

Vestry Retreat Minutes

The Church of St. Michael and St. George

6345 Wydown Blvd., Clayton MO 63105

Sunday 2/22/26

The meeting commenced at 9:00 a.m., immediately following attendance at the 8:00 service.

Vestry Members in Attendance: Joe Sheehan, Bill Jenkins, Rachel Martens, Matt Aplington, Lindsey Stokes, Rixey Ruffin, Cathy Sanders, Selby Grapel, Abby Castle Miller, Peter Smith, Will Springer, Stephen Eisle, Diane Duncan, Gail Patterson, Frankie Eichenberger, David Ott

Clergy: None

Staff & Guests: None

EXECUTIVE SESSION PROCEEDINGS

Administrative Matters

Vestry members signed the acknowledgement of the conflict of interest policy for 2026.

Vestry members signed the commitment to confidentiality of proceedings.

Intention

The Senior Warden discussed guidelines for meaningful discussion and engagement, the intention to make decisions in the best interest of the church, and leaving each meeting with unity of purpose.

Senior and Junior Warden Updates

The Senior Warden and Junior Warden provided summaries of their recent meetings with Staff and Clergy regarding the status of the ongoing transition and the concerns voiced by those constituencies.

The Senior Warden provided a brief history of the last two rector transitions, and lessons learned from those experiences.

Open Discussion: Factors that Attracted and Retain You at CSMSG

Themes: traditional liturgy, music, intellectual preaching/theological rigor, young families/youth program, friends/community.

Presentation: 2026 Strategic Plan & Survey (Steven Eisle)

Stephen Eisle, Chair of the 2025 Strategic Planning Committee reviewed the strategic planning process, the survey results, plan results and recommendations. The process commenced in June 2025 to refresh the prior strategic plan generated in 2019. Unlike the prior strategic plan, in 2025 we utilized a consultant (HolyCow Consulting) to conduct a more standardized survey and analyze the survey to capture our results against benchmarks for survey results across many churches.

Most of the programming priorities identified in the 2019 survey were addressed by initiatives flowing from that plan (e.g. permanent summer schedule, livestreaming, adult education improvements, new business director and practices, TSMSOC rebranding and focus). Accordingly, priorities have evolved to include reaching new people, forming meaningful relationships through small groups, attracting families with children, and hospitality. Respondents also favored expanding ministries to people on the margins/in need in the broader community.

The survey results were very high relative to benchmarks for music and worship, engagement in education, morale, and conflict management. The three lowest scores to benchmark were in governance, hospitality, and readiness for ministry.

A copy of the Strategic Plan document is posted on the CSMSG website, along with context associated with the process, executive summaries of survey and focus group findings, and HolyCow Consulting analysis (<https://www.csmmsg.org/2025-parish-survey-data>).

The Vestry later reviewed recommended initiatives flowing from the 2025 Strategic Plan based on identified priorities: Connection, Communication, Administration, Newcomers, Stewardship, and Leaning into Strengths. The initiative working groups will be filled by Vestry, parishioners, and parish staff. Preliminary timeframes have been proposed for each task item listed within the initiatives.

Presentation & Exercise: Organizational Change/OCL (Frankie Eichenberger)

The Junior Warden provided a presentation from the Our Community Listens framework regarding organizational change, how different constituencies respond to change, how and why change succeeds or fails, and how to increase the chances of successful change.

Other Transition Topics Raised by Vestry Members

A purse fund for Andrew is underway in accordance with the Episcopal tradition.

An oil painting of Andrew has been commissioned to hang in the Great Hall. Donors have fully covered the cost of the painting outside of the church operating budget.

There will be a cocktail party at St. Louis Club on Saturday April 11 to celebrate Andrew's tenure at CSMSG. The celebration will be open to the entire congregation.

Discussion of Interim Rector Decision

The Vestry commenced a robust discussion about the process for appointment of an Interim Rector to replace Rev. Archie given his recently announced intention to retire. The Vestry discussed several foundational traditions of the parish that are essential to be continued during the interim period, including use of traditional, Rite I liturgy and music, apolitical preaching, and inclusion all as reflected in the 2025 Strategic Plan and survey results.

The Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Missouri (dated as of November 13-15, 2025), Canon IV.12 states that the Vestry calls an Interim Rector with the advice and consent of the Bishop. It is customary within the Diocese that interim rectors are called and discerned by the parish vestry, subject to the advice and consent of the Bishop.

The Bishop has previously presented the Senior and Junior Wardens with a Diocese policy document that purports to interpret the Constitution and Canons. The Bishop has also proposed a candidate for Interim Rector.

A motion was made and seconded regarding selection of the Interim Rector for CSMSG:

RESOLVED: The Vestry of CSMSG will convene a transition committee to review and interview candidates for Interim Rector, including the candidate proposed by the Bishop, and propose the selection of a candidate for Interim Rector to the Vestry.

The motion passed unanimously.

A meeting has been scheduled for March 10 for the Senior and Junior Wardens to meet with the Bishop to discuss the Interim Rector resolution and path forward. 2025 Strategic Planning Committee Chair Steven Eisle will also attend to speak to the insights of the recently completed plan.

The Vestry next discussed the need to construct a candidate profile for the Interim Rector and discussed preferred characteristics for the Interim Rector.

A discussion ensued regarding appointment of individuals to the interim transition committee, subject to their willingness to serve. The following individuals were discussed for potential nomination to the interim transition committee:

- Patience Schock, Chair
- Cindy Heurmann
- Judah Hebisen
- Abram Van Engeman
- Stephen Eisle (Vestry)
- Bill Jenkins (Vestry)

There will be a virtual option Vestry meeting on Thursday, March 12 at 6:00 to report on the conversation with the Bishop.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Vestry discussed the continuing need to wear name tags at all services in which members are present. The Junior Warden will investigate ordering new, magnetic name tags for Vestry members.

Mr. Springer left the meeting.

The Vestry next discussed the need to develop a communication plan with the congregation regarding the various transition process items. A suggestion was made to have a rotating Vestry member give an approved status update on the process at each Sunday's service. Additional suggestions were made for a public timeline showing progress and next steps. The Communications strategic initiative team will own the communications plan.

The Clerk reminded the Vestry of the need to approve meeting minutes for November 2025 and all intervening meetings at the next regular Vestry meeting on March 26, 2026.

The Senior Warden thanked all assembled for the extensive effort and engagement.

The Vestry adjourned at 4:30 p.m. with the Lord's Prayer.

Reviewed and respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MA Aplington', written in a cursive style.

Matt Aplington, Clerk of the Vestry