



# ST. THOMAS

## EPISCOPAL CHURCH



2026 St. Thomas Church Annual Parish Meeting  
& St. Thomas Legacy Foundation Annual Meeting  
February 1, 2026

# 2026 Annual Meeting of the Parish Corporation

## Agenda – Parish Corporation

Call to Order.....	Fred Williams, Senior Warden
Opening Prayer and Moment of Silence for the Departed.....	Mother Liz, Rector
Senior Warden's Address .....	Fred
Housekeeping Items.....	Fred
Approval of the 2025 Annual Meeting of the Parish Corporation Minutes.....	Fred
Rector Housing Update.....	Mark Nelson
Building and Grounds Report.....	Tera Soelter
Parish Financial Review.....	Tim Diller
Q&A.....	Fred
Table Conversations.....	Mother Liz
Elections.....	Fred

### 2029 Vestry Slate

- Rob Brodhagen (3-year term)
- Stephanie Castle (3-year term)
- Roberta Goodnow (3-year term)
- Ethan Mandel (3-year term)

### 2026 Diocesan Convention Delegates

- Karl Rabel
- Nancy Rabel
- Mary Pneuman
- Megan Miller

- Larry Loranger
- Tim Diller

## 2026 Alternate Delegates

- Valerie Wang
- David Langhans
- Brian Evison
- Nancy Pitarys
- Kim Malcolm
- Anne Bentley

Recognitions & Announcements .....Mother Liz

Close the Parish Meeting .....Fred Williams

# **Minutes of the 2025 Annual Meeting of the Parish Corporation**

Ebsworth Life Center

February 2, 2025 – 10:40am – 11:40am

**Call to Order.....Kim Malcom, 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**

- Quorum confirmed at over 15 participants
- Unanimous consent is utilized.

**Approval of the 2024 Parish Annual Meeting Minutes.....Kim**

- Question: Any objections to the approval of the 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes
- Reported: No comments of objections
- Minutes are approved

**Building and Grounds Report.....Barbara Feldon, Junior Warden**

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

**Q&A.....Kim**

**Elections.....Kim**

## **2028 Vestry Slate**

- Molly McConkey (3-year term)
- Bruce Redman (3-year term)
- Karl Rabel (3-year term)
- Valerie Wang (3-year term)

Call for nominations from the floor.

Hearing no additional nominations, Vestry candidates are elected.

## **2024 Diocesan Convention Delegates**

- Mary Pneuman
- Anne Bentley
- Tim Diller
- Bill McSherry

## **Alternates**

- Nancy Rabel
- Karl Rabel
- Kim Malcolm
- Mike Allert

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 (Mary Rawson Foreman-Rorrer, Nancy McEachern, Theron Eichenberger, Jon Smith)
- All Vestry members
- Chancellor – Andrea Sato-Borgmann
- Executive Team (Kim, Barbara, Anne)

## **Close the Parish Meeting.....Kim Malcolm**

## Statement of Financial Position

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
 For the year Ended December 31, 2025  
 (With Comparative Totals for 2024)

Preliminary	Modified Cash Basis	
At December 31,		
<b>Assets</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$ 514,517	\$ 439,750
Investments ^	\$ 365,570	\$ 691,294
Property, Buildings & Fixtures	\$ 14,983,528	\$ 14,879,959
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 15,863,615</b>	<b>\$ 16,011,003</b>
<b>Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>		
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Refundable Advances *	\$ 194,545	\$ 232,605
Agency Funds **	\$ (20,636)	\$ 19,699
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 173,909</b>	<b>\$ 252,304</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Net Assets	\$ 15,689,706	\$ 15,758,699
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 15,689,706</b>	<b>\$ 15,758,699</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 15,863,615</b>	<b>\$ 16,011,003</b>

<sup>^</sup> cash & cash equivalents at Dec, 31, 2025 includes \$230,000 reinvested in Bank of America CD settle date of Jan 7, 2026

<sup>\*</sup> includes \$142,000 prepaid pledges and \$52,500 prepaid for stained glass windows (\$180,400, \$52,500 in 2024)

<sup>\*\*</sup> includes \$41,100 receivable from the Foundation (\$9,000 payable to Foundation in 2024)

# Statement of Activities & Changes in Net Assets

St. Thomas Episcopal Church

For the year Ended December 31, 2025

(With Comparative Totals for 2024 & 2025 Financial Plan for Mission)

Preliminary

Modified Cash Basis

	2025 Total		2024 Total		2025 FPM (Approved Jan 25)		FPM Diff Fav (Unfav)	
	Operating Revenues	Operating Expenses	Operating Revenues	Operating Expenses	Operating Revenues	Operating Expenses	Operating Revenues	Operating Expenses
Pledge Contributions	\$ 1,091,183		\$ 885,534		\$ 1,067,000		\$ 24,183	
Non-Pledge Contributions	\$ 266,672		\$ 228,832		\$ 213,000		\$ 53,672	
Lease & Other Revenue	\$ 305,684		\$ 248,904		\$ 270,300		\$ 35,384	
Investment Income	\$ 27,206		\$ 35,743		\$ 18,400		\$ 8,806	
<b>Total Operating Fund Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 1,690,745</b>		<b>\$ 1,399,013</b>		<b>\$ 1,568,700</b>		<b>\$ 122,045</b>	
Wages & Benefits	\$ 1,000,805		\$ 833,085		\$ 972,700		\$ (28,105)	
Diocesan Assessment	\$ 229,269		\$ 196,462		\$ 227,500		\$ (1,769)	
Buildings & Grounds	\$ 205,754		\$ 187,865		\$ 192,200		\$ (13,554)	
Utilities	\$ 77,892		\$ 73,480		\$ 80,100		\$ 2,208	
Charitable Outreach	\$ 52,502		\$ 2,254		\$ 11,700		\$ (40,802)	
Insurance	\$ 39,107		\$ 30,798		\$ 39,100		\$ (7)	
Professional Services	\$ 36,576		\$ 35,589		\$ 60,800		\$ 24,224	
Equipment Lease	\$ 31,552		\$ 30,776		\$ 33,900		\$ 2,348	
Advertising & Promotions	\$ 31,083		\$ 17,289		\$ 21,500		\$ (9,583)	
Supplies	\$ 28,147		\$ 24,825		\$ 28,500		\$ 353	
Technology	\$ 24,629		\$ 26,598		\$ 36,000		\$ 11,371	
Food & Beverage	\$ 11,837		\$ 15,285		\$ 15,250		\$ 3,413	
Banking	\$ 7,909		\$ 7,279		\$ 8,000		\$ 91	
Honorariums	\$ 5,891		\$ 27,080		\$ 17,500		\$ 11,609	
Postage	\$ 2,794		\$ 1,828		\$ 6,500		\$ 3,706	
Meetings & Events	\$ 1,379		\$ 2,353		\$ 7,500		\$ 6,121	
Books & Curriculum Materials	\$ 709		\$ 2,115		\$ 1,750		\$ 1,041	
Travel	\$ 258		\$ 952		\$ 1,000		\$ 742	
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,788,093</b>		<b>\$ 1,515,913</b>		<b>\$ 1,761,500</b>		<b>\$ (26,593)</b>	
Change in Nets Assets from Operating Activities	\$ (97,348)		\$ (116,900)		\$ (192,800)		\$ 95,452	
Other Nonoperating Revenue	\$ 33,409		\$ 25,428		\$ 33,000		\$ 409	
Deferred Building & Maintenance Expenses	\$ (5,054)		\$ (133,369)		\$ (40,000)		\$ 34,946	
<b>Total Change in Nets Assets/Net Loss</b>	<b>\$ (68,993)</b>		<b>\$ (224,841)</b>		<b>\$ (199,800)</b>		<b>\$ 130,807</b>	
<b>Total Change in Nets Assets/Net Loss from Regular Operations *</b>	<b>\$ (150,288)</b>		<b>\$ (224,841)</b>		<b>\$ (199,800)</b>		<b>\$ 49,512</b>	

\*Net Loss from Regular Operations excludes revenue received for projects with the corresponding spending capitalized during the year (sound system; choir risers)

## Parish Expenses by Category

Preliminary

Expenses*				As % of Total Expenses
	2023	2024	2025	
Administration	\$ 403,861	\$ 517,568	\$ 621,994	35%
Worship	\$ 225,810	\$ 286,930	\$ 290,657	16%
Formation	\$ 253,424	\$ 289,911	\$ 263,728	15%
Diocesan Assessment	\$ 204,304	\$ 196,462	\$ 229,269	13%
Music	\$ 176,611	\$ 149,888	\$ 144,355	8%
Community Life	\$ 59,076	\$ 98,904	\$ 89,655	5%
Outreach	\$ 29,548	\$ 26,772	\$ 76,790	4%
Pastoral Care	\$ 50,329	\$ 69,848	\$ 76,701	4%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,402,963</b>	<b>\$ 1,636,283</b>	<b>\$ 1,793,148</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Expenses reflect direct, indirect and allocated costs

## Parish Pledge History

Parish Pledge History							
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
No of Pledging Units	210	217	197	167	161	155	137
Total Pledged	\$ 1,026,599	\$ 1,091,500	\$ 938,096	\$ 794,735	\$ 868,677	\$ 1,111,910	\$ 970,773
Average Pledge	\$ 4,889	\$ 5,030	\$ 4,762	\$ 4,759	\$ 5,396	\$ 7,174	\$ 7,086
Median Pledge	\$ 2,400	\$ 2,400	\$ 2,400	\$ 2,060	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,640	\$ 3,600

## Parish Pledge Fulfilment History

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Operating Fund Pledge Fulfilment	\$ 1,123,037	\$ 1,044,481	\$ 889,179	\$ 803,942	\$ 885,534	\$ 1,091,183
Ebsworth Estate 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	\$ 372,630
	<b>\$ 2,266,650</b>	<b>\$ 1,614,220</b>	<b>\$ 1,217,179</b>	<b>\$ 803,942</b>	<b>\$ 1,176,998</b>	<b>\$ 1,463,813</b>
Total Pledged to Operating Fund	\$ 1,026,599	\$ 1,091,500	\$ 938,096	\$ 794,735	\$ 868,677	\$ 1,111,910
Operating Fund Pledge Fulfilment	\$ 1,123,037	\$ 1,044,481	\$ 889,179	\$ 803,942	\$ 885,534	\$ 1,091,183
Difference	\$ 96,439	\$ (47,019)	\$ (48,918)	\$ 9,207	\$ 16,857	\$ (20,727)

Percentage of Fulfilment 109% 96% 95% 101% 102% 98%

## 2026 Forward in Faith Summary Through January 19, 2026

<u>Operating Pledges</u>	<u>2025 to Date</u>	<u>2025 to Date</u>
<b>Number of pledges</b>	<b>137</b>	155
<b>Average</b>	\$ 7,086	\$ 7,174
<b>Median</b>	\$ 3,600	\$ 3,640
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 970,773</b>	\$ 1,111,910
<b>Number of New Pledges to date</b>	<b>14</b>	

### Rector Housing Fund Commitments

<b>Number of pledges</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>Average</b>	\$ 11,408
<b>Median</b>	\$ 3,600
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,311,919</b>



## **2026 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: Jonathan Burks.....	Fred
Close of the Foundation Meeting.....	Fred
Closing Prayer.....	Mother Liz Costello

## **St. Thomas Legacy Foundation 2025 Annual Meeting Minutes**

Ebsworth Life Center

**February 2, 2025 – 11:40am – 12:10pm**

**Call to Order.....**.....Fred Barkman, Foundation President

**Housekeeping Items.....**.....Fred Barkman

- Quorum confirmed at over 15 participants
- Unanimous consent utilized

**Approval of the Minutes of the 2024 Meeting.....**.....Fred Barkman

- Question: Any objections to approval of 2024 Meeting minutes?
- Reported: No comments or objection
- Minutes are approved

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

**Q&A.....**.....Fred Barkman

**Elections: Board Nominee, Mike Allert.....**.....Fred Barkman

Call for additional nominations from the floor.

