



ST. THOMAS

EPISCOPAL CHURCH



2025 St. Thomas Church Annual Parish Meeting & St. Thomas Legacy Foundation Annual Meeting

February 2, 2025

2025 Annual Meeting of the Parish Corporation

Agenda – Parish Corporation

Call to Order.....	Kim Malcolm, Senior Warden
Opening Prayer and Moment of Silence for the Departed.....	Mother Liz, Rector
Rector’s Address.....	Mother Liz
Senior Warden’s Address	Kim
Housekeeping Items.....	Kim
Approval of the 2024 Annual Meeting of the Parish Corporation Minutes.....	Kim
Building and Grounds Report.....	Barbara Feldon, Junior Warden
Parish Financial Review.....	Anne Bentley, Treasurer
Q&A.....	Kim
Elections.....	Kim
2028 Vestry Slate	
2025 Diocesan Convention Delegates	
2025 Diocesan Alternate Convention Delegates	
Recognitions & Announcements	Mother Liz
Close the Parish Meeting	Kim Malcolm

Minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting of the Parish Corporation

Agenda – Parish Corporation
Ebsworth Life Center

February 18, 2024 – 10:15am – 11:00am

Call to Order.....Tim Diller, Senior Warden

Opening Prayer and Moment of Silence for the DepartedMother Liz

Rector’s Address.....Mother Liz

Senior Warden’s Address.....Tim

Housekeeping Items.....Tim

Quorum confirmed at over 15 participants
Unanimous consent is utilized.

Approval of the 2023 Parish Annual Meeting Minutes.....Tim

Question: any objections to the approval of the 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes
Reported: No comments or objections
Minutes are approved

Building and Grounds Report.....Tera Soelter, Junior Warden

Parish Financial Review..... Anne Bentley, Treasurer

Q&A.....Tim

Elections.....Tim

2027 Vestry Slate

- Megan Miller (3-year term)
- Peter Pitarys (3-year term)
- Eric Dalquist (3-year term)
- Barbara Feldon (3-year term)
- Theron Eichenberger (1-year term)

Call for nominations from the floor.

Hearing no additional nominations Vestry candidates are elected.

2024 Diocesan Convention Delegates

- Anne Bentley
- Shirley Allert
- Mike Allert
- Tim Diller
- Kim Malcolm
- Mary Pneuman
- Nancy Rabel
- Karl Rabel

Call for additional nominations from the floor.

Hearing no additional nomination, delegates are elected.

Recognitions & Announcements.....Mother Liz

Mother Liz thanked....

- The overall Parish – with our time, talents and treasure.
- Vestry ending term (Tim Diller, Tera Soelter, Katie Ford, Jackie Livingston)
- All Vestry members
- Chancellor – Andrea Sato-Borgmann
- Executive Team (Tera, Tim, Anne)
- Close the Parish Meeting.....Tim Diller

Statement of Financial Position
St. Thomas Episcopal Church
For the Year Ended December 31, 2024
(With Comparative Totals for 2023)

Modified Cash Basis

		At December 31,	
Assets		2024	2023
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$	439,750	\$ 603,964
Investments	\$	691,294	\$ 701,408
Property, Buildings & Fixtures	\$	14,879,959	\$ 14,873,903
Total Assets	\$	16,011,003	\$ 16,179,275
Liabilities & Net Assets			
Liabilities			
Refundable Advances*	\$	232,605	\$ 134,441
Accounts Payable	\$	-	\$ 710
Agency Funds**	\$	19,699	\$ 58,384
Total Liabilities	\$	252,304	\$ 193,535
Net Assets	\$	15,758,699	\$ 15,985,740
Total Net Assets	\$	15,758,699	\$ 15,985,740
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$	16,011,003	\$ 16,179,275

* includes \$180,000 prepaid pledges and \$52,000 prepaid for stained glass windows (\$103,000, \$31,000 in 2023)

** includes \$9,000 payable to the Foundation (\$30,000 in 2023)

Statement of Activities & Changes in Net Assets
St. Thomas Episcopal Church
For the Year Ended December 31, 2024
(With Comparative Totals for 2023 & 2024 Financial Plan for Mission)

Modified Cash Basis

Operating Revenue	2024 Total	2023 Total	2024 FPM (Approved Jan 24)	FPM Diff Fav (Unfav)
Pledge Contributions	\$ 885,534	\$ 803,942	\$ 799,500	\$ 86,034
Non-Pledge Contributions	\$ 226,632	\$ 347,828	\$ 179,900	\$ 46,732
Lease & Other Revenue	\$ 248,904	\$ 237,118	\$ 243,659	\$ 5,245
Investment Income	\$ 35,743	\$ 26,556	\$ 15,000	\$ 20,743
Total Operating Fund Revenue	\$ 1,396,813	\$ 1,415,444	\$ 1,238,059	\$ 158,754
Operating Expenses	2024 Total	2023 Total	2024 FPM (Approved Jan 24)	FPM Diff Fav (Unfav)
Wages & Benefits	\$ 833,085	\$ 736,145	\$ 850,679	\$ 17,594
Diocesan Assessment	\$ 196,462	\$ 204,304	\$ 181,259	\$ (15,203)
Buildings & Grounds	\$ 187,865	\$ 210,812	\$ 199,115	\$ 11,250
Utilities	\$ 73,480	\$ 69,947	\$ 74,865	\$ 1,385
Professional Services	\$ 35,589	\$ 38,826	\$ 41,155	\$ 5,566
Insurance	\$ 30,798	\$ 21,147	\$ 32,487	\$ 1,689
Equipment Lease	\$ 30,776	\$ 34,698	\$ 31,200	\$ 424
Honorariums	\$ 27,080	\$ 8,732	\$ 21,750	\$ (5,330)
Technology	\$ 26,598	\$ 22,813	\$ 34,600	\$ 8,002
Supplies	\$ 24,825	\$ 19,742	\$ 26,950	\$ 2,125
Advertising & Promotions	\$ 17,289	\$ 4,454	\$ 25,000	\$ 7,711
Food & Beverage	\$ 15,285	\$ 5,638	\$ 11,000	\$ (4,285)
Banking	\$ 7,279	\$ 8,943	\$ 12,000	\$ 4,721
Meetings & Events	\$ 2,353	\$ 733	\$ 12,000	\$ 9,647
Charitable Outreach	\$ 2,254	\$ -	\$ 1,800	\$ (454)
Books & Curriculum Materials	\$ 2,115	\$ 4,969	\$ 3,000	\$ 885
Postage	\$ 1,828	\$ 747	\$ 4,435	\$ 2,607
Travel	\$ 952	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (952)
Printing & Copying	\$ -	\$ 62	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 1,515,913	\$ 1,392,712	\$ 1,564,795	\$ 48,882
Change in Nets Assets from Operating Activities	\$ (119,100)	\$ 22,732	\$ (326,736)	\$ 207,636
Other Nonoperating Revenue	\$ 25,428	\$ 18,234	\$ 24,000	\$ 1,428
Net Insurance (Payments) Proceeds	\$ -	\$ (21,159)	\$ -	\$ -
Deferred Building & Maintenance Expenses	\$ (133,369)	\$ -	\$ (55,000)	\$ (78,369)
Total Change in Nets Assets	\$ (227,041)	\$ 19,807	\$ (357,736)	\$ 130,695

