



ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH
FORWARD IN FAITH
CAMPAIGN

2024-2027

Revised October 2025

A MESSAGE FROM OUR RECTOR

Dear St. Thomas Church Family:

At St. Thomas Church, we are *Nourished by Community* and strengthened by the gift of being with God and with one another. This year, as we celebrate being *Nourished by Community*, we give thanks for how your presence, service, and giving make our life together possible. Your commitment allows St. Thomas Church to remain a place of welcome, care, and spiritual growth for all who come through our doors.

We live in a unique time. Many are seeking connection and meaning. A recent *Seattle Times* article noted that our region is the least Christian area in the country, just as many churches face decline. Yet St. Thomas is defying the trend. People new to the area, longtime parishioners, and visitors alike have found a place to connect, to belong, to find meaning, and to grow in their Christian faith.

Your pledge makes this possible. The worship, music programs, family ministries, outreach, fellowship gatherings, and pastoral care are sustained by your generosity.

As you prayerfully consider your pledge this year for the *Forward in Faith Campaign*, know that your gift is not only about sustaining the church—it is about building up a community of followers of Christ that nourishes you and others.

Together, *nourished by community* and called to be with God and with one another, we are building something rare and beautiful. Thank you for being part of it—for your prayers, your presence, and your generosity. Every gift of time, talent, and treasure enables us to remain *rooted in faith, nourished by community, and branching out to serve*.

Your sister in Christ,



The Reverend Elizabeth (Liz) R. Costello



AN INVITATION FROM OUR CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIRS

Dear St. Thomas Family:

Fall is the time of new beginnings – the start of school and the launch of our new program year at St. Thomas. It is also a time to reflect on how God is calling us into deeper relationship with His church. As Campaign Co-Chairs, we are pleased to announce the continuation of our *Forward in Faith* stewardship campaign to generate financial support for the Rector Housing Fund and our Annual Operating Fund.

As we step faithfully into this second year of our campaign, we celebrate the deepening ties that come from worshiping and serving God together. With God's help, we are building on a sure foundation to grow our service to our community, be a beacon to those seeking to grow in faith, and also honor the legacy that's been given to us by the faithful generations that came before us.

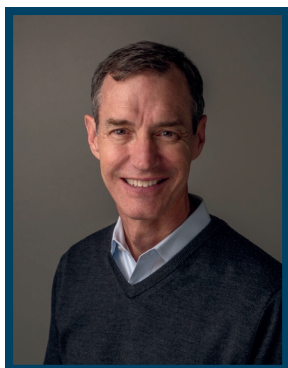
Our stewardship campaign will culminate this year in mid-November when you will be invited to pledge to this year's campaign by making a financial gift to our Annual Operating Fund, which supports our operating budget, and, if you have not already done so, to our Rector Housing Fund, which helps provide housing for clergy here on the Eastside.

There are many opportunities for you to become involved in the campaign through prayer, small-group meetings, fellowship events, and other activities. We need your active participation to be successful. Please plan to get involved in the campaign activities and give prayerful consideration to help if you are contacted by a member of the campaign team.

Plan now to be part of this exciting time in the life of the St Thomas family! We look forward to working in partnership with you.

In Christ,

Tim Diller
Campaign Co-Chair



Kim Malcolm
Campaign Co-Chair



ROOTED IN FAITH

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 **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 Wednesdays (which includes a simple supper), for our bountiful potlucks, at the St. Nicholas breakfast, at the newcomer lunches, and in multiple ways and times throughout the year.



Coventry Cathedral



St. Paul's Cathedral - London

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



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!

Membership and Engagement is Growing

- 96 new members since Mother Liz arrived
- Youth Program Expanded: We now welcome 12-20 children each week
 - Volunteers are supporting 18 committees, contributing thousands of hours each year

Expanding our Reach

- Digital presence expanded with consistent social media, podcasts and online engagement
 - Facebook activity has more than doubled
- 170+ posts were published on Instagram in 2024/2025

Musical Offerings are Flourishing

- St. Thomas Church Music Academy established in 2025
 - Choir and Choristers UK Choral Residency in 2025
- Strong participation in sacred music and concert offerings

We are Serving our Community

- Served 2,000 meals to neighbors in need in 2024/25
- Collected 2,500 pounds of food for our local food bank
 - Hosted Porchlight's Men's Shelter in July
 - Built housing for the Tiny Homes Project



MINISTRIES AT ST. THOMAS



Coffee Hour



Worship & Liturgy



Music: St. Thomas Choir & Choristers



Providing for Neighbors in Need



Breaking Bread Together



MINISTRIES AT ST. THOMAS



Children & Youth



Spiritual Formation



Summer Camp



Men's and Women's Retreats



Building Tiny Homes



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 fund

We welcome pledges of all amounts to support the continued growth of our parish and the many ways it nourishes us individually and as a community.