Hearing no additional nomination, delegate is elected.

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

**Closing Prayer.....**.....Mother Liz Costello

## St. Thomas Legacy Foundation Cash & Investments

Preliminary		2023	2024	2025
<b>Cash on Hand</b>				
Operating Fund	\$ 16,939	\$ 10,639	\$ 14,804	
<b>Total Cash</b>	<b>\$ 16,939</b>	<b>\$ 10,639</b>	<b>\$ 14,804</b>	
<b>Special Purpose &amp; Reserve Funds</b>				
Perpetual Memorial Reserve Fund	\$ 10,961	\$ 37,260	\$ 66,751	
Music Guild	\$ -	\$ 22,688	\$ 42,156	
Rector Housing Fund	\$ -	\$ 281,218	\$ 636,606	
Music Reserve Fund	\$ 1,392	\$ 1,415	\$ 1,427	
Liturgical Reserve Fund (DIF)	\$ 19,823	\$ 21,776	\$ 23,789	
Outreach Reserve Fund (DIF)	\$ 75,260	\$ 75,946	\$ 78,745	
Sabbatical Reserve Fund (DIF)	\$ 14,033	\$ 28,356	\$ 47,104	
<b>Total Special Purpose &amp; Reserve Funds</b>	<b>\$ 121,469</b>	<b>\$ 468,659</b>	<b>\$ 896,578</b>	
<b>Endowments</b>				
Buildings & Grounds Endowment (DIF)	\$ 53,303	\$ 56,807	\$ 59,509	
Columbarium Endowment (DIF)	\$ 145,006	\$ 157,698	\$ 170,064	
Sustaining Fund (DIF)	\$ 277,333	\$ 297,089	\$ 298,186	
Behnke Music Fund (DIF)	\$ 84,169	\$ 89,378	\$ 93,386	
Music Endowment (DIF)	\$ 5,500	\$ 7,200	\$ 4,602	
Perpetual Memorial Endowment Fund( DIF)	\$ 62,728	\$ 172,127	\$ 293,785	
<b>Total Endowments</b>	<b>\$ 628,039</b>	<b>\$ 780,299</b>	<b>\$ 919,532</b>	
<b>Total Cash &amp; Investments</b>	<b>\$ 766,447</b>	<b>\$ 1,259,597</b>	<b>\$ 1,830,914</b>	

Note: DIF = Diocesan Investment Fund

**Statement of Activities & Changes in Net Assets**  
**For the Year Ended December 31, 2025**  
**(With Comparative Totals for 2024)**

Preliminary			Modified Cash Basis
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>2025 Total</b>	<b>2024 Total</b>	
Donations and Other Income	\$ 590,167	\$ 475,478	
Investment Returns	\$ 86,168	\$ 73,176	
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 676,335</b>	<b>\$ 548,654</b>	
 <b>Expenses</b>			
Distributions to Parish	\$ 51,108	\$ 33,391	
Professional Services	\$ 76,199	\$ 16,548	
Other Expenses	\$ 18,817	\$ 5,565	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 146,124</b>	<b>\$ 55,504</b>	
 <b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$ 530,211</b>	<b>\$ 493,150</b>	

# Ministry Reports

## Newcomers Welcome Ministry

The Newcomers Welcome Committee had a busy year. We implemented a tracking system for visitors and increased publicity, and updated the Greeter Customary. We kept the pews stocked with welcome cards for visitors and prepared *Welcome to St. Thomas* folders for those seeking more detailed information.

We introduced quarterly “Coffee with the Clergy” events, giving visitors the opportunity to get to know our clergy in a small-group setting. We hosted two New Member events and welcomed 12 new members to St. Thomas, with 18 more expected to join in early 2026. Many of these new members have already become active participants and volunteers in St. Thomas events and ministries.



A key part of our ministry is the Greeter team, whose members not only welcome visitors but also introduce them to clergy after the service and invite them to Coffee Hour. We currently have 20 volunteers serving in this role and look forward to increasing communication and collaboration in 2026.

### Leaders:

- Chairs: Margie Gerrity, Libby Nelson & Darryl Cherdron
- Vestry Liaison: Peter Pitarys, Molly McConkey
- Staff Liaison: The Rev. Edmund Harris, Associate Rector

## Liturgical Guild

Volunteers serving in the Liturgical Guild support more than 100 services each year at the 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. Sunday services. They also assist with special services during Advent, Lent, and Holy Week, and support families and visitors attending Celebrations of Life.

Each service requires a minimum of two people and a maximum of fifteen—resulting in a large and dedicated volunteer corps. Our scheduling system, Ministry Scheduler Pro, now includes nearly 170 volunteers serving in the following roles:

Role	# of volunteers supporting this Ministry	Purpose
Minister of Ceremonies	13	Assist the Clergy with preparation for the Eucharist
Eucharist Minister	21	Assist with the distribution of wine during the Eucharist
Lector	38	Read the lessons
Intercessor	26	Lead the congregation in intercessory prayers
Usher	28	Coordinate traffic flow during the service and act as first point of contact in the event of an emergency
Greeter	20	Welcome everyone as they enter the Sanctuary
Acolyte	7	Lead the procession into and out of the church, carrying the cross and the torches
Coffee Hour Host	17	Provide wonderful refreshments following the 10 a.m. service
Storytellers and Shepherds for Godly Play, Building Blocks and Children's Chapel	15	Give younger children a chance to interact with Scripture in a more tactile way
Host, Cook, Helper, Coordinator, Stocker, and Shopper	95	Provide nutritious meals and housing for the homeless men we house each July as part of the Porchlight program

*Note: Some volunteers serve in multiple roles and may be represented in more than one category above.*



We maintain a Customary that serves as a helpful reference for most of these ministries and provides regular training to support volunteers in learning and understanding their roles. Mentors can also be assigned for additional guidance.

We are deeply grateful for the time and dedication of all our volunteers and warmly

welcome new members. We are also seeking new leaders to help coordinate these teams. If you are interested in serving in one of these ministries, stepping into a leadership role, or simply have questions, please contact Bea Covington or Tera Soelter.

#### Leaders:

- Co-Chairs: Bea Covington, Tera Soelter
- Vestry Liaison: Valerie Wang
- Staff Liaisons
  - The Rev. Liz Costello, Rector
  - The Rev. Edmund Harris, Associate Rector (Youth Acolytes)



## Fellowship & Hospitality

Throughout 2025, our Fellowship and Hospitality ministry played an essential role in nurturing connection and belonging as St.

Thomas continued to regroup and rebuild in this new season of parish life. With creativity, dedication, and generous spirits, the team planned and hosted gatherings that brought the community together around shared meals, conversation, and celebration.

Highlights from the year included a joyful Mardi Gras celebration on Shrove Tuesday, a meaningful Maundy Thursday Agape meal in April, and a kick-off barbecue in the fall that welcomed people back after the summer months and helped re-energize our communal life.



These occasions offered more than hospitality; they created space for renewed relationships, deeper fellowship, and a growing sense of shared purpose. We are deeply grateful to all who contributed their time, energy, and gifts to this ministry throughout the year.

Leaders:

- Chair: Vacant
- Vestry Liaison: Molly McConkey
- Staff Liaison: The Rev. Edmund Harris, Associate Rector



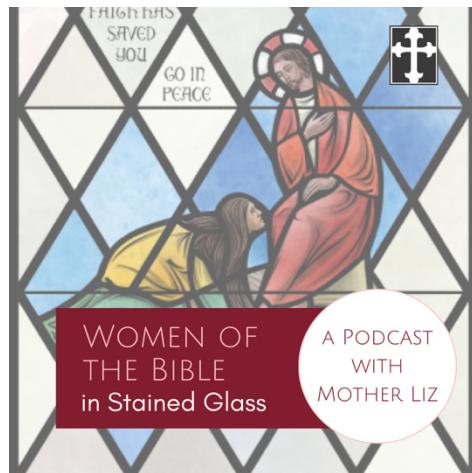
## Evangelism & Communication

**Main Objectives:**

- Spread the word about our active, open, and welcoming Episcopal parish to the greater community, including newcomers who may differ from the majority of past attendees.
- Connect, link, and celebrate our parishioners, rooted in our shared life in Christ.
- Maintain a “big tent” approach in messaging our theology.

**2025 Initiatives & Milestones:**

- Completed a comprehensive website audit (February 2025) and a full website revamp (November 2025), improving clarity, navigation, and accessibility for both newcomers and parishioners. The website averaged 825 unique visitors per month, with notable peaks in September (program year launch) and December (Advent and Christmas), offering insight into when people are most actively seeking out St. Thomas online.
- Produced and released the 8-episode *Women of the Bible in Stained Glass* podcast series. Alongside weekly sermon podcasts, monthly podcast downloads increased by 369% and listeners increased by 365%, with seven of the eight episodes ranking among the most-downloaded of the year.



- Created and shared a Holy Week video for social media to support invitation and engagement during the Easter season.
- Youth Sunday sermon by Cate Fitzgerald was reposted by The Episcopal Church's Instagram account and viewed more than 3,000 times.
- Ran targeted Meta (Instagram and Facebook) advertising campaigns supporting Holy Week and Easter services, the launch of St. Thomas Church Music Academy, St. Thomas Summer Camp, Advent Lessons & Carols, and Christmas services.
- Sent 120 parish-wide emails in 2025—more than the previous year—with higher click-through rates and fewer unsubscribes, indicating stronger overall engagement.



## Hopes for 2026:

- Increase organic, search-based website traffic from new visitors, building on insights from 2025 analytics.
- Improve email open rates through clearer subject lines, better timing, and continued content refinement.
- Strengthen consistent digital storytelling that reflects the lived experience of parish life across social media and other digital platforms.
- Continue refining the website and digital presence as a primary point of welcome and invitation.
- Thoughtfully test and refine parish communication methods to better match how people receive information today, while remaining attentive to what is most effective and trusted.

## Leaders:

- Staff Liaison: Ashley Graham-Wilcox
- Vestry Liaison: Kim Malcolm, Peter Pitarys

## St. Thomas School Committee

There were no major developments regarding the School Committee and our relationship to the St. Thomas School. In February, vestry member Kristen McSherry began serving as a member of the St. Thomas School Board and built strong relationships with the other board members. The school had a new Head of School begin over the summer, Pete Lutkoski, and the church welcomed him during one of our services and with a reception afterwards. Mother Liz and Pete meet regularly, and both Mother Liz and Father Edmund have been active with the school's chapel sessions since the start of this new school year. Now that the new Head of School is up and running, and the church's revenue committee has started to identify possible uses of the church grounds for revenue-generating activities, we expect the St. Thomas School Committee to start re-engaging with the school and its representatives regarding our long-term relationship and how we can work towards mutually beneficial solutions for both entities.