Parish Expenses by Category

Expenses*	2022	2023	2024
Administration	\$ 454,209	\$ 412,609	\$ 523,440
Formation	\$ 219,463	\$ 253,424	\$ 291,479
Worship	\$ 187,375	\$ 225,810	\$ 289,265
Diocesan Assessment	\$ 180,057	\$ 204,304	\$ 196,462
Music	\$ 143,941	\$ 157,612	\$ 151,364
Community Life	\$ 90,193	\$ 59,076	\$ 99,514
Pastoral Care	\$ 61,598	\$ 50,329	\$ 70,768
Outreach	\$ 52,103	\$ 29,548	\$ 26,990
Total Expenses	\$ 1,388,939	\$ 1,392,712	\$ 1,649,282

* Expenses reflect direct, indirect and allocated costs

Parish Pledge History

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
No of Pledging Units	210	217	197	167	161	150
Total Pledged	\$ 1,026,599	\$ 1,091,500	\$ 938,096	\$ 794,735	\$ 868,677	\$ 1,062,760
Average Pledge	\$ 4,889	\$ 5,030	\$ 4,762	\$ 4,759	\$ 5,396	\$ 7,085
Median Pledge	\$ 2,400	\$ 2,400	\$ 2,400	\$ 2,060	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,640

Parish Pledge Fulfilment History

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Operating Fund Pledge Fulfilment	\$ 1,123,037	\$ 1,044,481	\$ 889,179	\$ 803,942	\$ 885,534
Ladd Gift	\$ 325,000	\$ 325,000	\$ 325,000	\$ -	\$ -
ATBB Capital Fund Pledge Fulfilment	\$ 818,613	\$ 244,739	\$ 3,000	\$ -	\$ -
Rector Housing Fund Pledge Fulfilment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 291,464
	\$ 2,266,650	\$ 1,614,220	\$ 1,217,179	\$ 803,942	\$ 1,176,998
Total Pledged to Operating Fund	\$ 1,026,599	\$ 1,091,500	\$ 938,096	\$ 794,735	\$ 868,677
Operating Fund Pledge Fulfilment	\$ 1,123,037	\$ 1,044,481	\$ 889,179	\$ 803,942	\$ 885,534
Difference	\$ 96,439	\$ (47,019)	\$ (48,918)	\$ 9,207	\$ 16,857
Percentage of Fulfilment	109%	96%	95%	101%	102%

2025 Forward in Faith Summary through January 28, 2025

<u>Operating Pledges</u>	<u>2025 to Date</u>	<u>2024 Total</u>
Number of pledges	150	161
Average	\$ 7,085	\$ 5,396
Median	\$ 3,620	\$ 2,600
Total	\$ 1,062,760	\$ 868,677
Number of New Pledges to date in 2025 (not 2024)		
	18	

<u>Rector Housing Fund Commitments</u>		
Number of pledges	111	
Average	\$ 11,865	
Median	\$ 4,650	
Total	\$ 1,305,179	



St. Thomas Episcopal Church 2025 Financial Plan for Mission

	2025 FPM	Actual as of December 31, 2024
Revenues		
Operating Fund Pledge Revenues	\$ 1,067,000	\$ 885,534
Non-Pledge Contributions	\$ 213,000	\$ 226,632
Other Revenue	\$ 270,300	\$ 248,904
Investment Returns	\$ 18,400	\$ 35,743
Total Revenues	\$ 1,568,700	\$ 1,396,813
	2025 FPM	Actual as of December 31, 2024
Expenses		
Advertising & Promotions	\$ 21,500	\$ 17,289
Banking	\$ 8,000	\$ 7,279
Books & Curriculum Materials	\$ 1,750	\$ 2,115
Buildings & Grounds	\$ 192,200	\$ 187,865
Diocesan Assessment	\$ 227,500	\$ 196,462
Donations/Outreach	\$ 11,700	\$ 2,254
Equipment Lease	\$ 33,900	\$ 30,776
Food & Beverage	\$ 15,250	\$ 15,285
Honorariums	\$ 17,500	\$ 27,080
Insurance	\$ 39,100	\$ 30,798
Meeting	\$ 7,500	\$ 2,353
Postage	\$ 6,500	\$ 1,828
Services	\$ 60,800	\$ 35,589
Supplies	\$ 28,500	\$ 24,825
Technology	\$ 36,000	\$ 26,598
Travel	\$ 1,000	\$ 952
Utilities	\$ 80,100	\$ 73,480
Wages & Benefits	\$ 972,700	\$ 833,085
Total Expenses	\$ 1,761,500	\$ 1,515,913
Net Ordinary Loss	\$ (192,800)	\$ (119,100)
Deferred B&G Maintenance	\$ (40,000)	\$ (133,369)
Other (Loss) Income Total	\$ 33,000	\$ 25,428
Adjusted Net Loss	\$ (199,800)	\$ (227,041)
Per Day Operating Costs	\$ 4,826	\$ 4,153

2025 St. Thomas Legacy Foundation Annual Meeting

Call to Order.....	Fred Barkman, Foundation President
Housekeeping Items: Approval by Unanimous Consent.....	Fred
Approval of the Minutes of the 2024 St. Thomas Legacy Foundation Meeting...	Fred
St. Thomas Legacy Foundation Report & Financial Review.....	Fred
Q&A.....	Fred
Elections: Board Nominee: Mike Allert.....	Fred
Close of the Foundation Meeting.....	Fred
Closing Prayer.....	Mother Liz Costello

Minutes of the 2024 St. Thomas Legacy Foundation Annual Meeting

Ebsworth Life Center

February 18, 2024 – 11:00am – 11:35am

Call to Order.....Fred Barkman

Housekeeping Items.....Fred Barkman
Unanimous consent utilized

Approval of the Minutes of the 2023 Meeting.....Fred Barkman

Quorum confirmed at over 15 participants

Unanimous consent utilized

Minutes are approved

St. Thomas Legacy Foundation Report & Financial Review.....Fred Barkman

Q&A.....Fred Barkman

Elections: Board Nominee, Fred Barkman.....Anne Bentley

Call for additional nominations from the floor.

Hearing no additional nomination, delegates are elected.