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

Our second goal is to further solidify support of Rector Housing. A Rector Housing Fund was established in 2024 for the first time in the history of St. Thomas parish. This fund is intended to provide the financial support needed to make high quality and local housing available to our rector. During Year 1 of our Forward in Faith campaign, substantial pledges of support were given by parish members. Our focus in Year 2 is the fulfillment of these pledges and seeking further support from those called to give to this ministry.

Rector housing is critical to the health of the parish and a successful Rector call. Reasons for this include:

- 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 awhile have experienced rising home prices and rents that outpace wage growth. This isn't a problem we can wait out.

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

"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 to contribute to the Annual Operating Fund AND offer generous gifts above and beyond annual stewardship to our Rector Housing Fund, if you haven't already made that commitment. Tune your heart to discover new ways to share.

Commit

We are seeking *everyone's* involvement in this campaign - return your pledge card today, or share it during Commitment Sunday on November 16. 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 OPERATING FUND

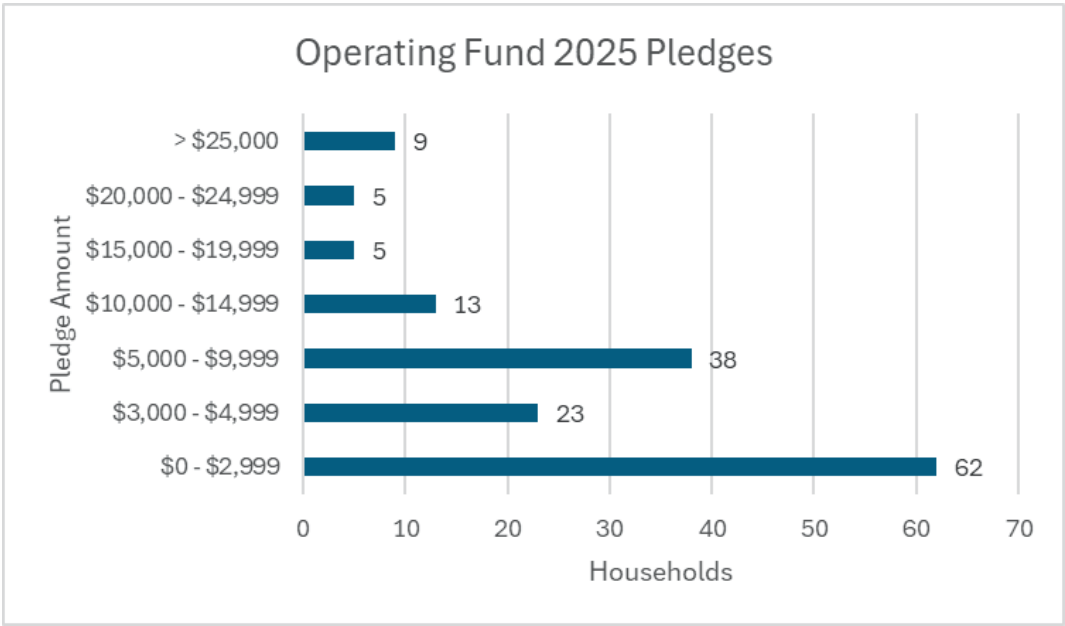
Goal for 2026 = \$1,250,000

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 meeting our goal of \$1,250,000, we anticipate narrowing our deficit to approximately \$150K in 2026.

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

The strength of the capacity to give by this parish was demonstrated last year. 155 Households made a pledge to our Annual Operating Fund to meet our goal of \$1,100,000, including 20 first-time pledgers for 2025! The average pledge for 2025 was \$7,174 and the median \$3,640, an increase of 33% and 40% over 2024!