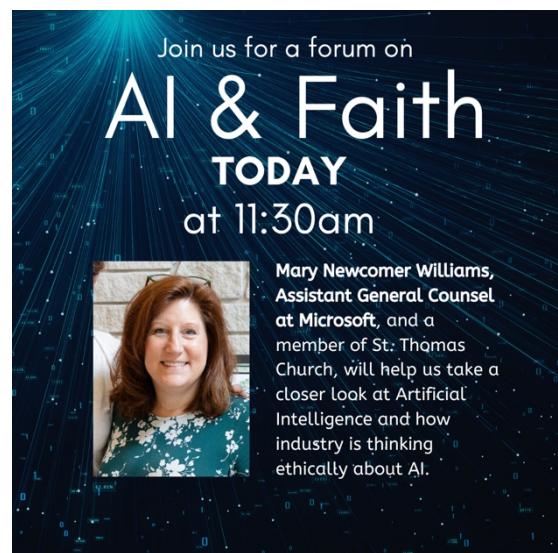
### Leaders:

- Chair: Stephen Hornbuckle
- Vestry Liaison: Kristen McSherry
- Staff Liaison: The Rev. Liz Costello, Rector

## Adult Formation Committee

Adult Formation at St. Thomas is grounded in the belief that faith is lifelong—formed through study, prayer, worship, and honest engagement with the world around us. Throughout 2025, our offerings reflected a commitment to nurturing mature Christian faith, cultivating hope, and strengthening community.

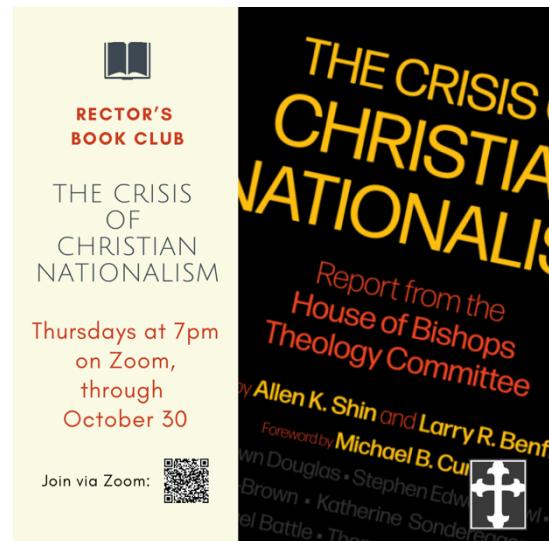
Winter 2025 focused on both foundational formation and engagement with contemporary theological questions. In January, we offered Adult Confirmation classes, accompanying adults as they prepared for confirmation, reaffirmation, or reception into the Episcopal



Church. During the season of Epiphany, Wonderful Wednesday featured a series on AI and Faith, inviting participants to explore emerging technologies through a Christian lens and reflect on questions of ethics, human identity, and discernment. The year also began with the Rector's Book Club reading *Life Worth Living: A Guide to What Matters Most*, creating space for thoughtful conversation about meaning, purpose, and faithful living.

During Eastertide, the Rector's Book Club continued with *Hope Is Here: Spiritual Practices for Pursuing Justice and Beloved Community*, grounding conversations about justice and community in the hope of the resurrection.

Fall 2025 Adult Formation invited the parish into a season of deepened connection and spiritual practice. Sunday Morning Forums included the 1-Minute Story of Faith, a community-building experience that helped participants get to know one another through storytelling. Later in the fall, Adult Formation prepared for the installation of new stained-glass windows through both an in-person Sunday morning forum and a companion podcast series. The Sunday forum explored the biblical figures depicted in the windows alongside theological reflection on their design, while the podcast invited broader digital engagement through prayerful reflection on each window. This work also fulfilled the digital engagement component of the Narthex grant.



Wonderful Wednesday continued throughout the fall, offering accessible, pastoral formation. Fall offerings included a return to the 1-Minute Story of Faith and a reflective session on the Spirituality of Death and Dying, inviting participants to engage end-of-life planning through the lens of Christian hope, resurrection, and the communion of saints. The Rector's Book Club concluded its 2025 offerings in the fall with *The Crisis of Christian Nationalism: Report from the House of Bishops Theology Committee*, fostering faithful conversation about discipleship, civic life, and the Church's public witness.

Advent 2025 formation wove together music, prayer, and teaching. A Hymn Sing and Teaching with Dr. Paul Meier explored beloved Advent hymns and carols, while Wonderful Wednesday offered a two-week Advent Prayer Series, inviting participants

to learn about prayer and practice new prayer forms together during the season of expectation.

Leaders:

- Chair: Vacant
- Staff Liaison: The Rev. Liz Costello, Rector
- Vestry Liaison: Barbara Feldon

## Music Ministry

The music ministry supports and enhances the worship life of the parish and provide opportunities for people to develop and offer their musical gifts to God. The two parish choirs are the Choir of St.

Thomas, comprised of volunteer and professional adult singers, and the St.

Thomas Choristers, comprised of elementary and middle school aged children. The St. Thomas Church Music Academy currently offers private lessons in voice, piano, flute, and organ. The St. Thomas Music Guild presents a series of concerts and musical events throughout the year. (*For additional information about the Music Guild, please see the separate Music Guild report.*)



The current music staff members are Paul Meier, Director of Music and Organist, Jacki Sullivan, Director of the Choristers, Suzanne Anderson, Music Academy Administrator, and staff singers Jeffri Lynn Carrington, Anjani Briggs, Greg Tiffany, and Charles Robert Stephens.



The year began with the Choir of St. Thomas offering music at the 10:00 service on Sunday mornings during the program year, as well as special services and services of Choral Evensong. The St. Thomas Choristers also sang at services during the academic year. Staff singers served as solo cantors to assist with musical leadership at the 8:00 service year-round and at the 10:00 service when the choir was not present. Midweek

Taizé services were enhanced by the musical contributions of Marilyn Pedersen,

violinist, and Michelle Carlill, cellist, and violinist Cecilia Buss shared musical offerings at the 10:00 service.

In February, the Music Guild presented a Valentine's Day concert featuring opera arias and love songs from Broadway and the great American songbook.

In March, the Music Guild presented an all-Bach concert including vocal selections with oboe obligato and organ music.

In April, the Interim Director of Music and Organist, Paul Meier, was hired as Director of Music and Organist. The Choir of St. Thomas offered music at Holy Week services and was joined by a brass quartet for Easter Day. The chorister concert and fundraiser, An Evening for the Choristers, was held the week after Easter.

In May, the Music Guild presented a concert in conjunction with the Governor's Chamber Music Series featuring two pianos with four pianists. One of the pianists was Douglas Cleveland, the parish's former Director of Music and Organist.

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 July, the choir and choristers began summer rehearsals to prepare for the UK choral residency and offered four services of Choral Evensong at St. Thomas in July

and August. The Music Guild presented an afternoon event in the courtyard featuring the Phinney Ridge Steel Drum Band. The band performed a varied program and audience members had the opportunity to try out the steel drums and play with the band.

In August, the choir and choristers traveled to the UK for a choral residency at St. Paul's Cathedral in London, providing music for four Choral Evensongs, and to sing Sunday



services at Coventry Cathedral. The choir, comprised of 27 adult singers and 23 choristers, was directed by Paul Meier, and Douglas Cleveland was the organ accompanist. In addition to the musicians, the large traveling group included the Rector, parishioners, and family members of the singers.

In September, the St. Thomas Church Music Academy began offering private music lesson. Suzanne Anderson was hired as Music Academy Administrator to oversee the day-to-day operations of the academy with Paul Meier serving as Music Academy Director. A portion of each academy student's tuition goes to the church for facility usage and administrative overhead. By the end of the year, there were 11 students enrolled in private lessons, and the spring term already has additional new students enrolled.



In October, the Music Guild presented a program of flute and piano music performed by Steven Kim and Sunmin Kim.

In November, the Music Guild and St. Thomas Church offered an All Souls' Day service of remembrance featuring Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem* with the Choir of St. Thomas and orchestra.

In December, the Choir of St. Thomas and the St. Thomas Choristers offered a service of Lessons and Carols. Paul Meier presented an adult forum on Advent Hymns. On Christmas Eve, special music was offered by harpist Cystal Jiao and cellist Ethan Haparnas at the 4:00 service and music at the 8:00 PM service included the Choir of St. Thomas and a brass quartet. The Music Guild ended the year with a New Year's Eve concert featuring vocal and piano music.

#### Leaders:

- Staff Liaison: Dr. Paul Meier, Director of Music & Organist
- Vestry Liaison: Karl Rabel

## Music Guild

The Music Guild is currently in its second year of producing concerts that bring enriching musical experiences to the greater community. We are blessed to have the support of St. Thomas Music Director Paul Meier, who has generously contributed his talent, experience, and guidance to help the Music Guild continue to grow.

Our focus remains on supporting musical offerings that appeal to the wider Eastside community, whether attendees are church members or not. We view this work as an important form of community outreach. While the Music Guild is not responsible for liturgical music used in worship at St. Thomas, we collaborate closely with the Music Director to maintain a high level of excellence across the overall music program.

To date, our concerts have been attended by both church members and community members, many of whom have expressed interest in and support for our concert series. We continue to build the Music Guild's infrastructure, establishing systems that ensure the successful continuation of our vision: offering exceptional musical experiences and being recognized as a valuable resource to the broader community.

### Leaders:

- Co-Chairs: Marilyn Pedersen, Jon Smith
- Vestry Liaison: Karl Rabel
- Staff Liaison: Dr. Paul Meier

presented by the St. Thomas Music Guild

### *The Art of Lyricism / Songs Without Words*



Join flutist Sungwoo Steven Kim and pianist Sunmin Kim for a beautiful Sunday afternoon filled with the lyricism of different eras.

The program journeys from Mozart's heartfelt melodies to Haydn's playful wit, through Ravel's shimmering colors, and into Schubert's tender melancholy — a celebration of melody's power to move across time.



**Oct. 5 / 2pm** This concert will be followed by a reception

## Pastoral Care Ministries

The Pastoral Care Team has accomplished much over the past year. A dedicated group of members—Lisalynn Reed, Mary Pneuman, Claude Rogers, and Nancy Lund—reviewed the church rolls to identify pastoral care needs, update contact information, and confirm church membership. Several new LEVs have been trained, and the team has continued to refine and strengthen our prayer list tracking processes.

The Touch Point group has welcomed new members, Trish Evison and Susan Heunefeld, and continues to provide cards and phone calls to parishioners.

The Stephen Ministry group cared for two individuals this year; both care relationships have now concluded. We created a workflow for parishioners who have recently lost a family member, ensuring they receive a four-part grief book series within the first year. Additionally, we have identified several members who may benefit from a grief support group, and we have plans to launch a small-group meeting. Frozen meals remain available in the church freezer for parishioners in need.

We also faced several challenges this year. The pastoral care tracking document was lost mid-year following Father Shane's departure but has since been recreated. While we have several new Lay Eucharistic Visitors, we need a system for pairing each LEV with a second individual to reduce the administrative burden of visits. Touch Points remains active with cards and calls, but visits are limited, which presents a potential gap in support. Several Stephen Ministers are nearing the end of their commitments, highlighting the need for new training. Finally, some pastoral care members have expressed a desire to step away from their roles, making succession planning an ongoing challenge for the ministry.