Close of the Foundation Meeting.....Fred Barkman

Closing Prayer.....Mother Liz Costello

St. Thomas Legacy Foundation Cash & Investments

		Balance at December 31,		
		2022	2023	2024
Cash on Hand				
	Operating Fund	\$ 22,834	\$ 19,418	\$ 9,212
	Total Cash	\$ 22,834	\$ 19,418	\$ 9,212
Special Purpose & Reserve Funds				
	Perpetual Memorial Reserve Fund	\$ 9,417	\$ 11,462	\$ 37,260
	Music Guild ^	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,000
	Rector Housing Fund	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 291,568
	Liturgical Supply Fund (*DIF)	\$ 17,683	\$ 19,823	\$ 21,775
	Outreach Reserve Fund (DIF)	\$ 40,113	\$ 50,178	\$ 75,945
	Sabbatical Reserve Fund (DIF)	\$ 1,767	\$ 12,784	\$ 28,357
	Music Reserve Fund (DIF)	\$ 20,336	\$ 458	\$ 1,414
	Total Special Purpose & Reserve Funds	\$ 89,316	\$ 94,705	\$ 461,319
Endowments				
	Buildings & Grounds Endowment (DIF)	\$ 49,194	\$ 53,303	\$ 56,807
	Columbarium Endowment (DIF)	\$ 127,733	\$ 142,104	\$ 157,696
	**Sustaining Fund (DIF)	\$ 253,393	\$ 277,357	\$ 297,113
	Behnke Music Fund (DIF)	\$ 86,790	\$ 84,167	\$ 89,376
	Music Endowment (DIF)	\$ -	\$ 5,500	\$ 7,200
	Perpetual Memorial Endowment Fund(DIF)	\$ 51,750	\$ 62,728	\$ 172,127
	Total Endowments	\$ 568,860	\$ 625,159	\$ 780,319
	Total Cash & Investments	\$ 681,010	\$ 739,282	\$ 1,250,850

* Diocesan Investment Fund

^ Additional \$23,000 to be transferred to Music Guild account from Parish at 12/31/24

Statement of Activities & Changes in Net Assets St. Thomas Legacy Foundation For the Year Ended December 31, 2024 (With Comparative Totals for 2023)

Modified Cash Basis

Revenue	2024 Total	2023 Total
Donations	\$ 475,478	\$ 65,150
Investment Returns	\$ 73,176	\$ 80,017
Total Revenue	\$ 548,654	\$ 145,167
Expenses		
Distributions to Parish	\$ 33,391	\$ 53,834
Professional Services	\$ 16,548	\$ 5,895
Other Expenses	\$ 5,565	
Total Expenses	\$ 49,939	\$ 59,729
Net Income	\$ 498,715	\$ 85,438

Ministry Reports

Newcomers Welcome Ministry

Many thanks to Peter and Nancy Pitarys who led a robust newcomer ministry in 2024, welcoming 49 new members to St. Thomas representing 30 households. A new leadership team started in October 2024 with Margie Gerrity, Libby Nielsen, and Darryl Cherdrone.

The new team expanded the Newcomer Committee to include Greeters as well as Event Volunteers. The team created a *Guide for Greeters*, an updated *Welcome to St. Thomas* folder to give to visitors and worked with Lisalynn to make Greeter nametags. An informational meeting was held in November to introduce the new leadership team and to share the updates.



The overarching goal for 2025 is to welcome and support all visitors to St. Thomas. The team will work with Greeters to streamline communication and encourage use of MSP to ensure consistent presence at services. They will work with clergy to ensure newcomer events are well-attended and effective, and hope to recruit more event volunteers to support additional events as they arise. They will also review the *Greeter Customary* and update it as appropriate.

Leaders:

- Chairs: Libby Nelson, Darryl Cherdrone, and Margie Gerrity
- Vestry Liaison: Nancy McEachran, class of 2025
- Staff Liaison: The Rev. Shane Carlson, Curate

Liturgical Guild

The volunteers serving in the Liturgical Guild supported over 115 services in 2024, plus funerals, memorials and other celebration of life events. Each service requires a minimum of 2 people and a maximum of 15 people – which works out to a lot of volunteers! Our scheduling system (Ministry



Scheduler Pro) now has a total of over 150 volunteers which support our liturgical services, as well as Porchlight, and Children's services (i.e. Godly Play, Children's Chapel and Building Blocks of Faith). These dedicated volunteers should be commended and celebrated!

We are always looking for more volunteers, so in 2025, please reach out if you have any interest in becoming a volunteer. Our volunteers will continue to support both existing and any new services introduced throughout the year.

Leaders:

- Co-Chairs: Bea Covington, Tera Soelter
- Vestry Liaison: To be determined
- Staff Liaisons
 - The Rev. Liz Costello, Rector
 - The Rev. Edmund Harris, Associate Rector
 - The Rev. Shane Carlson, Curate
 - Lisalynn Reed, Parish Administrator

Fellowship & Hospitality



Our dedicated fellowship and hospitality team worked hard this year to plan events that helped us come together as a community as we continue to regroup and rebuild in this new season at St. Thomas. Highlights included our Mardi Gras celebration on Shrove Tuesday, our Maundy Thursday Agape meal in April, a reception for the Bishop Candidates townhall held at St. Thomas in May, and a fall kick-off barbeque to welcome folks back to church after the summer.

Leaders:

- Chair: Kimbra Ong
- Vestry Liaison: Theron Eichenberger, class of 2025
- Staff Liaison: To be determined

Evangelism & Communication

Our main objectives:

- To spread the word of our active, open, and welcoming Episcopal parish to the greater community, including newcomers who may be different from the majority of people who have attended in the past
- To link, connect, and celebrate our own parishioners, rooted in our shared life in Christ.
- Maintain a “big tent” approach in messaging our theology



2024 Milestones:

- Created wide-reaching postcard mailing to West Bellevue/Clyde Hill/Medina neighborhoods in advance of Christmas & Easter, significantly boosting attendance
- Created and posted banner displaying service times in lead-up to Christmas and Holy Week
- Created posters for use on sandwich boards to advertise upcoming events, concerts, services
- Renewed posting on Instagram & Facebook
- Received \$15K grant from the Narthex Project to enhance our digital footprint
- Gathered 15+ staff and St. Thomas leaders for 2-day “Unstuck Group” consultation in July covered by the Narthex grant to craft a digital evangelism plan for St. Thomas
- Tried out creating podcasts for our fall speakers series



- Using grant monies, hired a web consultant to audit and update our webpage, as well as a contractor to boost our SEO (search engine optimization) to draw more visitors to our site
- With a generous gift from a member, hired a part-time communications contractor to enhance social media posting and update webpage
- Installed a new bulletin board for posting news in the Ebsworth Life Center lobby
- Completed a year-long inclusive messaging campaign, and installed inclusive message signs throughout our spaces

Hopes for 2025

- To complete and build on digital evangelism plan begun in 2024, including reaching individuals and families at different stages of their spiritual journey
- To continue to create more regular, quality content for posting on social media
- To recruit more volunteer members to help with capturing our life together for sharing on social media
- To enhance our website based on feedback from our website auditor

Leaders:

- Chair: Andi Moss
- Staff Liaison: The Rev. Edmund Harris, Associate Rector
- Vestry Liaison: Kim Malcolm

St. Thomas School Committee



We have reconstituted the committee after the resignation of the former chair. We have made progress in developing our relationship with St. Thomas School, and hope to make more progress next year. The committee members have been named, and we have a draft agenda proposed by the school task force.

In the coming year we hope to have made a presentation to the Vestry and have a decision about the agreed approach to take with defining our relationship with the school. The first step is to meet with the existing school task force that is in place to address the ongoing difficulties with the

school/church relationship. After this discussion we will present the options to the Vestry so that they can make a decision about how to approach the school.

