of St. Thomas is strong, and we have the power to decide the future as the Spirit guides us ***Forward in Faith.***

In Christ,

Kim Malcolm
Campaign Co-Chair
Sr. Warden (2024)



Tim Diller
Campaign Co-Chair
Sr. Warden (2023)



GROW ROOTS

At St. Thomas Church, we seek to be a Christian community where people can be rooted in their relationship with God and one another.

We are blessed by a **rich and meaningful worship and prayer life,**



committed staff and clergy,
and a beautiful campus.



BE NOURISHED



We live in a joyful Christian community, and that means coming together in both good times and in trying times; to celebrate, to learn, to reflect, to enjoy the simple pleasures of sharing a meal together.

We gather at Sunday coffee hour, at our Wonderful Wednesday (which includes a simple supper), in our bountiful potlucks, at the St. Nicholas breakfast, at the newcomer lunches, and in multiple ways and times throughout the year.



As part of our music program, we host a variety of free concerts throughout the year. These are supported by our highly talented musicians, soloists, and choir.



BRANCH OUT

The love of God we know and experience at St. Thomas is too precious to keep all for ourselves. As we practice our faith, we are called to branch out, sharing our life at St. Thomas with others, both within our walls and beyond them. We've been busy!

13

newly baptized
Christians.

75

new members
welcomed into St.
Thomas.

1,300+

meals served to our
neighbors.

1,800

pounds of food
collected for our
local food bank.

46%

increase in
attendance at Easter
services.

30%

increase in
attendance at
Christmas services.

15,000+

volunteer hours
provided by St. Thomas
members in 2023 and
2024.

20+

concerts held in our
spaces welcoming
hundreds of people
from the community.



MINISTRIES AT ST. THOMAS



Coffee Hour



Worship & Liturgy



Music: St. Thomas Choir & Choristers



Cooking for Neighbors in Need



Pride



MINISTRIES AT ST. THOMAS



Children & Youth



Summer Camp



Men's and Women's Retreats



St. John's Bible



WHY SHOULD YOU STEP FORWARD IN FAITH?

Forward in Faith combines two stewardship efforts to sustain St. Thomas's current growth, and to ensure that we have all the elements in place for long term success.

Replenish our annual operating budget and eliminate our deficit by 2026

Like many churches, we emerged from the pandemic needing to invest in rebuilding our community using our rainy-day fund. If our faithful and new pledgers increase our total donations by 25%, we will be on the path to balance our budget by 2026.

Help our current and future rectors live among the St. Thomas community

Our second goal is to provide a parish supported housing solution by creating a Rector Housing Fund. In the year since we've been discussing where our rector lives, we have learned a few critical things about why location matters:

- The rector is expected to be close, and available outside regular hours, unlike anyone else in the parish. Having our rector live in our community means they can build deeper, more meaningful relationships with parishioners and connections with community leaders. This helps them better support parishioners and attract new members.
- Being able to provide housing options and support makes us a more attractive employer. There are more parishes seeking priests than priests seeking parishes. Of the over 100 parishes in the Diocese of Olympia, St. Thomas is one of the three largest, ranked among the "Grade A" parishes. We are the only grade A parish without a rectory or housing solution.
- The soaring cost of housing on the Eastside presents a long-term challenge for our parish. Those of us who have lived here for a while have experienced that home prices and rents keep going up at rates that outpace wage growth. This isn't a problem we can wait out.

We believe this is the first time in St. Thomas's history that we have not had a rector live on the east side of Lake Washington. The increased demands and limitations it places on both the rector and the parish makes it undesirable for all of us.

St. Thomas has been a bedrock for so many people for over 70 years. The power to strengthen that foundation for ourselves, our children, and our grandchildren is in our hands, as the Spirit guides us **Forward in Faith**.

"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second-best time is today."



GUIDANCE FOR GIVING

Discern

Pray for a spirit of discernment to guide you as you consider how to share your financial resources in our **Forward in Faith** campaign. The call is both to increase our contributions to the annual operating budget AND offer generous gifts above and beyond annual stewardship to our Rector Housing Fund. Tune your heart to discover new ways to share.

Commit

As you feel called, make your commitment to both the annual and capital campaigns. More than the dollar amount, the key is the level of generosity each of us expresses. Everyone's precious gifts are needed!

