Cathedral Vestry Meeting

Meeting:	Saint Mark's Episcopal Cathedral Vestry Meeting
Date/Time:	Aug 18, 2026, 7:00-9:00PM
Location	Saint Mark's Heritage Room or Join Zoom Meeting
Documents:	Uploaded to meeting folder

Participant	***Present?***
The Very Reverend Aidan Owen, Dean-Elect	Y
Mike Shepherd, Senior Warden	Y
Rachel Babbitt, Junior Warden	Y
Janet Balej, Treasurer	Y
Michele Mandrich, Clerk	Y
The Rev. Mary Beth Farrell, Chaplain to the Vestry	Y
The Rt. Rev. Craig Loya, Bishop ECMN	N
Canon Karen Olson, ECMN	N
Joe Ward, Property Committee Chair	Y
Jacob Buchen, Finance Committee Chair	Y
Vivien Smith, Council Member	N
Brandon Lorge, Governance Committee Chair	Y

Paul Anton, Foundation Committee Chair	N

Agenda

Topic	Time	Speaker	Notes
Call to Order	5 min	The Very Rev. Aidan Owen, Dean-Elect	The meeting was called to order at 7:12 p.m.
Opening Prayer	5 min	The Rev. Mary Beth Farrell, Chaplain to the Vestry	Mary Beth led the opening prayer
Review and approval of July meeting minutes	5 min	The Very Rev. Aidan Owen, Dean-Elect	No additions or corrections were requested for the July minutes. A motion was made and seconded to approve the July minutes. The motion carried unanimously.
Vestry Spotlight	5 min		Joe Ward shared reflections on his life, family, professional background, and faith journey.
Pilgrimage to UK Dean's Report	45 min	The Very Rev. Aidan Owen, Dean-Elect	The Vestry discussed a proposed pilgrimage to the United Kingdom next fall for up to 20 participants, intended as part of the cathedral community's discernment about what it means to be a cathedral. The contract with Wonder Voyage totals approximately $50,000, payable in installments: a $3,000 deposit at signing, $22,500 by November 1, $22,500 by February 1, and any remaining balance by June 15 depending on final participation. Aidan explained that participant payments would be scheduled so the cathedral would have funds in hand before remitting payments to Wonder Voyage. The Vestry discussed ways to broaden access to the pilgrimage, including building scholarship funds into pricing, holding small fundraising events, setting

Topic	Time	Speaker	Notes
			aside two or three spaces for participants needing financial assistance, and considering a “third/third/third” model in which participants pay one-third, raise one-third, and receive scholarship support for one-third. There was also discussion of whether youth participation or future pilgrimage opportunities might be appropriate. **Motion:** Joe Ward moved to approve signing the Wonder Voyage pilgrimage contract and to designate Aidan as the cathedral representative authorized to sign the contract. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously. Aidan opened a discernment conversation regarding remaining funds from the roof insurance payout, along with a separate donation designated for staff well-being. Aidan suggested possible uses, including addressing staffing shortages, correcting compensation inequities, and reserving funds as seed money for a capital campaign. No decision was requested or made. Discussion emphasized the need to distinguish one-time expenditures from ongoing commitments, ensure transparency with the congregation, and avoid spending money without a sustainable plan. Vestry members discussed risks associated with both action and inaction. Members also discussed the importance of engaging Finance Committee input before making commitments.

Topic	Time	Speaker	Notes
			Aidan will develop a more concrete roadmap for the Vestry to continue discussing, in collaboration with stewardship and finance leadership.
Foundation Task Force Update	15 min	Janet Balej, Treasurer	Janet reported that the task force met on August 3 and continues to make progress. The group has identified key areas for recommendations and is continuing its work with open discussion, listening, and creative thinking. Members noted that the pace has become more methodical than originally anticipated and that the task force should keep the Chancellor and Bishop informed at an appropriate point.
Treasurer's Report and Finance Committee Update	15 min	Janet Balej, Treasurer and Jacob Buchen, Finance Committee Chair	Janet reported that July was financially strong and that the current forecast shows an approximate $27,000 surplus. The Vestry discussed a recent estate gift, with approximately $51,000 expected for the cathedral operating budget and the remainder to the endowment, pending confirmation of paperwork and accounting details. The Vestry discussed whether the current outsourced accounting arrangement is the best long-term solution. Finance leaders plan to meet with Aidan to review the remainder of the year, clarify budget assumptions, and begin building a clearer 2027 budget.
Junior Warden's Report	10 min	Rachel Babbitt, Junior Warden	Rachel reported that the Human Resources Committee is being reactivated after approximately ten years of dormancy. Committee members

Topic	Time	Speaker	Notes
			include Rachel, Aidan, Inez Berquist, Martha Hoover, and Kerry Childe. The committee will review compensation, job descriptions, current processes, accountability structures, performance review practices, and the employee manual. The Vestry noted the importance of HR structures in maintaining healthy operations. Rachel also reported that the Safety and Security Team continues to move forward, with the next meeting scheduled for Thursday. Rachel provided the current slate of 2026 diocesan convention lay delegates and alternates. Confirmed delegates include Rachel, Caitlin Child, Michaela Conrad pending availability, Andy Stewart, and Brandon. Alternates include Amanda Stephan, Dave Burke, and Joe Ward, with two additional alternates still needed. The convention will be held in St. Louis Park, so hotel costs are not expected. The Vestry discussed registration costs of approximately $185 per person and the need to identify the appropriate budget line.
Senior Warden's Report	15 min	Mike Shepherd, Senior Warden	The Vestry-led forum is scheduled for Sunday, August 30, at 9:30 a.m. The forum will be brief and will reinforce key priorities and show how Vestry work aligns with those priorities. Mike will lead development of brief slides in collaboration with Aidan and may request data points from Vestry members. Vestry members are encouraged to attend.

Topic	Time	Speaker	Notes
			The Vestry confirmed its prior virtual vote with an in-person vote, which was unanimous, to move forward with Revenue Stream on the expense review. Mike will send the non-disclosure agreement and engagement agreement to Danelle Windsor. A kickoff may occur in Minneapolis, and the Vestry may receive advance homework to make the meeting productive. The Vestry discussed the need to send pledge statements showing both year-to-date giving and pledge balance due. Some members noted they had not received statements or that automatic withdrawals had not occurred after a process change. The goal is to send corrected statements by September 1. Vestry members offered to assist with envelope stuffing if a date is scheduled. Mike reported that a committee is actively planning the Celebration of New Ministry, also referred to as the installation. Costs are expected to include livestream support, limited travel and accommodations, and a reception following the Eucharist. The existing Dean transition fund held with the foundation is expected to provide funding, with more detail to come. Aidan noted that the previous three deans have been invited to participate, with travel and accommodations covered. Paul and Spencer have confirmed; Joel has not yet confirmed. Aidan explained that this invitation is intended to symbolize continuity of ministry and may also provide an opportunity for reconciliation, while acknowledging that some members of the congregation may have mixed or difficult feelings given prior departures. Vestry members were encouraged to be

Topic	Time	Speaker	Notes
			pastorally sensitive and to refer anyone wishing to discuss concerns to Aidan.
Closing Prayer	5 min	The Rev. Mary Beth Farrell, Vestry Chaplain	Mary Beth led the closing prayer.
Adjourn	1 min	Aidan Owen, Dean-elect	Michele moved to adjourn, and Brandon seconded. The motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 8:59 p.m.