Leaders:

- Chair: Stephen Hornbuckle
- Vestry Liaison: Fred Williams
- Staff Liaison: The Rev. Liz Costello, Rector

Adult Formation Committee

In the spring of 2024, the Adult Formation Committee focused on deepening biblical engagement. To support this goal, the group read *The Path*, which guided participants through the biblical narrative throughout the season. In addition to Bible study, several special formation opportunities were offered, including Episcopal 101, an introduction to Episcopal beliefs and practices. Book discussion



groups also provided space for meaningful conversations, including *Book of Joy*, and a meaningful group, *Bearing Witness: A Journey with Holy Land Christians*. Another significant event was the screening of *Philadelphia Eleven*, which explored the story of the first women ordained as Episcopal priests.

DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL VISITS ST. THOMAS CHURCH ON OCTOBER 26-27



October 26

- Cocktails & Conversation on Giving at 5pm

October 27

- Preaching at the 8 & 10am services
- Interview with Kim Malcolm at 9am
- Special Forum following the Halloween Celebration

Dean of St. Paul's since 2023, Dean Tremlett is visiting St. Thomas Church ahead of our choir residency at St. Paul's in 2025. These events are open to all. Please join us!

In the fall of 2024, the committee hosted a dynamic lineup of speakers from across the Anglican Communion. David Porter, former Canon for Reconciliation for the Anglican Communion, led an All-Parish Retreat titled *The Elusive Quest: Reconciliation in a World of Conflict*, followed by a preaching and forum session on reconciliation. Later in the season, The Very Rev. Andrew Tremlett, Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, visited to preach and lead a forum

on *Friends of St. Paul's Cathedral in America*, in preparation for St. Thomas' Choir residency at St. Paul's in 2025. The speaker series concluded with The Rev. Scott Gunn, Executive Director of Forward Movement, who led a retreat on hope in difficult times, followed by a preaching and forum session on *Three Ways to Stay Close to God*.

Throughout the year, the committee worked to expand its membership and assess the best timing for adult forums. In previous years, forums were held at 9 AM, but attendance remained inconsistent. In response, the 2023-2024 program year introduced a small group reading *The Path* at 9 AM while shifting the main Adult Forums to 11:15 AM, following the 10 AM service. This adjustment aimed to encourage greater participation and engagement. The committee remains committed to refining its approach to best serve the needs of the congregation. The Adult Formation Committee expresses gratitude for the continued interest and participation of the community and looks forward to fostering new opportunities for learning, reflection, and spiritual growth.

Leaders:

- Chair: Mary Rawson Rorrer
- Staff Liaison: The Rev. Liz Costello, Rector
- Vestry Liaison: Mary Rawson Rorrer

Music Ministry



The music ministry strives to support and enhance the worship life of the parish and to provide opportunities for people to offer their musical gifts to God. The two choirs at St. Thomas are the St. Thomas Choir, comprised of volunteer and professional adult singers, and the St. Thomas Choristers, comprised of elementary and middle school aged children. The members of the music staff are Jacki Sullivan, Director of the Choristers, and Paul Meier, Interim

Director of Music and Organist.

The year began with the St. Thomas Choir offering music at the 10:00 service on Sunday mornings, as well as special services and services of Choral Evensong and the St. Thomas Choristers singing at services monthly. For the 8:00 service, a staff singer served as a cantor to help provide musical leadership. In April, St. Thomas presented an organ concert by David Briggs, an internationally renowned concert organist and Artist-in-Residence at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. In June, the choir and choristers took a summer recess. During this time, the liturgical music was enhanced by vocal soloists and guest instrumentalists, and staff singers served as cantors at both morning services.

In August, the Music Guild was established to provide support for a music concert series at St. Thomas, working collaboratively with the Music Director and the Rector, to provide input and assistance with

- Program planning and development of community concerts and liturgically themed concerts
- Providing outreach to the greater community with music events
- Event operations and organization related to concerts and non-liturgical music events
- Fundraising to support these activities

(For additional information about the Music Guild, please see the separate Music Guild report.)

- In September, the church said goodbye to Douglas Cleveland, Director of Music since 2016, who took a position as Interim Organist and Director of Music at Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago.
- Following Doug's departure, Jacki Sullivan, Director of the Choristers, directed the adult choir and planned music for the services. She was assisted by several guest organists during this time.
- In November, the Music Guild presented a Concert of Remembrance: Requiem by Gabriel Fauré with the St. Thomas Choir and orchestra.
- At the end of November, Paul Meier joined the staff as Interim Director of Music and Organist. Paul came to St. Thomas from Grace and Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Kansas City where he was Director of Music.
- In December, the adult choir and choristers offered a service of Lessons and Carols.
- For 2025, the St. Thomas Choir and St. Thomas Choristers will continue to offer music at parish liturgies. The chorister program will also begin to implement a Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) based curriculum.
- Both choirs are preparing for a choir residency in August at St. Paul's Cathedral in London and Coventry Cathedral. The last choral residency for the St. Thomas Choir was in 2019 at Gloucester Cathedral, and the 2025 residency will be the first to include both the St. Thomas Choir and the St. Thomas Choristers.



— Dr. Paul Meier, Interim Director of Music and Organist

Search for Interim and *now* Director of Music and Organist

Doug Cleveland's last Sunday was on September 22. Doug accepted a call to his dream job, and we wish him well. Jacki Sullivan covered the gap while a search committee looked for an Interim Director of Music and Organist. We are grateful to Jacki for her service to our church. After successfully hiring Paul Meier, the committee reset and began a national search for a permanent Director of Music and Organist.

Search Timeline:

January 2025	Post Job Description
February 21, 2025	Accept applications until Feb 21, 2025
February 21-March 2	Committee Reviews applications
March 2	Committee and Liz create shortlist
March 2025	Conduct Virtual Interviews
April 2025	Invite 2-3 candidates for on-campus interview
April 21-May 21	Conduct on-campus interviews
May 31	Make Offer
July/Aug	Permanent Director begins

Why do we need an Interim?

Music is a signature ministry at St. Thomas Church. People come to St. Thomas because of our music, and they stay here because of it. Because our music program is so beloved, part of tending to it will include an interim that does the following work:

1. ***Salary Research and Adjustments.*** We need to increase the salary for Director of Music and Organist in order to attract and retain high quality candidates.
2. ***Build Infrastructure for Music Program.*** There is a lot of building that needs to be done in our program, including administration, organization, HR work, and clarifying the relationship between the Music Guild and the Director of Music.
3. ***Discern Liturgical-Center of St. Thomas Church in 2025.*** We will enter a discovery period where we discover and affirm our musical-center. Historically we offered blended music that was inclusive of jazz, gospel, global music, alongside Sacred Music/Anglican Choral music. Most look at this period with nostalgia, while others may have a different opinion. It will be valuable to discover where our congregation is today.

Thank you to all those who served or are currently serving in this process! Thank you to: Marilyn Pedersen and Peter Camp, co-chairs of the committee; Alyce Rogers, Jon Smith, Jacki Sullivan, Judy Siehl, Jim Blundell, Mary Wang, and Margaret Chorlton.