### Leaders:

- Chair: Heather Smith
- Vestry Liaison: Bruce Redman
- Staff Liaison: The Rev. Liz Costello, Rector



# Outreach

The Outreach and Social Justice Ministry at St. Thomas was active in 2025, serving our neighbors both locally and globally. Highlights from the year include:

1. **PorchLight Emergency Shelter (Kitchen Parties):** For the 32nd year, St. Thomas hosted approximately 20 men, and provided housing, meals, conversation, and fellowship. Many parishioners—including members of the Men’s Ministry, Vestry, and Altar Guild—contributed their time and energy. We were also assisted by Temple de Hirsch Sinai-Bellevue and the Muslim Association of Puget Sound, strengthening interfaith relationships. In 2025, 37 men rotated through the program. 17 found permanent housing, 4 returned to family, and 1 entered a detox program, reflecting the significant impact of our shelter ministry.
2. **Renewal Food Bank Food and Hygiene Drives:** During Lent and in November, the parish collected approximately 1,000 pounds of food and hygiene items at each drive.
3. **PorchLight Rotating Shelter:** St. Thomas again hosted approximately 20 men for shelter, meals, and fellowship, with volunteer support from multiple parish groups and interfaith partners.
4. **Vacation Bible Camp:** Daily outreach activities for children ages 4–11 included education on environmental stewardship, planting two trees in Medina Park, making toys for dogs at the Seattle Humane Society, assembling 100 Neighbor in Need bags (in addition to 100 assembled earlier by the Youth Group), and preparing sandwiches and cookies to feed 100 people experiencing homelessness.
5. **Missionary and “Member Abroad”**

**Anne Thomas:** Anne Thomas The ORSJ Committee hosted its annual dinner and information event featuring an update from Anne on her work in Southeast Asia promoting literacy and access to clean water. These presentations support Anne’s applications for Diocesan Sustainable Development Grants. Through her work,



students have obtained high school or college education, with many returning to their communities as teachers.

6. **Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem:** We support the social services work of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and their efforts to find peace and justice for Palestinians. To this end, we held a dinner event in November where we served Palestinian food and had Zoom conversations with Father Fadi Diab, director of the Arab Evangelical Episcopal School, and Giovanni Anbar, director of the Episcopal Technological & Vocational Training Center, both in Ramallah (Staff Contact: Mother Liz).
7. **Sound Foundations:** For a second year, the Men's Ministry volunteered to help build a tiny home, contributing to efforts to address the local housing crisis.
8. **Christmas Giving Tree:** The parish collected over 120 gifts—including toys, clothing, and gift cards—for KidVantage to distribute to those in need.
9. **Blood Drives:** St. Thomas continued hosting Bloodworks NW drives at the Ebsworth Life Center. Participation was low, and the program will be reassessed for future continuation.



#### Leaders:

- Chair: Laurie Angelo
- Vestry Liaison: Megan Miller
- Staff Liaison: The Rev. Edmund Harris, Associate Rector

## Buildings & Grounds

The Building and Grounds Committee had another busy year in 2025.

The largest and most visible project this year was the installation of new speakers and an updated sound board in the Sanctuary. We received a lot of positive feedback following this upgrade and are delighted that everyone



can now hear both the spoken word and the beautiful music shared during our services. As part of this project, sound was also reinstated in the ELC, allowing services to be heard there as well.

Several other key projects were completed, which may not have been as visible:

- The Bell Tower was repaired, allowing the bells to ring again each Sunday.
- Risers were added in the choir area to improve visual contact between the choir director and the choir. Grab bars were also installed to ensure safe access to the different levels of the choir platform.
- Several kitchen issues were addressed, including maintenance on the coffee pot, espresso machine, kitchen range/grill, and hot water heater.
- Visible campus improvements included new bark, power washing of sidewalks, the labyrinth, and the columbarium, as well as newly refinished benches. The holly hedge was pruned in December, improving parking access on the north side of the lot.



We also address general maintenance issues throughout the year, both planned and unplanned. In 2025, this included annual roof maintenance, HVAC maintenance and repairs, and inspections and repairs for fire alarm panels, the elevator, and the ELC sprinkler system. Since resolving water issues in the basement in 2024, we continue to maintain these systems to prevent future problems.



Looking ahead to 2026, we are starting the year with a shorter project list. The most critical project identified so far is addressing an HVAC leak in the ELC. In addition, we will continue general maintenance and attend to other items identified by the committee.

From a cost-saving perspective, we are working with an independent consultant to fine-tune HVAC and lighting programming to reduce

utility bills. We are also working with Comcast to identify the best Internet solution in terms of cost and functionality. Additionally, we are supporting the effort to move all offsite records to onsite storage by providing secure racks, boxes, and other resources.

We extend our sincere thanks to the generous donors who support Building and Grounds activities and to the committee members who regularly meet each month to discuss and address ongoing needs.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to any committee member with questions, feedback, or concerns. We are committed to maintaining a safe, functional, and welcoming campus for everyone who visits St. Thomas.

Leaders:

- Chair: Mark Nelson, Tera Soelter
- Vestry Liaison: Fred Williams
- Staff Liaisons: Lisalynn Reed, Parish Administrator and Kevin Chrisinger, Sexton, the Rev. Liz Costello, Rector

## Stewardship Committee

We are just finishing Year Two of our Forward in Faith Campaign, launched in 2024 with two goals - make rector housing for St Thomas a reality on the Eastside, now and in the future, and support our annual fund.

The three- year rector housing campaign continues to draw significant support from our parish, with over \$1.3 million dollars pledged towards a \$2 million dollar goal. The campaign was buoyed considerably this year with a generous gift of land from the Lane household on which to build a future rectory. We cannot express adequately our gratitude and thanksgiving for the leadership, faith, and open-hearted optimism and generosity that Martha and Katie Lane have shown the parish with this gift. The development of their donated site in Enatai is underway, and with the guidance of a former senior warden and architect Mark Nelson plans are being worked on that we hope will come to fruition once the full amount is raised.

Based on information provided by the Finance Committee, we set a goal of \$1.25 million to raise for the annual fund, to keep pace with rising costs and inflation. As of the end of January 2026, we are close to the \$1 million dollar mark in pledges and hope to draw closer to our goal with more pledges to come.



The Stewardship Committee was able to leverage the groundwork laid last year in Year One of the three-year campaign, and again offered newsletters, parish-wide mailings, witness speakers and small group informational gatherings on Zoom, at the parish, and in parishioners' homes to help us all learn more about our goals, financial situation, and offer feedback. Our annual campaign celebrated the generosity of our community with our Stewardship Banquet on November 6<sup>th</sup> and culminated in Ingathering Sunday on November 16<sup>th</sup>. A Toast to You event was held in January to thank all those who pledged to our campaign this year.

Stewardship committee members this year included Molly McConkey, Roberta Goodnow, Mary Waldmann, Tera Soelter, Ashley Graham-Wilcox, Barbara Hornbuckle, David Paranchych, Lisalynn Reed, Mother Liz, and co-chairs Tim Diller and Kim Malcolm. Many others offered their support - Valerie Wang and David Langhans, Banquet chefs for the Stewardship Banquet and Toast to You event; Mark Reike, our campaign consultant; Anne Bentley, Treasurer; Jennifer Winter



Eichenberger, Photographer; and Lily Liu, Ray Waldmann and Doug Anderson, who helped us stuff, stamp and prepare all of our mailings.

We are grateful to our members, new and long-standing, for their dedication, love, and sacrificial giving of time, talent, and treasure in support of our church. Thanks be to God!

## Leaders

- Chair: Tim Diller & Kim Malcolm
- Vestry Liaison: Mike Eggenberger
- Staff Liaisons

The Rev. Liz Costello, Rector

## Legacy Committee

The Legacy Committee continued to make solid progress in 2025. From 16 Legacy Members in 2023, we have grown to 35 Legacy Members in 2025. Some families have elected to direct their Legacy Donation to the Rector Housing Project. The St Thomas Rectory is an asset that will be held in the Legacy Foundation. We continue to make announcements in church and feature small advertisements in the wrapper to encourage members to join the Legacy Society and remember St. Thomas in their Wills. The Legacy Fund has grown from \$650,000 in 2023 to over \$2,000,000 in 2025, including the Rector Housing Fund.



## Leaders:

- Fred McConkey, Chair
- Vestry Liaison: Eric Dahlquist
- Staff Liaison: The Rev. Liz Costello, Rector

## Revenue Committee

The Revenue Committee was formed in the fall of 2024. We have sorted out many revenue ideas that won't work and are currently working on four projects that could produce revenue. These options are being considered:

1. Long term leases of underutilized space in the ELC.
2. Sale of engraved pavers and creating a paver path from ELC to the church under covered walkway.
3. Sale of naming rights for more rooms in the ELC.
4. Fundraiser dinner and donated items from members of the church.



We are currently sorting out issues with leasing the building during the week and on Sunday evenings. We hope to sign a listing agreement with a brokerage firm to bring us tenants soon. We are testing the market to see if a paver path will be successful. If we can pre-sell 50 engraved pavers at \$750 each, we will proceed with the

project. The Auction is being discussed and will happen this fall if there is enough interest. Overall, we hope to generate \$100,000 to \$200,000 in annual incremental revenue by year end 2027.



#### Leaders:

- Fred McConkey, Chair
- Vestry Liaison: Valerie Wang
- Staff Liaison: The Rev. Liz Costello, Rector

## 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.



Following Shane's departure, our staffing levels have remained steady, and no staff searches were initiated during this period. Our efforts instead focused on strengthening internal personnel processes and ensuring organizational clarity. We supported clergy in updating part-time employment and contractor agreements so they reflect current responsibilities. We also revised the organizational chart to incorporate the St. Thomas Music Academy, providing clearer reporting structures and alignment across ministries. In addition, we collaborated closely with the diocese to maintain clarity, consistency, and compliance with diocesan policies. Significant progress was made toward refining the Employee Resource Manual to better outline policies, procedures, and resources available to staff. Looking ahead, our focus will remain on supporting healthy personnel practices, maintaining clear documentation, and continuing to ensure our structures and policies are aligned with the ongoing needs of the parish.

#### Leaders:

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

## Finance Committee

There is no accounting for *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* — the classic Western film noted for its ambitious style and lasting influence. Using this title as a theme, I would like to submit our financial highlights from the past year.

**The Good** refers to our parish, which has benefited from a long history of generous support from you and from prior parishioners. This support included a significant gift from Barney Ebsworth and his estate. In the years prior to Mother Liz's arrival, the parish prudently set aside these funds to establish \$1 million in reserves and operated at a break-even level during that period.



Following the uncertainty of COVID and the transition period surrounding the call of our new Rector, the parish was no longer able to operate at break-even. This was largely due to a declining pledge base and increasing inflationary costs — a trend that is not unique to St. Thomas. The financial results for 2025, however, reflected a better-than-expected loss of -\$150,000 from regular operations, compared to the originally budgeted loss of -\$200,000. The combined losses from 2024 (\$225,000) and 2025 resulted in a cumulative loss of \$294,000, which was approved by the Vestry on the assumption that we would maintain a minimum reserve threshold of \$500,000. Several initiatives led by parishioners helped reduce these losses by funding important projects:

1. A choir and choristers trip to the UK, which was funded through a generous parishioner.
2. Installation of a new sound system in the Sanctuary, which was fully donor funded.
3. Completion of stained glass windows honoring women in the Bible was funded by many parishioners.



There are currently several initiatives underway to explore new revenue-generating opportunities for the parish, though these will take time to implement.