Celebrate

Give thanks for the abundance in your life and for the calling you have to carry out God's work in this place.



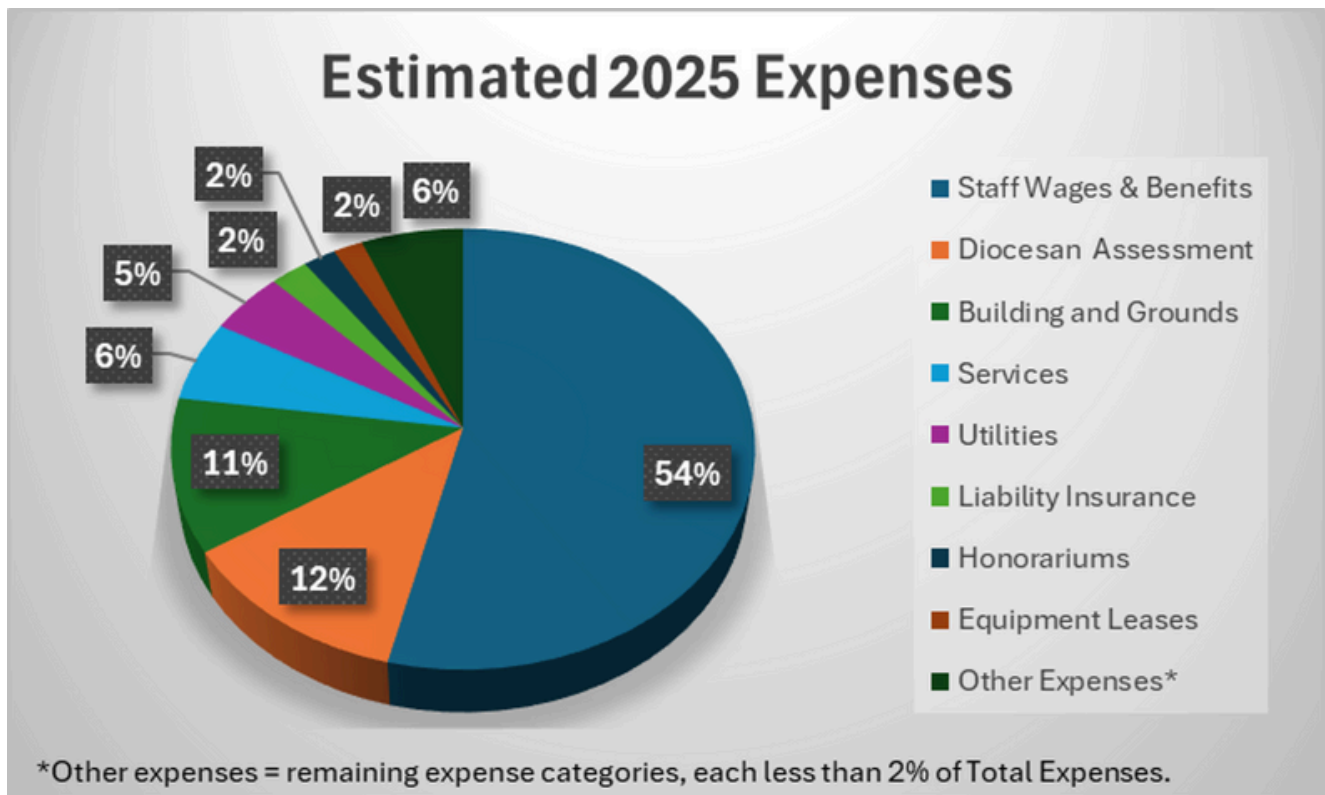
ANNUAL FUND CAMPAIGN

Annual Stewardship Goal = \$1,100,000

With this campaign, we are working toward sustaining our annual operating expenses and at the same time decreasing our reliance on our reserves to cover our budget gap. By increasing our support by 25% over 2024, we would narrow our deficit to less than \$200K, putting us on our way to a balanced budget in 2026.

We invite you to consider increasing your pledge to help us meet this goal.

How will my pledge dollars be spent?