--- Liz

Music Guild

The mission of the St. Thomas Music Guild is to enable the continuation of our great heritage of Anglican music, including Anglican Evensong worship and congregational worship music, along with programs of sacred music open to the greater Eastside community. The goal is to serve music lovers of all ages by providing a wide variety of musical styles, both vocal and instrumental that reflect the diversity of the community of which we are a part.



The Music Guild steering committee is in the strategic planning stage, establishing an organizational structure and specific, measurable goals that will move our mission forward. These goals will be both financial and artistic.



Paul Klemme, the Director of music ministries at St Paul's Episcopal Church in Salem Oregon, has met with the committee and offered valuable advice. St. Paul's has provided a very successful yearly community Evensong/concert series for over 20 years. It is a program that is supported by parishioners and non-parishioners alike.

Recent offerings like the Piano for Eight Hands, and Amahl and the Night Visitors demonstrate the potential to reach out beyond the walls of the church to offer the spiritual gift of music.

We hope to pattern a music ministry that reflects the needs of St. Thomas as well as offer a music program the reaches out to the greater Eastside community.

Leaders:

- Co-Chairs: Marilyn Pedersen, Jon Smith
- Vestry Liaison: Jon Smith, class of 2025
- Staff Liaison: To Be Determined

Pastoral Care Ministries

Accomplishments:

2024 was a year of formation for the pastoral care team. Stephen Ministry recruited and completed training for new Stephen Ministers, and continue to meet for supervision twice monthly. We have had three care receivers to date, with at least 6 referrals. Touch Points ministry completed training on confidentiality and boundaries, and has met at least three times this year as a



group. Over 150 cards have been sent to parishioners this year. Prayer Ministry has continued to evolve this year, with many accomplishments including maintaining a close working relationship with Lisalynn for prayer list requests, follow-up calls or emails and referral for additional pastoral care needs. All names on the prayer list for healing have been entered on the database, and we no longer have names that are not known. Laura Scheyer is working with Lisalynn to help create a second position to help with this growing ministry.

Father Shane has started visiting Pacific Regent once a month during a replay of the taped 10 AM Sunday service. A grief group led by Jackie Livingston, Joanne Del Bene, and clergy met in July and August of 2024. Seven people attended. A pastoral care tracking sheet has also been created to maintain updated information on pastoral care receivers. An abbreviated Spiritual Gifts course was offered in September with good turnout.

Goals for 2025:

1. Continue to refine the Touch Points, Prayer Ministry, and Stephen Ministry referral process
2. Create a more formalized process of pastoral care offerings to parishioners who are in bereavement
3. Offer another grief group session, possibly twice yearly
4. Create a support group for moms
5. Create a prayer wheel for short term, immediate prayers for parishioners
6. Have a meal service, possibly making meals that can be frozen in church freezer for parishioners in need
7. Maintain once or twice monthly hosted 10 AM service replay at Pacific Regent

8. Train additional Lay Eucharistic Visitors, especially men.

Leaders:

- Chair: Heather Smith
- Vestry Liaison: Kim Malcolm Sr. Warden, class of 2026
- Staff Liaison: The Rev. Shane Carlson, Curate

Outreach

Outreach and Social Justice Ministry at St. Thomas did much to help our brothers and sisters in need locally and around the globe in 2024. Our church serves as the July Rotating Shelter for the men of PorchLight, and many families stepped up again—31 to be exact—to feed our guests dinner each evening of the month. The Men’s Ministry and other parishioners also hosted each evening, providing important conversation and fellowship. The St. Thomas kitchen remains a central part of the ORSJ Ministry service as groups of 5-7 people each month cooked, transported, and served food to the PorchLight Emergency Shelter for 75 men.



We made approximately 200 Neighbors in Need Bags and supported KidVantage and Bellevue Safe Parking Program by donating over 120 gifts of toys, clothing and gift cards to children and families for our Christmas Giving Tree. We also lead the summer Vacation Bible Camp program’s daily outreach activities educating our young people on our responsibility to serve our neighbors and then doing just that! Those young people ages 4-11 made 200 sandwiches and bagged them in 40 minutes to feed the homeless!



The committee also sponsored an annual evening with Anne Thomas, a missionary in Cambodia and “member abroad” of St. Thomas. The Men’s Ministry participated in their first Sound Foundations construction build, learning much about the housing crisis in Seattle and building a tiny home to house a person in need; they plan to

return in 2025. The groundwork was laid this last year for St. Thomas to be used as a collection site for Blood Works NW. Starting in April, you can donate blood every other month right here. This past year also provided an opportunity for our team to make a connection with Bellevue Safe Parking. Trish Evison will have just led our first coordinated dinner for them, and our partnership with them will grow this year with volunteer opportunities to follow, stay tuned!



Leaders:

- Chair: Laurie Angelo
- Vestry Liaison: Mary Rawson Foreman-Rorrer, class of 2025
- Staff Liaison: The Rev. Shane Carlson, Curate

Buildings & Grounds

The Building & Grounds Committee had a very successful year in 2024. Our goal at the beginning of the year was to have a warm sanctuary and dry basement. We are happy to report that both have been achieved.



We completed the replacement of the broken boiler for the Sanctuary and Chapel building with the help of two very generous parishioner. We figured out a solution to the water intrusion issue in the west wall of the Youth Room and are just finishing up the project by re-staining the concrete floor. The odor in the Basement of the ELC has also been eradicated with a much-needed cleaning of the grinder pump.

Several other routine maintenance issues were addressed throughout the year.

We are hopeful that 2025 will be a year when this committee is *less* busy. We already have a few projects on our list (i.e. repairing the controller for the bell tower, patching some areas where the stucco has been damaged, and possibly repairing and repainting the gates to the columbarium.) Depending on funding, we may also reseal and restripe the parking lot. One carry-over project for 2024 is to continue to re-tune the

microphones and speakers in the Sanctuary to produce better quality sound. We want to be sure that everyone can hear the sermons and the liturgy.

As always, let us know if you notice something that should be taken care of!

Leaders:

- Chair: Mark Nelson
- Vestry Liaison: Barbara Feldon, Jr. Warden, class of 2027
- Staff Liaison: Lisalynn Reed, Parish Administrator and Kevin Chrisinger, Sexton

Stewardship Committee

This year brought some key challenges into focus: how best to support our operations while facing a \$350,000 deficit. and also taking concrete steps to attract and retain our clergy now and in the future, as the cost of housing continues to rise on the Eastside.



Starting in January 2024, through research, multiple meetings, and housing summits, a subcommittee determined that the cost of living and housing would deter high quality clergy candidates from coming to and staying at St. Thomas. After soliciting feedback from the Vestry, lay committees, and staff, the stewardship committee and the vestry leadership decided the issue could not wait. By midsummer, a recommendation was made and the vestry approved launching a capital campaign to support rector housing in conjunction with our annual stewardship campaign to support our annual operations.



Consultant Marc Rieke with The Enrichment Group was hired, and the groundwork for a joint campaign was laid, with a campaign committee formed to start work in August. ***The Forward in Faith*** campaign formally launched in September, designed to support giving to the rector housing fund over three years, and the annual fund for 2025.