Below is a breakdown of pledges made:



Since 2019, our number of pledging households has decreased. We hope to increase the number of pledging households in 2026 to 180. We encourage everyone to pledge - no matter the amount - and if you are able, consider moving up to the “next tier” to help us meet our goal again this year!



RECTOR HOUSING CAMPAIGN FINANCIALS

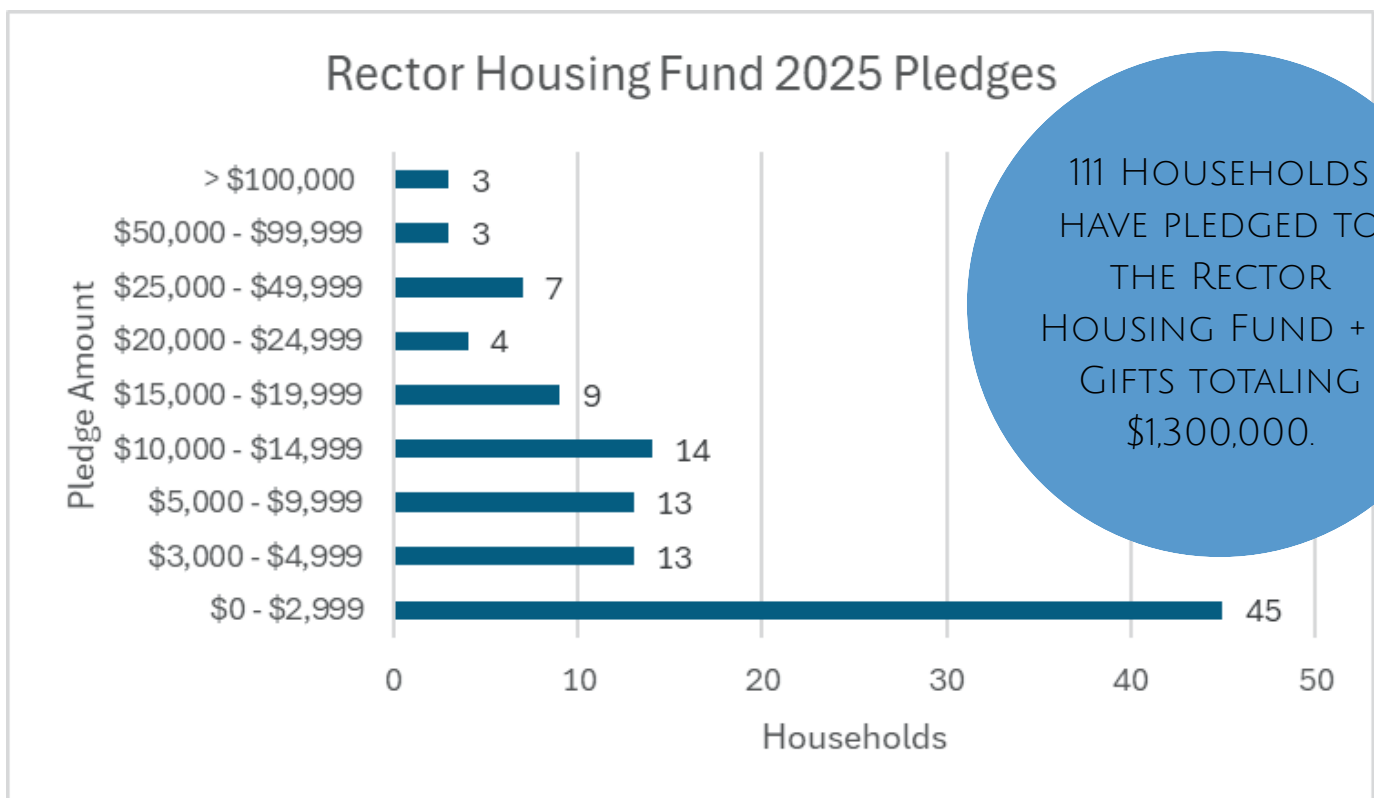
(Above and beyond our \$1,250,000 target for the Annual Operating Fund)

3-year Rector Housing Fund Goal = \$2,000,000

Pledged as of July 2025 = \$1,300,000

Remaining Goal = \$700,000

Pledges made to date:



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 2025, 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.

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*



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