**The Bad and the Ugly** refers to our continued reliance on pledges, which account for approximately 80% of our total revenue, while our annual expense base remains around \$1.9 million. Recently, this expense base was thoroughly reviewed based on input from staff and volunteers, who challenged each expense and identified potential savings. As pledges for the 2026 budget are tallied, it appears that we will fall short of the 2026 goal and fail to narrow our operating loss to the extent needed to stay within the above mentioned reserve threshold. Recommitting to our parish via additional pledges will be necessary to continue the current path. Alternatively, careful work and discernment will be necessary to find another way forward toward continued financial health.

On a positive note, I would like to acknowledge the dedication of the Finance Committee, which includes Mother Liz, Anne Bentley, Tim Diller, Dave Katri, Mike Eggenberger, Peter Barrett, and Mike Allert. The committee met monthly to review expenses approved by the Vestry and to ensure alignment with our budget.

Leaders:

- Chair: Brian Evison
- Vestry Liaison: Mike Eggenberger, Anne Bentley
- Staff Liaison: The Rev. Liz Costello, Rector

## Children, Youth, and Family Ministry

St. Thomas is blessed with a vibrant and growing ministry for children, youth, and families. This past year was marked by increased participation, strong community life, and renewed energy across all age groups. A shared emphasis on consistency, formation, and hospitality has helped many new families find a spiritual home at St. Thomas.



## Highlights of the Year

In March, we gathered for the annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, featuring pancake races, the burying of the Alleluias, and the burning of palms. During Lent, families were supported with Lent in a Bag kits, offering simple practices to help children engage the season at home. We also offered a special Ash Wednesday service for children and a child-friendly Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, providing accessible ways for children to enter the rhythms of Lent and Holy Week.



A major focus of the year was The Quest, our year-long confirmation preparation class co-led by Father Edmund, Julie Barrett, Mary Pneuman, and Annika Wallendahl. The Quest began in September 2025 and continued through the program year, culminating on Cathedral Day in May, when ten youth were confirmed at Saint Mark's Cathedral.

In June, we celebrated Youth Sunday, honoring graduating seniors. Cate Fitzgerald, a graduating senior, preached a powerful sermon that was widely shared on Episcopal social media, offering a strong witness to the faith and leadership of our youth.

Also in June, St. Thomas hosted Summer Camp with the theme *Caring for God's Creation*. More than 15 children ages 4–10 participated, supported by 20+ volunteers, making it a true parish-wide effort. Throughout June and July, we again offered Children's Chapel on Sundays, providing interactive worship and formation for children in grade 5 and under, with the support of our Godly Play and Building Blocks teachers.



## Fall and Program Year Growth

The program year began in September with several important changes. Youth Group moved from every other Sunday evening to every Sunday morning from 9–10am, emphasizing consistency—we promise to be there every Sunday at 9am, no matter what, with donuts.

Father Edmund, Ryan Williams, and Jennifer Eichenberger developed a year-long curriculum focused on relationship-building, grounding youth in scripture and



Episcopal identity, and creating space for faithful questioning. This shift has had a stabilizing effect, with ten new youth joining between September and January.

Also beginning in September, we launched Last Sunday Families with Children Breakfasts, creating a regular, relaxed space for families to connect. These gatherings have become an important rhythm of community-building, particularly for newer families.

Godly Play and Building Blocks of Faith resumed in the fall, alongside expanded efforts to recruit and train new storytellers and teachers. We are especially grateful to Trish Evison for coordinating these programs.

September also included our annual Blessing of the Backpacks, and in November, children participated in the All Saints' Sunday procession, carrying saints' icons and placing them around the altar.

### **Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany**

During Advent, families received Advent Preparedness Kits, including a short devotional and materials to mark each week of the season at home. Throughout the fall, Father Edmund led several acolyte trainings, expanding opportunities for children in grades 3–5 to serve as Junior Acolytes.

December included the St. Nicholas Breakfast, Lessons and Carols with a visit from Santa Claus and a hot chocolate bar, and rehearsals for the Christmas Pageant, held on Christmas Eve at the 4:00pm service. The pageant offered roles for all, including walk-on angels, shepherds, and animals. Formation for children continued throughout the Christmas season with Children's Chapel, Godly Play, and Building Blocks, and on Epiphany, we welcomed the Three Wise Men back to St. Thomas.

### **Ongoing Formation and Looking Ahead**

Throughout the year, Mother Liz and Father Edmund led baptism preparation gatherings for families preparing to welcome children into the Church.

#### **Areas of Growth:**

We continue to see growth in both numbers and vitality, with many new families joining the parish and strong engagement across programs.

**Areas of Need:**

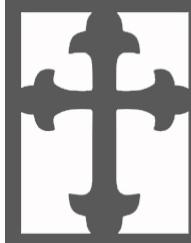
As participation increases, there is a growing need for additional teachers and volunteers to ensure sustainability and prevent burnout among current leaders.

We give thanks for the many volunteers, parents, and leaders who make this ministry possible and look forward with hope to the year ahead.

**Leaders:**

- Chair: Vacant
- Vestry Liaison: Kristen McSherry
- Staff Liaison: The Rev. Edmund Harris, Associate Rector





ST. THOMAS  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

# STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

2024-2029

## TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

### **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 **Grow Roots, Be Nourished, and Branch Out** for Jesus.

**Strategic Focus Areas:** These are priorities that define the work within each Strategic Direction—Grow Roots, Be Nourished, and Branch Out for Jesus.

**Goals:** These are the desired results within a Strategic Focus Area (Grow Roots, 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.

## our STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Grow Roots, Be Nourished, and Branch Out

We seek to be a Christian community where people can **Grow Roots** 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



### Grow Roots

**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.

*Update: January 2026 – Stewardship and budget planning have made progress narrowing the gap, and the Vestry continues to monitor progress toward a balanced budget by 2027/28. This requires continued investment from our operating reserves. We made progress in narrowing the deficit gap in 2025, however 2026 remains a challenge.*

2. Goal: Grow annual Stewardship to sustain the current complement of 3 clergy.

*Update: October 2025 – Met \$1.1M annual fund goal. Was not sufficient to retain third clergy.*

3. Goal: Raise \$2 million for the Rector Housing Endowment by 2027.

*Update: January 2026 – Campaign remains active with \$1.3M pledged to date; ongoing outreach and seeking additional pledges toward the \$2M goal in year 2 of the Forward in Faith campaign. Received a gift of land from the Lane sisters to build a rectory. Received the gift of Mark Nelson (architect) offering his expertise to design new rectory.*

*Goal: Increase Endowment to \$7.5 million by 2029 (75th anniversary).*

4. Goal: Increase Endowment to \$7.5 million by 2029 (75<sup>th</sup> anniversary).

*Update: October 2025 – Received a naming right gift that will go toward our endowment and operations.*

5. Goal: Increase Legacy Society membership.

*Update: October 2025 – As of April 2025, we have 32 members of the Legacy Society. In 2023, we started with 16 Legacy Society members.*

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

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

*Update: January 2026 – The newcomer process has been streamlined, with new members welcomed twice annually with clear coordination between clergy, staff, and volunteers. Newcomer gatherings and small group engagement support deeper integration into parish*

*life that are run by lay volunteers and supported by the clergy team. Increased membership in 2023 by 38 members, in 2024 by 48 members, and in 2025, by 13 new members.*



## 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.

*Update: January 2026 – A new Building Blocks of Faith class for grades 3–5 and monthly Children’s Chapel have expanded offerings, welcoming 12–20 children weekly.*

2. Goal: Strengthen Youth Program and increase size by attracting more local youth through offering confirmation class, service opportunities, mission trips.

*Update: January 2026 – Since the fall, we have welcomed ten new members to our youth group. A yearlong confirmation program began in 2024–2025, and youth gatherings shifted to Sunday mornings to better engage families. The first youth confirmation class was held in 2025, with 10 youth confirmed. Tried to offer a local mission trip, but low registration numbers caused us to postpone offering.*

3. Goal: Pilot Sunday service from 5:00-6:30 pm, which includes a 30-minute deconstructed liturgy with a potluck dinner.

*Update: October 2025 – Awarded diocesan grant totaling \$8,000 to support service, but due to staffing limitations, was unable to launch pilot service.*

### **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.

*Update: October 2025 – Sacred music offerings have flourished through 2024–2025 with strong participation and support.*

2. Goal: Implement RSCM 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.

*Update: October 2025 – The RSCM program is active, and choristers participated in the England residency at Coventry and St. Paul’s Cathedrals.*

3. Goal: Fundraise and plan 2024-2025 concert series.

*Update: October 2025 – Concert series completed with surplus funds; the 2025–2026 season is fully funded.*

4. Goal: Plan and execute Choir-in-Residence trip to St. Paul's Cathedral, London in August 2025.

*Update: January 2025 – The Choir-in-Residence trip was completed successfully with 89 participants. Additional Update: The St. Thomas Music Academy launched in Fall 2025, offering piano, voice, and organ lessons for parish and community students. With 11 students enrolled and 6 faculty.*

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

1. Goal: Launch Adult Formation Committee.

*Update: October 2025 – Adult formation remained robust throughout the year, offered across virtual, in-person, and hybrid formats. A variety of opportunities were available, ranging from short course series to year-long programs, ensuring accessibility for parishioners with different needs and schedules. Four adults were confirmed and one adult reaffirmed their faith in May 2025. A key goal was to increase lay participation in planning and leadership. This has been achieved, with more parishioners taking active roles in organizing book clubs, leading series, and guiding retreats. While no formal committee has been established, this broader involvement reflects a stronger sense of ownership and engagement within the community.*

2. Goal: Increase interfaith involvement and forge interfaith connections on the Eastside.

*Update: October 2025 – Parish leadership has participated in interfaith gatherings and partnerships with local faith communities, especially with Temple De Hirsch Sinai. Attempts have been made to contact MAPS, but they have been unresponsive.*

3. Goal: Add to the Fellowship Committee to plan out additional fellowship events throughout the year.

*Update: October 2025 – increased and intentional fellowship opportunities planned by staff in partnership with volunteers, but no official committee formed.*



## 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.

*Update: October 2025 – Study completed and findings implemented to inform digital outreach strategy funded by the Narthex Grant. Seasonal service attendance grew measurably: Easter attendance increased from 504 to 550, a 9.1% growth, and Christmas attendance grew from 626 to 677, an 8.2% growth. Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) increased 15% from 2023 to 2024, reflecting strengthened engagement in regular parish life in addition to seasonal services.*

2. Goal: Create Strategic Communications Plan with Unstuck Consultants that targets and markets to seekers, newcomers, and potential new members.

*Update: October 2025 – Plan completed and implemented under the new part-time Communications Coordinator in consultation with the committee and the clergy team.*

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.

*Update: October 2025 – Digital presence greatly expanded with consistent social media, podcasts, and online engagement.*

4. Goal: Increase Digital Presence to provide a cohesive online offering for virtual members near and far from different ages and stages of life.

*Update: October 2025 – Online participation continues to grow, supported by an expanding range of digital offerings that now include prayer services, podcasts, and Zoom-based adult formation programs. Engagement on social media has also strengthened 6 considerably. Facebook activity has more than doubled, reflecting deeper connections with target audiences through both ads and organic posts. On Instagram, more than 170 posts were published between 2024 and 2025, averaging about 15 each month, further increasing visibility and building stronger connections with both in-person and online parishioners.*

**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.

*Update: October 2025 – Parish again participated successfully in 2025.*

2. Goal: Host Medina Days Beer Garden.

*Update: October 2025 – Event successfully hosted with volunteer and staff support.*

3. Goal: Promote service days with St. Thomas Church.

*Update: October 2025 – Ongoing parish-wide service initiatives continue throughout the year, including Porchlight and Tiny Home builds.*

4. Goal: Create a committee to research additional opportunities.

*Update: October 2025 – Ongoing parish-wide service initiatives continue throughout the year, but no committee has been created.*

## About this document

This Strategic Action Plan arose from planning & input sessions that took place on May 16, May 22, and May 26, 2024. It was approved by St Thomas Vestry June 18, 2024 and updated in October 2025.