Campaign committee members included Mother Liz, Father Edmund, Tim Diller, Kim Malcolm, Tera Soelter, Nancy McEachran, Megan Miller, Molly McConkey, Mary Williams, Mary Waldmann, Barbara Feldon, David Paranchych, Kristen McSherry, Peter Justus, Lisalynn Reed, and Gwen Ellison. Several others provided critical support for the campaign including Fred McConkey, Brian Evison, Anne Bentley, Jennifer Eichenberger, David Langhans and Valerie Wang.

Benefits of the campaign include a framework for our annual giving over the next three years. A significant volume of work has been invested in small group informational gatherings, marketing, newsletters, witness speakers, parish wide letters, and larger meetings where parishioners could ask questions and offer feedback. We can now leverage this framework to guide our stewardship efforts over the next three years, easing the burden for our dedicated stewardship volunteers.

Initial results from the 2024 phase of the Forward in Faith campaign show how deeply faithful our parishioners are in giving to our church, and how invested our members are in our future health as an Episcopal church on Seattle's Eastside. As of January 28, gifts to support our annual operating expenses have now risen 22% over last year for a total of a little over \$1.06 million, and so far \$1.3 million has been pledged to build the rector housing fund, which will be housed in the St Thomas Foundation. We are grateful to our members for their dedication, love, and sacrificial giving in support of our church. Thanks be to God!

Leaders

- Chair: Tim Diller & Kim Malcolm
- Vestry Liaison: Mike Eggenberger, Secretary, class of 2026
- Staff Liaisons
 - The Rev. Liz Costello, Rector
 - The Rev. Edmund Harris, Associate Rector
 - The Rev. Shane Carlson, Curate
 - Lisalynn Reed, Parish Administrator

Legacy Stewardship Committee

The parish Legacy Stewardship Committee switched gears this year and undertook the task of raising money for the new Rector Housing Fund. We determined that the St. Thomas Legacy Foundation the best vehicle to hold and



invest the money raised for Rector Housing. The Rector Housing money is in a separate sub-account fund held under the St. Thomas Legacy Foundation, which currently holds and manages \$1,250,850 in various endowment and reserve funds that support the parish. The Rector Housing Fund capital campaign received pledges of about \$1.3 million to be collected over the next three years for Rector Housing. A committee led by Tim Diller will evaluate how and when to buy a Rectory home. The goal is still to raise \$2 million but we are very pleased with the \$1.3 million that has been pledged so far.



There are two ways to donate to the St. Thomas Legacy Foundation. The first method is lifetime gifts, which is what we are doing for the Rector Housing Fund. The second method is Legacy gifts where one leaves money to St. Thomas Church, or directly to the Legacy Foundation, in their will or other estate planning methods when they pass.

For 2025, we had assumed that the Federal Estate Tax Exemption would drop in half due to tax laws sunsetting. Our strategy was to encourage everyone to remember St. Thomas as they updated their estate documents for the changing tax law. With the Republicans in power, the 2025 tax cuts will likely be extended, so our new strategy is to encourage everyone to remember St. Thomas in their will, as few will be subject to Estate Tax. Only estates over \$13.99M or \$27.98M for couples will be subject to estate tax, so there is plenty of room for most to donate to St. Thomas before being subject to estate tax.

For 2025-2028, we will focus on collecting the pledges for Rector Housing Fund lifetime gifts. We will also send out emails, flyers, and wrapper notices to remember St. Thomas in their Wills for Estate gifts.

The St. Thomas Church 75th Anniversary is in 2029. We are planning a new St. Thomas Legacy Foundation campaign at that time, with a goal to boost the Legacy Foundation's endowment and reserve funds assets to \$7.5M, excluding the Rector Housing Fund. At an annual distribution rate of 4% of endowment assets, this would generate \$300,000 per year to help fund parish budget items. Our goal is to eventually cover all building expenses, repairs, and preventive maintenance from the Legacy Foundation's endowment and reserve funds.

Challenges During this Season of Rebuilding:

The greatest challenge was to sift through enormous amounts of legacy giving information, and present a concise, high-level, professional brochure to introduce and describe the program. All the committee members worked hard on this project and Natalie Ingrisano did an outstanding job in producing the brochure in desktop publishing. The next challenge will be forming a list of members for Mother Liz to visit, scheduling those visits, and securing donations and pledges to the St. Thomas Legacy Foundation. We have been told by other churches that this is the most effective method of building endowment.

The next challenge will be forming a list of members for Mother Liz to visit, scheduling those visits, and securing donations and pledges to the Foundation. We have been told by other churches that this is the most effective method of building the endowment balance.

Leaders:

- Fred McConkey, Chair
- Vestry Liaison: Eric Dahlquist, class of 2027
- Staff Liaison: Lisalynn Reed, Parish Administrator and the Rev. Edmund Harris, for marketing production

People Resources Committee

The PRC is tasked with ensuring that policies, procedures and processes are in place to support church employees, clergy and volunteers. This team keeps the Employee Handbook up-to-date and relevant, and makes recommendations to the Vestry regarding employee policies, training, vacation accrual, compensation strategy, rewards/ recognition and performance management.



Accomplishments last year

- Worked on revising letters of agreement for staff
- Worked with Finance and Vestry after Stewardship Campaign to review wage/benefit budget and made recommendations for coming year.
- In process of updating Employee Handbook

Challenges

- Doug's departure meant an unexpected staffing change.
- We are looking forward to supporting the staff through issues that may arise from parish growth, consulting with Vestry on employee policies, and finishing work on the Employee Handbook.



Leaders:

- Margaret Chorlton, Chair
- Vestry Liaison:
- Staff Liaison: The Rev. Liz Costello, Rector

Finance Committee

Kudos to Anne Bentley and Jean Waite for their dedication and countless hours spent to maintain and monitor every aspect of our financial position throughout the year.

Your finance committee met each month to conduct due diligence on each expense that occurred and to ensure it was within the budgeted amount agreed for the year. In reviewing our financial status, it is pleasing to report that the results improved substantially from the original planned loss of \$358,000 to a final net loss of \$225,000. This improvement was due to our generous parishioners who committed and followed through with their pledges and additional support for the parish.



We accepted the challenge throughout the year to contain our losses within the approved budget and to ensure our Operating Reserves threshold remained at a minimum balance of \$500,000 by the end of 2025, as approved by our Vestry. Based upon the positive revenue trend and the strategic direction of our leadership, we are targeting to break even in 2026. Your finance committee will continue to monitor our planned expenses that will be matched by our anticipated revenue for our future endeavors. In order to be transparent, we will continue to publish our quarterly financial status in the Ministry Minute and Wrapper.

I would like to thank the members of the 2024 finance committee for their commitment and time spent to find innovative ways to attain our financial goals.: Mother Liz, Fr. Shane, Anne Bentley, Jean Waite, Dave Katri, Tim Diller, Peter Pitarys(Vestry), Steve Pedersen, Mike Allert.