Your Pledge will also help us to do the following:

- Continue to expand formation for children and youth
- Initiate a third service on Sunday evenings to attract seekers and new members
- Increase our outreach ministry in the wider community
- Expand our digital footprint to better share our life with those beyond our walls
- Sustain programming with appropriate staffing levels
- Continue to invest in our beautiful buildings and grounds so that they can be a gathering place for the congregation and the community



RECTOR HOUSING CAMPAIGN FINANCIALS

(Above and beyond our \$1.1M target for annual stewardship)

Rector Housing Fund Goal = \$2,000,000

**Below is our path to reach this goal -
It takes everyone . . .**

# of Gifting Families	Amount (Total Over 3 Years)	Total
1	\$200,000	\$200,000
2	\$100,000	\$200,000
3	\$75,000	\$225,000
4	\$60,000	\$240,000
5	\$48,000	\$240,000
6	\$33,000	\$198,000
8	\$21,000	\$168,000
10	\$15,000	\$150,000
14	\$9,000	\$126,000
18	\$6,000	\$108,000
26	\$3,000	\$78,000
Many Gifts	\$300 - \$1,800	\$67,000
160		\$ 2,000,000

Give the gift that brings you joy!



CREATIVE GIFT PLANNING

For many of us, our first thought when asked to contribute to a worthy cause is to give from our income. The parish is living proof of the generosity that has been afforded the parish through this sharing of income. Often, however, gifts for capital campaigns are contributed in ways that are a sharing of wealth from assets we may hold other than cash and checkbooks. For this campaign, we are encouraging everyone to think outside the conventional box about ways of sharing.

Gifts of Appreciated Investments

Donations of appreciated long-term stocks, mutual funds, or other investments are an excellent way to support our church. If your portfolio has experienced above average growth in 2024, consider sharing some of this appreciation with the parish. This extraordinary growth may give you the ability to give extraordinarily! When you donate appreciated investments, you do not pay capital gains tax, and you receive a charitable deduction for the full fair market value on the date of the donation.

Gifting from an IRA

You can make a tax-free charitable contribution to the church from your IRA. The contribution must be made directly from your IRA to the church and, if you are 73 or older it may be made as a Qualified Charitable Contribution from your Required Minimum Distribution. This could also take the form of moving legacy gifting forward.

Lifestyle Giving

Another way to generate gifts for our campaign is to consider lifestyle adjustments. Postponing the purchase of an automobile or remodeling of a home, are all ways to “find money” in order to make a generous gift.

Real Property as a Charitable Gift

There are two main methods for real estate to be given as a charitable gift. The first is an outright gift of the property. This is the simplest, most direct method resulting in the most immediate tax benefit. The second method involves bequests either through one’s will, establishment of trusts or annuities. For the latter there are various tax benefits depending upon the specifics of the bequest and upon the individual’s life circumstances and desires.

Bundling

With the doubling of the standard deduction, there’s a reduced incentive to itemize. Since you must itemize to claim a charitable deduction, consider “bundling” your charitable gift. With bundling, you simply alter the timing of your giving so that you exceed the standard deduction and reap a tax deduction. For example, instead of donating \$4,000 annually for each of three years, consider giving \$12,000 all at once. It’s the same gift as before, but if you coordinate it with your other potential deductions, you may be able to take advantage of the deduction in a year you itemize.

Donor Advised Funds

For those that have access to a Donor Advised Fund, this creates another opportunity to make a generous gift to St. Thomas.

Note: St. Thomas Episcopal Church cannot give legal advice. You are encouraged to consult your professional advisor before implementing any of the above plans.



PRAYER

Almighty God, we thank you for the provision and abundance in our lives. We recognize that everything that we have is a gift from You. Guide each of us as we discern how to share our gifts with your church, through the ***Forward in Faith*** Campaign. Empower us to become the next generation that glorifies you, allowing your power to work through us, so that together, we might accomplish something far more than we could have asked or imagined at St. Thomas Church.

Amen.



FACES OF ST. THOMAS





The primary mission of St. Thomas Church for 2024-2026 is to build a vibrant, diverse and loving Christian community within the Episcopal tradition that is recognized as the flagship Episcopal parish on Seattle's Eastside.

People will know us as followers of Christ through our liturgically rich worship, faith formation for all ages, service to the community, and inclusive message where everyone belongs...

-Vision Statement from St. Thomas' *Strategic Action Plan*

 **ST. THOMAS**
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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