## Rector's Report

*In the name of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

This year, I am going to use the sermon time to deliver my annual meeting rector's address. When we get to the annual meeting, I'll invite you to engage with some of the questions from this sermon.

First, I want to thank you for the privilege of being your rector. It is an honor and a privilege to journey with you through the joys, celebrations, and heartaches of life.

Second, I want to thank the staff for all their hard work over the last year. We have a small and dedicated staff who continue to serve God through serving at St. Thomas Church. Thank you. It is a privilege to serve alongside you.

And last, I want to thank you for partnering with the staff and me in ministry. St. Paul said in his letter to the Corinthians, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth... For we are God's coworkers, working together; you are God's field, God's building."<sup>1</sup> Thank you for partnering with the staff and me in ministry. We have grown, and it is because of your labors and God's help!

I am grateful for this opportunity to celebrate all that we have accomplished for God's glory at this year's annual meeting.

For this annual meeting, I want us to picture a crocus in the snow. That is how I see St. Thomas Church: growing in the wintertime of the church.

St. Thomas is experiencing growth. This growth is a continuation of the past several years. A crocus is a picture of growth, but it is also exposed.

As a historically well-resourced church, we were among the first parishes in our diocese to emerge from the winter, the pandemic, and larger national and global trends in church attendance, and we have shown signs of growth. Our church has shown great resilience and perseverance.

And to give you a sense of the growth I am talking about, I'd like to share some stats from the year. Last year:

### **1. We grew in numbers.**

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 3:6-9.

- a. Average Sunday Attendance increased by 4%.
- b. Easter Vigil attendance grew by 40%.
- c. Easter Day attendance grew by 11%.
- d. Christmas Eve attendance grew by 9%.

2. **We grew in our children and youth ministry**, welcoming six new families with children into the life of the parish since September.
3. **Sixteen people were confirmed**, including 10 youth and 6 adults.
4. **Our music ministry flourished**, with a strong concert series offered by the music guild, a choir and chorister trip to England with over 90 people attending, and the launch of the St. Thomas Church Music Academy.
5. **We strengthened our financial health**. While challenges remain, we met a pledging stretch goal, received many generous gifts toward the Rector Housing Campaign (including a land gift), secured a significant naming-rights gift, and worked on revenue generation compliance work.
6. **We invested in our buildings and grounds**, including completing the stained-glass windows and major upgrades to our sound system.

And there is more. I commend the updated Strategic Action Plan to you for more examples of growth. I share these metrics not to boast, but as part of the narrative of transformation happening at St. Thomas.

I'd like to pause and offer thanks to God and to you for this growth.

As a crocus in the snow, there is a sense of faith and momentum. There is a sense that if we can root down and persevere while the earth thaws, that, in the long term, we will thrive and even flourish in the springtime of the church.

And as a crocus in the snow, we have been able to embrace doing and being church in new ways. As our ability to pay staff has decreased, we have increased volunteer participation and involvement. And now that we are hitting capacity, we have begun to discern what sustainable ministry looks like moving forward.

It is also true that, as a crocus in the snow, we are exposed.

We are growing during the wintertime of the church. We are exposed to winter weather, which makes us vulnerable. It is not spring yet. We know winter is just a season, and we don't know how long this one will last.

And today, our vulnerability stems from our budget deficit.

During my first month as your Rector, we discovered the extent of our budget deficit. And while we have worked hard to reduce it and made good progress in strengthening our financial health, it is part of the wintery mix that has colored the backdrop of our common life since the day that I arrived.

As an early winter bloom, we straddle these two truths that are in tension with one another.

We are growing despite all odds. We are bucking the trends of church decline. And we have a budget deficit that we can no longer sustain in the short-term. We will hear more about this at the annual meeting from our Senior Warden and Treasurer's Report.

And there is a place where these two truths, these two narratives, come together. And one of those points of connection is: it takes money to grow a church. I wonder if these two truths are ringing true for you?

When we get to the annual meeting, I'll invite you to reflect on how this image and these two truths resonate with you.

Doing this type of exercise is part of what business professionals call "strategic foresight."<sup>2</sup> In business speak, strategic foresight is turning uncertainty into a competitive advantage. Finding the upside of these two truths.

In an article from Harvard Business Review, entitled "Managing Uncertainty: What Companies that Excel at Strategic Foresight Do Differently," Wendi Backler talks about strategic foresight and how it can help companies. In the life of the church, I would describe this concept as a strategy for turning uncertainty into a missional and spiritual opportunity to grow and become the people God is calling us to be. It is the disciplined practice of faithfully discerning how to respond to present realities, while keeping an eye on the future God is calling us toward.

In this article, Wendi Backler describes how foresight leaders can address the challenge of spanning two-time frames in an organization's life. Backler writes: "Foresight leaders overcome the pressures of short-termism by running foresight at two speeds in parallel: sensing foresight for real-time decisions and shaping foresight for long-term bets."

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<sup>2</sup> <https://hbr.org/2026/01/what-companies-that-excel-at-strategic-foresight-do-differently>

In other words, foresight leaders resist being driven solely by the threat of the moment and instead seek possibilities and faithfulness amid uncertainty.

Backler discusses the types of organizational attitudes needed to turn uncertainty into a competitive advantage. She does this by asking these questions: “Are you continually stuck in a cycle of short-term reaction to perceived threat of the moment, or are you able to focus on hunting for upside amid uncertainty? Is intuition taking a front seat to quantitative approaches?”

At St. Thomas, foresight leadership has meant this: We have held our budget realities alongside prayerful discernment in investing in church growth. We have looked honestly at our finances while also listening deeply for where the Spirit is leading us. We have developed and worked on a strategic action plan that addresses both the short-term and long-term tracks.

For us, foresight leadership has not been about predicting the future or controlling outcomes. It has been about paying attention—to God, to one another, and to the realities before us—so that we can make faithful decisions in this moment while preparing for the church God is calling us to become tomorrow.

When I sat with our leadership (the Vestry and Executive Committee), I invited us to reflect on the upside of our uncertainty, or in spiritual talk, the spiritual opportunity of being a crocus in the snow.

A few of those reflections included:

- In a financially well-resourced community, the church has been invited to have more faith in God with our finances.
- We have tried to increase our financial transparency.
- We have re-examined our “why” and doubled down on our mission.
- We have increased our interdependence on all church members in new ways, relying on everyone’s time, talent, and treasure.
- We have continued to turn outward to our community and invited them into the life of the church. Which will be our focus next year, “branching out to serve”.
- We have tried to live into the ELC’s vision to be a resource for the community while also generating revenue, which required us to do compliance work to make this vision possible.
- We have reinvigorated and strengthened our relationship with St. Thomas School.

- We have come to terms with our human limitations about what this body of Christ can do today.

I'm sure there are more we will hear in the annual meeting.

We are a crocus in the snow. We are growing. With God's and your help, we will weather this storm and continue to thrive in the springtime of the church.

As we celebrate the past year, and look to the coming year, let us continue to strive for God's kingdom right where we are. Let us remember what God requires of us and make it our mandate to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly before our God. Let us remember the invitation of the beatitudes that describes the kingdom of God that looks different from the icons of power and is found in the poor, the vulnerable, and in the people we'd least expect.

And finally, let us remember what Jesus said about flowers – the lilies.<sup>3</sup> Let us remember God's promise to care for the lilies and to strive for not the things of this world, but for the kingdom of God. **Amen.**

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<sup>3</sup> <sup>27</sup> Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. <sup>28</sup> But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! <sup>29</sup> And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. <sup>30</sup> For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. <sup>31</sup> Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

Managing Uncertainty

# What Companies that Excel at Strategic Foresight Do Differently

by Wendi Backler, Alan Iny and Moe Turner

January 8, 2026 | Harvard Business Review

At the start of a new year, it's human nature to want a crystal ball: What lies ahead, and how will it affect us? This feeling is particularly acute in times of uncertainty, when the ability to engage in meaningful foresight can feel elusive at best. And whether the world is objectively more volatile, it certainly feels that way to CEOs: Based on our analysis of earnings calls, 2025 saw a significant **spike** in discussions about uncertainty, with little sign of abating in 2026.

In our experience working with leadership teams, we've found that many get trapped in firefighting mode and often react to volatility by freezing up or reverting to gut instinct. But a minority of companies have a different response when confronted with an unpredictable future. In a recent survey of executives at 500 organizations, we identified clear patterns of behavior that differentiate organizations that report turning uncertainty into advantage through foresight practices from organizations that struggle to effectively use foresight.

By strategic foresight, we mean the disciplined practice of scanning for change, exploring multiple plausible futures, and using those insights to make better choices in the present. The field traces back to Cold War military planning but was embraced by the corporate world in the 1960s and '70s, when companies such as **Royal Dutch Shell** began using scenarios to rehearse possible shocks rather than betting on a single forecast. Today's methods range from monitoring emerging signals to war games to scenario planning—with AI rapidly expanding capabilities.

Organizations that get strategic foresight right excel in two key areas. The first is process, with leaders that enable teams to view the full spectrum of unknowns on both real-time and long-term horizons. The second is mindset: Foresight leaders look beyond risk management to seek future opportunities in unpredictability and routinely rely on data with the help of a sophisticated foresight toolkit.

These foresight leaders, spread across industry, revenue size, and ownership model, don't just report being better prepared. Companies with more advanced foresight capabilities also report a significant edge over their competition: Moving from standard to a more state-of-the-art level of foresight is associated with a 5% increase in financial performance. The good news for laggards? They can take concrete steps to avoid getting left behind.

## **Creating Advantage from Uncertainty**

Our research revealed that foresight exercises are common across organizations, but most are simple and patchwork: 60% of respondents report relying primarily on basic foresight methods. By basic foresight methods, we mean information that is largely qualitative and periodic, gleaned from reading trend reports, running SWOT-style scenarios, and tracking dashboards. Advanced foresight, in contrast, is systematic and data/AI-enabled, using methods like machine-learning forecasts, weak-signal and sentiment mining, and using digital twins or war-gaming to stress-test strategic moves. Worse, only about 15% strongly agree that foresight is contributing positively to their organization. Those grappling with foresight implementation bottlenecks most often cite a common blocker: the degree to which strategic decisions are driven by short-term pressures.

Yet at its best, foresight is an organizational capability, not a series of one-off exercises. It tracks what's reasonably predictable, prepares for what isn't, and cuts through noise to the few signals that matter. As strategy's foundation, it improves long-term choices and in-the-moment decisions through a combination of prediction, positioning, and real-time

awareness—so the next time a rule change rewrites compliance overnight, a supplier or partner is hit by ransomware, or extreme weather stalls operations, you’re prepared to not just ride out the storm, but to make the most of the situation. At a company with an effective foresight system in place, the system tells you when to make your move.

Our survey revealed that it’s not just tech startups or organizations with large budgets that can lead in foresight. The effect holds across sectors, sizes, and operating models—including the public sector and nonprofits. The more advanced foresight leader cohort looks much like the broader sample: industry mix does not substantially differ, and they are only about 10 points more likely to be privately owned, with no strong trends by scale.