Leaders:

- Chair: Brian Evison
- Vestry Liaison Peter Pitarys, class of 2027
- Staff Liaison: The Rev. Liz Costello, Rector

Children, Youth, and Family Ministry



St. Thomas is blessed with a strong, vibrant ministry for children, youth, and families. As with so many ministries at church at this moment in our history, this past year was marked a time of rebuilding and growth.

There were many highlights. In the spring, we had a wonderful Shrove Tuesday dinner, which included activities for kids like the burning of Palms. On Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, we hosted special services for younger children. On Easter Sunday, we welcomed over 150 children to our two egg hunts! On Pentecost, we enjoyed a special visit from the Bellevue Fire Department. On Youth Sunday, we bade farewell to our graduating seniors, and listened to two seniors, Olivia Ong and Seema Borgman, preach from our pulpit.

During the summer, we hosted camp again for the second year in a row, welcoming over 20 children ages 4 thru 5th grade for a week-long camp exploring peacemaking, and engaging countless volunteers from St. Thomas Church to help with camp and aftercare. Also during the summer, we initiated Children's Chapel to ensure there would be formation for children throughout the summer.





In the fall, in response to our growing numbers of younger children, we added a second Sunday school class, Building Blocks of Faith, drawing on Legos as a tool for exploring stories from the Bible, and also recruited additional shepherds and storytellers to help staff our Sunday school. On the last Sunday of each month, in lieu of Sunday school, children took part in Children’s Chapel, giving them an opportunity to experience a worship service designed especially for them.

During the fall, we also designed and initiated a yearlong confirmation class for youth seeking to be confirmed called “The Quest.” It began meeting bi-monthly starting in September and will culminate at Cathedral Day in May when confirmation takes place, as well as with a summer youth sailing pilgrimage in late July. Also in the fall, backpacks were blessed, children again participated in our All Saints’ Sunday celebration, carrying in saints icons in the procession for our All Saints’ altar. We also had another fabulous Halloween parade and party and made Advent wreaths on the first Sunday of Advent. This year’s Christmas Pageant was a huge success, drawing on regular St. Thomas children and youth, as well as walk-ons. Finally, in January, we hosted a breakfast for new families and children, making space for new “grown ups” and children alike to better get to know one another.



In the coming year, two big hopes include 1) continuing to grow our Sunday school, both in terms of numbers of children, as well as in volunteer support, and 2) continuing to build community among our families with children. At present, we are blessed with a critical mass of families, which is our best tool for welcoming additional new families with children who want find a “village” like St. Thomas in which to raise their kids.

Staff Liaison: The Rev. Edmund Harris, Associate Rector
Vestry Liaison: Kristen McSherry, Class of 2026



STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

2024-2029

From Planning & Input Sessions on May 16, May 22, and May 26, 2024

Approved by St Thomas Vestry June 18, 2024

Updated: June 12, 2024

Terms in the Strategic Action Plan Packet

Part I: Completed in Focus Group Session.

Vision: The overall vision for St. Thomas Parish in relationship to this Strategic Action Plan.

Strategic Directions: The overarching directions for the Strategic Plan are **Root Down, Be Nourished, and Branch Out** for Jesus.

Strategic Focus Areas: These are priorities that define the work within each Strategic Direction-- Root Down, Be Nourished, and Branch Out for Jesus.

Goals: These are the desired results within a Strategic Focus Area (Root Down, Be Nourished, and Branch Out for Jesus) that our parish commits to achieve.

Part II: Created by subcommittee.

Strategy Implementation: This roadmap includes actions, responsibility, timeline, and success indicators. For each goal, it delineates steps to be accomplished, by whom, by when, and measures of success leading to goal accomplishment.

Strategic Plan Accountability: To facilitate communication with the Vestry regarding progress made toward accomplishing strategic plan goals, committee chairs will provide quarterly reports to their individual vestry liaison. *Note, the plan identifies committee chairs and committees responsible for each action. Those committees will initiate and oversee that action.* Other committees, staff, parishioners may work with those committees as needed to accomplish the goal.

The timeline for each action is part of accountability. Committee chairs may report to the vestry any issues related to the timeline.

Focus Group Commentary: Includes notes from our focus groups from May 16, May 22, and May 26, 2024.

Vision Statement

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. This, alongside intentional marketing and evangelism efforts, will help increase membership and provide for long-term financial stability.

Strategic Directions

Root Down, Be Nourished, and Branch Out

We seek to be a Christian community where people can **Root Down** in their relationship with God and one another, **Be Nourished** through spiritual and social programs, and **Branch Out** to invite others to join us and to serve our community.

Strategic Focus Areas

Root Down, Be Nourished, and Branch Out

Root Down

Strategic Focus Area: Strengthen financial health of St. Thomas to ensure institutional flourishing today and in the future.

1. Goal: Narrow \$350,000 budget gap over 2024-2025 so that operating expenses and revenue are balanced by 2026.
2. Goal: Grow annual Stewardship to sustain current complement of 3 clergy.
3. Goal: Raise \$2 million for Rector Housing Fund by 2025.
4. Goal: Increase Endowment to \$7.5 million by 2029 (75th anniversary).
5. Goal: Increase Legacy Society membership.

Strategic Focus Area: Bolster Newcomer and New Member Ministry, creating a clear progression from newcomer to member.

1. Goal: Revise Newcomer and New Member program to include a clear process that is shared by clergy, staff, and lay volunteers.

Be Nourished

Strategic Focus Area: Become essential church community for family ministry (children and youth) on the Eastside.

1. Goal: Strengthen Godly Play and Sunday School for children by increasing offering to two classrooms and recruiting additional adult volunteers.

2. Goal: Strengthen Youth Program and increase size by attracting more local youth through confirmation class, service opportunities, mission trips.
3. Goal: Pilot Sunday service from 5-6:30 pm, that includes a 30-minute deconstructed liturgy with a potluck dinner.

Strategic Focus Area: Become a Center for musical excellence on the Eastside that is inclusive of sacred music, concert series, choir and chorister programs, and community music offerings.

1. Goal: Execute inspiring sacred music program through Sunday worship, Evensongs, Lessons and Carols, and other sacred music offerings.
2. Goal: Implement Royal School of Church Music training program for chorister program, begin charging \$350 per student this Fall 2024, and plan for a choristers' component to the England trip in August 2025.
3. Goal: Fundraise and plan 2024-2025 concert series.
4. Goal: Plan and execute Choir-in-Residence trip to St. Paul's Cathedral, London in August 2025.

Strategic Focus Area: Offer inspiring worship and compelling formation, fellowship, and pastoral care for members.

1. Goal: Launch Adult Formation Committee.
2. Goal: Increase inter-faith involvement and forge interfaith connections on the Eastside.
3. Goal: Add to Fellowship Committee to plan additional fellowship events throughout the year.

Branch Out

Strategic Focus Area: Grow Church Membership by 15% by 2025 building a vibrant, more diverse, and inclusive community for seekers and newcomers.

1. Goal: Perform demographic study with Unstuck Consultants to better understand populations that live on the Eastside.
2. Goal: Create Strategic Communications Plan with Unstuck Consultants that targets and markets to seekers, newcomers, and potential new members.
3. Goal: Increase marketing through social media, direct mail, email, street signs, banners, concerts, plays and promotions that target and are inclusive of Greater Bellevue demographics.
4. Goal: increase digital presence to provide a cohesive online offering for virtual members near and far and of different ages and stages of life.

Strategic Focus Area: Increase Church's Presence in the Community by partnering with Bellevue and Medina to learn of opportunities for social and service engagement.

1. Goal: Sign up for booth at Paws and Pride.
2. Goal: Host Medina Days Beer Garden.
3. Goal: Promote service days with St. Thomas Church.
4. Goal: Create committee to research additional opportunities.

Background Information from Focus Group Sessions

Positive Characteristics of St. Thomas Church:

- Talented, new and young clergy & excellent lay paid staff.
- High quality of preaching.
- We are fully staffed, no vacancies at present.
- Dedicated corps of lay volunteers w/ over 20 active committees
- Two beautiful, updated campus buildings that offer capacity to grow, and all construction is completed.
- No debt on buildings and no debt on line of credit.
- Increasing membership: 20 new members for 2023 and 49 newcomers.
- The Church is easily accessed from multiple cities, in an attractive, affluent neighborhood.
- Our parish is large, the 3rd biggest in Olympia Diocese.
- Maintenance projects are getting done.
- Outreach programs are working well, including Porchlight, clothing drive, Hopelink food drive, etc.
- Pastoral care program has core of trained volunteers.
- High quality music program, with growing choir and support for community concerts.
- Growing number of families & children and youth.
- Godly Play attendance is increasing.
- Youth Group is rebuilding, post-pandemic.
- Reserves are over \$1,000,000 as of May 2024.
- Our diversity is intergenerational, economic, political, and geographic.
- Live streaming and recording of services is organizationally perfected and working well.

- Marketing programs are robust, including targeted campaigns for Christmas and Easter.
- We like to socialize!
- Coffee hour is busy and well attended.
- We are accepting of all – our theology is inclusive – and we welcome seekers of all backgrounds.
- St. Thomas people are hospitable and work at integrating newcomers.

Despite substantial progress, the St. Thomas church faces several near term and long term challenges

Financial:

- We need Rectory Housing now and in the future, and a capital campaign to raise at least \$2,000,000 for equity.
- Projected operating loss for 2024 is \$358,000 and will require a draw on the \$1,024,000 of reserves.
- The Vestry is willing to use up to \$500,000 of reserves, so 2025 operations need to improve to a loss of \$142,000 or less, and 2026 needs to be a break-even year.
- The Endowment is \$651,000 and provides only \$26,000 in interest income to help cover operating shortfalls.
- The church campus is beautiful, but it is expensive to maintain.
- How do we get more money from our facilities, events, rent, leases to 3rd parties?

Attendance

- Attendance has been declining over the past few years.
- The 8:00 AM service is barely surviving with about 22 average in attendance.
- The number of pledges has been declining over the last few years.
- St Thomas is not immune from national trends including fewer younger people attending religious services, with “nones” now the single largest cohort (28%) among American adults compared to evangelical Protestants (24%) or Catholics (23%).
- The live video stream of church services is viewed only by a few people, often less than 10.
- We have an aging church population.
- We need to increase attendance in our youth programs.

- We need to encourage and develop inter-generational family attendance. How do we get our adult children to attend St. Thomas?

Staff & volunteer burnout

- We are fully staffed, but not completely staffed given our ambitions.
- We do not have enough staff and volunteers to maintain our current programs, much less add any new ones.
- Staff salaries need to be competitive and compensate for inflation or we will lose our good people.
- We have champagne taste on a beer budget.
- It's hard to get people to sign up to do volunteer shifts.
- We have multiple ministries: do we really need them all? Focus and prioritize.
- We have staff and volunteer burnout trying to support too many events and programs.

Attracting and retaining new members

- We need to be welcoming of Greater Bellevue neighbors, understanding the gift of cultural diversity.
- We have a lack of diversity in our congregation.
- We need to understand our customer, the newcomer. Who comes here and why?
- We need to figure out what people want – who are our people? How do we reach them?
- We need to understand why our newcomers came, so we can target-market new people.
- We are perceived as a “wealthy church”, which may scare some people away before they get here or after they arrive.
- Medina location possibly a hurdle for those who see us as exclusive.

Weaker community ties

- We need a better communication system among members. St. Thomas “Connect” does not work very well and should be replaced.
- We have an aging population, and difficulty communicating with each other – there is a feeling of disconnection.
- The relationship with St. Thomas School has drifted apart, and the lease is not favorable to the church.
- We need more community engagement.

- We need more outreach programs involving the neighborhood, like the “Thanksgiving Meal Delivery” program.
- We could improve our ties with City of Medina officials, i.e. Medina Days, etc.
- We need to better help people find out about service and social opportunities.

Opportunities identified include:

- Utilize Evangelism Grant from Eli Lilly to expand our online presence and find younger people where they are – here in West Bellevue but also beyond.
- We have the capacity to build our endowment to ensure we can maintain our campus into the future.
- We are a central gathering place, well placed for community service.
- Build stronger relations with city of Medina.
- Host community events like blood drives, speaker series to draw people from outside Medina/Bellevue area.
- Opportunity to increase 8:00 AM service to 50 plus attendees.
- Find ways to get people involved more than just giving their money.
- We have an opportunity to build relationships through small groups.
- Have side conversations through adult formation.
- We are in an unchurched part of the world – lots of people don’t go to church, but are seeking connection and a spiritual grounding, so it’s an opportunity for us to offer them a potential home.
- There are LGBTQ+ folks who have been told by their church communities they are not welcome. They are welcome here.
- We have an opportunity to welcome diverse communities, like LGBTQ, all represented on Eastside.
- We can run short, focused fundraising campaigns for visible, finite projects like improving the play area off of the childcare room (yes, we have one!)
- We could build our regional profile by promoting the excellent preaching from our clergy, and hosting headline speakers.
- More young people see Christianity as a toxic brand. We can fight against that.

ST. THOMAS CHURCH STAFF



The Rev. Liz Costello
Rector

Lizestthomasmedina.org



The Rev. Edmund Harris
Associate Rector

Edmundestthomasmedina.org



The Rev. Shane Carlson
Curate

Shaneestthomasmedina.org



The Rev. Jim McEachran
Priest Associate

Mceachranj5@gmail.com



Kevin Chrisinger
Facilities Manger & Sexton

Facilitiesestthomasmedina.org



Velvet Chrisinger
Sexton



Dr. Paul Meier
Interim Director of Music &
Organist

Paulestthomasmedina.org



Aaron Reed
Tech Aide

Techestthomasmedina.org



Lisalynn Reed
Parish Administrator

Lisalynnestthomasmedina.org



Jacki Sullivan
Director of Choristers

jackiestthomasmedina.org



Jean Waite
Parish Accountant

Jeanestthomasmedina.org



Maria Piñeda
Nursery Coordinator

Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings with your most gracious favor, and further us with your continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in you, we may glorify your holy Name, and finally, by your mercy, obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—Collect for Guidance, *The Book of Common Prayer*