Moreover, our self-reported performance metrics align with [previous academic research](#) showing that firms that are prepared for the future are more likely to become industry outperformers and to achieve superior profitability and market-cap growth. The takeaway: robust, systematic foresight pays off.

## How Leaders Structure Their Foresight Capability

Foresight leaders understand that they need a comprehensive perspective on uncertainty—this includes different types of unknowns, but also the ability to consider both present-day and future challenges. If we think about uncertainty on a matrix, it illustrates how some unknowns are predictable and short-term, others are unpredictable and long-term, and so on. Foresight leaders design their processes to capture all four quadrants.

### Covering two types of unknowns.

Some features of the future are reasonably predictable. For these *patterned unknowns* you can form evidence-based expectations using historical data. Most organizations stop here, by trying to pinpoint the future that will unfold using trend reports, analyst takes, and performance extrapolations. Companies can still find advantage in the interpretation of signals, but their competitors will increasingly have access to similar data,

and predictive analytics is becoming more accessible to a broader swathe of strategic teams.

Foresight leaders add a second layer, by considering *breakout unknowns*. These are aspects of the future that, even with solid data, teams would struggle to predict—often these elements are not just unpredictable, but hard to even imagine. Foresight leaders build systems to identify, explore, and prepare for what can't be predicted. They treat true unknowns as a design challenge, not a forecasting exercise. Foresight leaders are nearly twice as likely as laggards to report having a systematic foresight process for addressing “unknown unknowns.”

The two types of unknowns require different methods and emphasis. On the one hand, for example, for predictable unknowns, [Alphabet has used internal corporate prediction markets](#). The company essentially gathers and uses the wisdom of crowds through its broad employee base to increase forecasting accuracy for both internal and competitor future milestones.

On the other hand, for true unknowns, Netflix designed its own foresight system for resilience using [chaos engineering](#), an experimental approach to generating data about possible future events for which there is limited current context or predictability. Netflix teams run its software and infrastructure through partially random [failure injection experiments](#)—conditions to expose vulnerabilities engineers might not have thought of. They deliberately break things to expose blind spots before customers do.

## **Covering two timeframes.**

Foresight leaders overcome the pressures of short-termism by running foresight at two speeds in parallel: sensing foresight for *real-time decisions* and shaping foresight for *long-term bets*. Laggards tend to overlook the former, with only 30% reporting that they refresh foresight frequently, compared to 60% of leaders. At the same time, foresight leaders report using multiple timeframe foresight views (for example, short and long term) in parallel more than twice as often as laggards do. While many teams are pulled into constant firefighting, foresight leaders stay responsive to rapid shifts while also building disciplined views of the far-off future to guide strategy. For instance: Right now, real-time weak

signal detection systems sense the first murmurs of market and competitor moves; for later, scenario planning defines the testing ground for no regrets moves.

The 2021 semiconductor shock shows the contrast. Two automakers, Toyota and Tesla, faced a chip shortage. Because these organizations had different styles and sources of advantage, they focused on two distinct foresight approaches. Toyota leaned heavily on the long-term view through [advance contingency mapping, planning, and preparation](#). Tesla prioritized the near-term, real-time view, enabling the company to [pivot quickly through flexible design choices](#) at the first sign of issues.

### **Shifting the Foresight Mindset**

Most leadership teams engage in some form of scenario planning and trend tracking, yet these efforts rarely change decisions. To move from scattered, low-impact activity to foresight leadership requires two mindset shifts: focusing on potential future upside opportunities, not just avoiding future risk; and putting data ahead of intuition, so forecasts are trusted and acted upon.

### **Upside orientation.**

Most organizations use foresight primarily to reduce downside—developing alerts for known risks and monitoring familiar threat lists. This is useful, but insufficient. It's one thing to track what has hurt you before; it's another to detect what's likely to matter in the future.

Foresight leaders flip that emphasis. When asked about their strategic orientation, leaders are about 20% more likely to report using foresight to search for upside opportunities, using foresight methods amid uncertainty and shifting conditions (versus a more typical focus on avoiding downside risk), than laggards.

Considering the upside requires not just a view of relevant possible futures but also a clear understanding of how the organization creates value. Instead of gearing foresight solely around detecting the next catastrophe, leaders set up systems to detect signals and forecast features of plausible futures from which they could gain advantage because of their

differentiated capabilities. This is not to say that leaders focus on upside at the expense of being ready for downside turns; they are doing both.

For example, Walmart built Scintilla, a [platform](#) that allows the retailer to detect early signals of shifts in customer preferences and purchasing behavior and experiment with possible future products through test groups. The aim of the Scintilla foresight system is to help teams to rapidly pivot operations and design products, more effectively capturing demand spikes. Whereas many organizations focus on data-driven systems to capture stock needs, Scintilla is an example of foresight focused on upside opportunity detection.

### **Data-forward foresight**

Most businesses still struggle to make objective data sets the basis for leadership decisions; instead, intuition and internal politics play an outsized role. However, foresight leaders orient by default to data using a toolkit designed to help them narrow in on the signals and views of the future that matter most to their strategy process.

They also apply an outside-in view, avoiding focusing too much on single exceptional instances—which suggests they take a more sophisticated quantitative view of the future than laggards. For example, most organizations project key metrics, attempting to anticipate sales, engagement, and launches years in advance. Often this is done based on an organization’s past performance, alongside a few market reports or expert datasets. Even more often, these predictions turn out to be wildly different from the actual future that unfolds.

Modern statisticians, in contrast, build predictions from base success rates across similar organizations in similar instances, rather than anchoring on the individual past performance of a single organization. Foresight leaders, when asked about their forecasting processes, were twice as likely to report using this more advanced approach. The result is a flywheel: Better forecasts lead to higher trust, which leads to broader use, which leads to better data, and finally to better forecasts.

One way that organizations approach data-oriented foresight, particularly where market data may be sparse or not directly applicable to innovative products, is by implementing broad, low-cost experimentation, effectively allowing teams to generate new data about many possible future paths.

Consider [LEGO's Creative Play Lab](#): It provides a clear process for bottom-up prototypes and pushes teams to generate beta-test data early. The lab [deliberately probes where ideas fail, not just where they work](#), which enables leadership to narrow in on the strongest, most relevant signals.

### **Moving Toward Foresight Leadership**

As company leaders begin the New Year, a simple retrospective can reveal what stands between your team and foresight leadership.

#### **Start with a single episode.**

Recall a recent change in your operating environment that your organization did not anticipate. Looking back, what signals might have preceded the change? What do you wish you had been tracking? Maybe you had all the data, but somehow it wasn't translated into the right strategic moves. What moves do you wish your organization had made? For example, suppose a competitor launched a product you didn't anticipate—you might wish that you had noticed their patenting activity years ago so that you would have seen their earliest moves and been able to change course.

#### **Learn from what you've missed.**

Repeated failures of future detection often point to gaps in foresight. The foresight matrix defines four complementary lenses for viewing the future of your organization. For opportunities you've missed can help to highlight quadrants that may need more systematic focus. If we continue the example above, missing the competitor's patenting suggests a gap in projecting capabilities—the quadrant of the matrix that relates to long-term views of reasonably predictable future events.

#### **Check your organizational attitudes.**

Not all failures of foresight stem from a gap in foresight routine. For foresight to drive strategy, the right organizational attitudes must be in place. Consider what you and senior leaders around you focus on: Are you continually stuck in a cycle of short-term reaction to the perceived threat of the moment, or are you able to focus on hunting for upside amid uncertainty? Is intuition taking a front seat to quantitative approaches?

Moving toward foresight leadership is about more than going through the motions—fostering the right set of organizational attitudes creates the bridge between foresight dashboards and decks and the actual strategic moves that generate advantage. Imagine that, at our hypothetical company, the strategy team told leadership they were tracking patenting activity and even reported the competitor’s activity years ago. But at that time, leadership was so focused on the next quarter’s results that they failed to imagine how competitors might translate patents into new products. In this case, the gap was not the foresight projecting capability, it was the integration of that capability into the strategic process.

...

Knowing what to track and how to spot changing conditions that offer business opportunities is the start of the journey to becoming a foresight leader. Organizations that prioritize these capabilities can move faster and will be far better equipped to turn uncertainty into advantage. It’s not a crystal ball, but it will be a critical tool for the new year—and beyond.

**Wendi Backler** is the global lead for growth and innovation analytics and the co-lead of strategic foresight at Boston Consulting Group. She is a fellow at the BCG Henderson Institute.

**Alan Iny** is the global lead for creativity and scenarios and co-lead for strategic foresight at Boston Consulting Group, and a fellow at the BCG Henderson Institute. He is co-author of *Thinking in New Boxes* (Random House).

**Moe Turner** is in management consulting at the Boston Consulting Group, where she works with companies and investors on strategy and investment decisions. She is an ambassador with the BCG Henderson Institute.

## Revenue Committee Addendum

To: Vestry  
 From: Revenue Committee  
 Date: December 7, 2025

The Revenue Committee has been working and meeting for about a year now. We have sorted out many revenue ideas that didn't work, and are currently working on four projects that could produce revenue. The options being considered at this time are:

1. Long term leases of underutilized space in the ELC.
2. Selling engraved pavers and creating a paver path from ELC to the church under covered walkway.
3. Sell two more rooms with naming rights in ELC.
4. Raise money at a dinner and fundraiser auction, with items donated from, and purchased by members of the church.

The estimated timeframe for income is as follows:

	EOY 2025	EOY 2026	EOY 2027	EOY 2028	EOY 2029	EOY 2030
<b>1. Long term Leases</b>						
Great Hall	\$20,000	\$ 60,000	\$ 62,400	\$ 65,000	\$ 67,000	
Nurseries (1)	10,000	72,000	74,100	76,380	79,400	
Godly Play (2)		10,000	72,000	74,100	76,380	
Lease Chapel		24,000	24,700	25,710	26,740	
Empty Offices		3,000	12,000	12,360	12,730	
Potential Lease Income	\$30,000	\$169,000	\$245,200	\$253,550	\$262,850	
<b>2. Sell Pavers:</b>						
<u>Engraved</u>		\$ 20,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 22,000		
<b>3. Sell Room Names</b>						
			\$300,000	\$250,000		
<b>4. Fund Raising Auction</b>						
	\$20,000	-----	-----	-----	-----	
High Estimate						
Total Revenue (3)	\$50,000	\$189,000	\$585,200	\$525,500	\$262,250	
Low Estimate						
Total Revenue (4)	\$10,000	\$ 80,000	\$ 87,100	\$114,710	\$ 93,740	

(1) Requires school approval on parking to lease the nursery.  
 (2) Requires school approval on parking and waive exclusive right for 2 ½ - 4 year old toddler daycare.  
 (3) Assumes everything goes perfectly, best case.  
 (4) Assumes school denies parking and daycare use, room naming does not happen.

**St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Long Term Room Leasing Proposal  
December 8, 2025**

Purpose: To create long-term reoccurring lease income from renting rooms and excess capacity in ELC. Money to be applied to operating fund income.

Broker: Kidder Mathews Religious Advisor Services, Zeke Pelluer, Steve Pulluer

Opportunity: There is strong demand for infant daycare, less than 2 ½ year olds.  
There is relatively high demand for child daycare, 2 ½ - 4 ½ year olds.  
There is some demand for another church to lease the ELC Great Hall nursery and Sunday School on Sunday evenings, 5 pm – 10 pm, for their own church services.  
There is some demand to lease the Chapel on Sunday afternoons or evenings.  
There is low demand to for leasing the kitchen.  
There is low demand to lease Great Hall breakout rooms, with moveable divider walls.  
There is low demand to lease the large room upstairs that can be divided into three separate spaces with moveable walls. The St. Thomas Music Academy may eventually use these rooms for lessons.

Economics:

1. Lease Great Hall on Sundays 5-10 PM for another church's services  
\$5,000/mo. X 12 = \$60,000/yr.
2. Lease Pitarys Nursery for infant daycare, M-F, 7AM – 6 PM, requires "E Occupancy" City of Bellevue/Medina, which should be attainable.  
Pitarys' Nursery: \$3,000/mo. income x 12 = \$36,000/yr.  
(requires School approval on parking)
3. Lease Kids Club and Godly play for child daycare, requires "E Occupancy" City of Bellevue/Medina, should be attainable.  
Kids Club: \$3,000/mo. income x 12 = \$36,000/yr.  
Godly Play: \$3,000/mo. income x 12 = \$36,000 yr.  
(requires School approval on parking)
4. Lease second floor vacant office for school admin.  
(Father Shane's) for Admin \$1,000/mo. X 12 = \$12,000/yr.  
(requires School approval on parking)
5. Lease Chapel for Sunday evening services \$24,000/yr.

Total Higher Demand Rooms, Potential Income = \$204,000/yr.  
(absolute best case)

Lower Demand Rooms: may take longer than a year to lease or may never lease.

6. Lease kitchen M-F 9AM – 5PM  
\$3,000/mo. X 12 = \$36,000/yr.

7. Lease upstairs divided rooms (3) for tutoring:  
\$3,250/mo. X 12 = \$39,000/yr

Lower Demand Rooms, Potential Income = \$ 75,000/yr.

Questions:

1. The Higher Demand nursery and daycare rooms would likely be 5 to 10-year leases to a single For Profit Corporation. The lease commissions are paid from the first month rent and security deposit paid by the tenant. Any income and property taxes due are passed through to the tenant. The committee is reviewing this with our CPA firm.
2. The library could also be converted and leased for \$36,000/yr. for infant care. The room would need to be converted from a library/conference room into a long-term daycare. The tenant would pay for a new door to the outside and a door to the nursery's restroom. The conference room upstairs could be used for a replacement library/conference room, as it is not likely to rent. As this is a big decision and a big change, the Vestry, Clergy and Staff would need to decide if this is worth pursuing for \$36,000/yr. additional income.
3. Under the Lease and Joint Use Agreement, the school would need to approve nursery employee parking. The School has an exclusive on daycare, so they would have to waive this restriction for us to lease to another daycare with 2 ½ - 4-year-olds.
4. Extra janitorial needs are provided by and paid for by the tenant.
5. For security, a nursery/day care would require a keypad lock to the outside door for secure access.
6. In the event of an emergency, the nursery/daycare staff would be responsible for evacuating the kids. They have their own procedures.
7. This is a big change. Can we start out slow and just lease out the nursery? We could try this, but it is more likely a single company would want to lease the nursery, upstairs Sunday School Classes, and an admin office. The committee can evaluate all lease deals presented, but if we are too restrictive, the brokers will be less motived to bring us deals.

8. If another church leases the Great Hall for year-round church services, what do we do during July when Porchlight is staying with us. The brokers have dealt with and solved this before. The men generally leave at 7 am and return at 5 pm. If this becomes a conflict, the visiting church could use the main church in July for their services.
9. It seems that we are rushing into this. Why the hurry? The church will likely lose \$150,000 to \$200,000 in 2026, so lease income would go a long way in helping us to break even. The money comes from outside sources, so this is not a burden on the parishioners. It will take time to get the spaces leased and occupied. The income will not come online all together. If we start right now, it may be 2027-2028 before we get a full year of income.
10. How long are the lease terms? The tenants will likely want 3 or 5-year lease terms, with options to extend. Once they get set up and established, they don't want to move. Some churches sign 10-year leases to lock in the income for the long term. The rents generally escalate at 3% - 4% a year.

Next Steps:

1. Present long term leasing concept to Vestry and work through feedback/concerns.
2. School Committee presents a proposal to the School which allows use of 10-20 parking stalls on 84<sup>th</sup> Avenue M-F, and School waives exclusive use so we can lease to a daycare.
3. Confirm zoning, Nursery "i Occupancy", Library "i Occupancy", Godly Play, Kids Club "E Occupancy"
4. Decide what rooms we can lease and what rooms we cannot lease.
5. Determine tax impact and cost of various room leases.
6. Clergy and Staff prepare for potential changes if rooms lease up.
7. Sign 6-month Exclusive Leasing Agreement with Kidder Mathews, automatically renews until all rooms are leased, but can be terminated on 30 days' notice.
8. Once leases are signed, make operational changes to accommodate new tenants.

**Engraved Paver Fundraiser  
High Level Outline  
December 8, 2025**

**Option A: Engraved Pavers on Walkway**

1. Purpose: To raise money for Legacy Fund, or for Operating Fund, and complete the sell out by the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, in 2029.
2. Concept: Sell engraved pavers in the sidewalk connecting ELC to Church.
3. Vendor: BricksRus, has a canned program that makes it easy. See website and links. [www.BricksRus.com](http://www.BricksRus.com).
4. Process:
  - a. Use the same style of engraved pavers to match those at St. Thomas School
  - b. Present the paver concept at the Annual Meeting in February 2026, and get a show of hands for how many would buy them.
  - c. Collect pledges from those wanting to buy a paver.
  - d. Market the Engraved Pavers Program to members.
  - e. Go/no go, Spring 2026, based on pre-sales break even
5. Cost/Benefit: Assumptions

Sell: 150 large pavers @ \$750/each =		\$112,500
Cost: Demo area, install sand/base =	\$ 10,000	\$
Purchase/install blank pavers: \$10x 100 =	\$ 1,000	\$
Purchase sold engraved pavers \$50 x 150 =	\$ 7,500	\$
Marketing Expense, consultant	\$ 4,000	\$
Misc. expense/contingency	<u>\$ 8,000</u>	<u>\$ 0.00</u>
Total Expense	\$	(\$30,500)
Proposed Income	<u>\$ 82,000</u>	
(over 3-year sales campaign)		

6. Break Even

Total Cost:		
Pre-Sale Income: 30 x \$1,000 =	\$30,000	(\$30,000)
Pre Sale Income: 30 Pavers	<u>\$30,000</u>	
Break Even	\$ 0.00	

We would need to pre-sell and collect pledges for at least \$30,000. As the initial sale is usually the strongest, we may want to pre-sell 50 pavers before commencing on the project. If pavers sell out, we may wish to consider an engraved tile giving wall in the ELC.



**ELC Room Naming Fundraiser  
High Level Proposal  
Updated December 8, 2025**

1. Purpose: To raise money for Legacy Fund, or for Operating Fund, and complete the sell out by the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, in 2029.
2. Where: Name the remaining rooms in the ELC. Replace existing signs with more noticeable plaques.
3. Vendor: Mark Nelson is researching a vendor to make the signs.

Below is suggested asking price for each room

**First Floor**

<u>Room #</u>	<u>Room Name</u>	
1	Great Hall	\$750,000
	Main Reception Hall, South Entrance	\$250,000
	Kitchen	\$500,000
	Administrative/Reception, North Entrance	\$250,000
226	Choir room	\$300,000
225	Director of Music's Office, not named	\$250,000
217	Kids Club	\$250,000
216	Lounge	\$250,000
206/209	Godly Play 1 & 2	<u>\$250,000</u>
		\$2,800,000
	Total Potential	

Named Rooms

109	Pitarys Nursery (Named 11/6/25)
137	Vesta Lloyd Parlor
107	Del Bene Family Library & Conf. Room
	Hayes Youth Center

The 3 rooms named 13 years ago went for \$250,000 each, which is about \$375,000, indexed for inflation. The Pitarys prefer to keep the amount of their gift confidential.

## Potential Income:

### 4. Cost/Benefit: Assumptions

Sell: Sell 8 rooms at an average of \$350,000 each=	2,800,000
Cost: 13 new signs at \$500 each =	(6,500)
Marketing Consultant	(2,000)
Misc. contingency, 6 rooms don't sell	(2,100,000)
Total Expense	<u>(2,108,500)</u>
Proposed Benefit	\$ 691,500

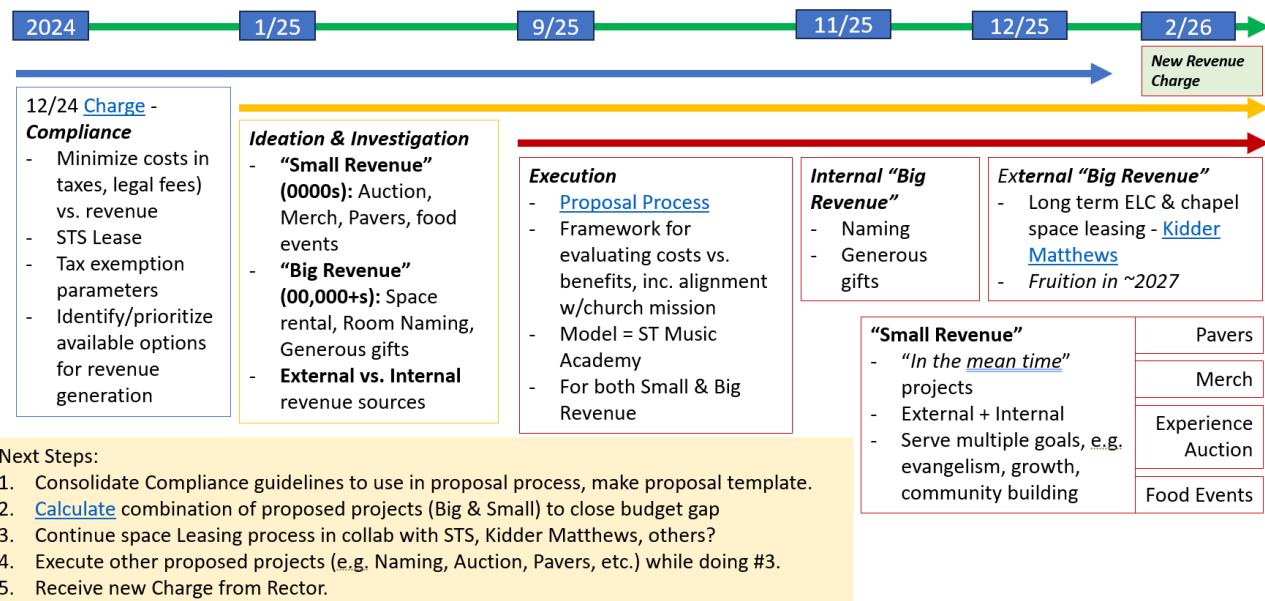
(Timeline for Campaign 2026-2029, sales could be better than just 2 more room sold)

### 5. Process:

- Approve by Revenue Committee and Vestry
- Announce at Annual Meeting Feb 2026
- Prepare marketing campaign in conjunction with Pavers
- Prepare New Signage/Plaques for Existing Named Rooms, and a New Signs Sign for Future Named Room, with blank naming area
- Create and Launch a Marketing Program with a 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Theme, Spring 2026

## Revenue timeline

What we've done + Next Steps



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*



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