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## Executive Summary – August 9, 2025 Council Retreat

### *Overview*

Council retreat began with several reflections on our time at St. Mark's; how this Council's composition represents the broader journey and experience of our congregation; and how God is moving to guide our actions. We had a centering devotion that set our focus on serving God by serving others, and we shared Holy Communion together. We revisited the 1999 Long Range Planning Report and acknowledged (often with humor) how many of the same themes persist over 25 years.

These reflections set the stage for a process improvement discussion. We uncovered common themes among successful board initiatives, and discussed specific projects or next steps that each board will commit to improving. Through collaborative discussion, Council agreed upon small, well-defined action items for each board to implement, with God's guidance. Council also discussed two strategic opportunities ahead: (1) the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and the discernment process for a potential capital campaign in late 2026/early 2027; and (2) succession planning for each Council member.

We closed the day with prayer, reflecting on how God's presence is all around us as we serve St. Mark's and the community.

### *Retreat Highlights*

#### 1. Council Member Best Practices & Growth Opportunities

- a. **Finance:** Review Treasurer reports prior to Council meetings; budget strategically to undertake the mission and outreach work we are called to do; review your budget vs. actuals monthly.
- b. **Board Operations:** Establish a regular agenda; use Board Storage to create a historical record and work more efficiently; communicate meeting dates and agendas to your board; communicate in between meetings.
- c. **Board Reports:** Use the board report template to summarize action items, highlights, and your 3-month look ahead. Your board agenda and report should work together, making this a streamlined process for your benefit and for record-keeping.
- d. **Collaborate with Staff:** Staff liaisons can provide historical context and help you develop a complete implementation plan. Clear communication is essential to define lay leadership responsibilities.
- e. **People Reach People:** We serve our congregation and our God by recognizing strengths in others. We can help people feel seen, and can make specific asks for their involvement at an event, project, or meeting where they can provide value.
- f. **Visibility:** Encourage and support fellow Council members to be visibly active in the congregation, especially in supporting activities across boards.

#### 2. Executive Council Action Items

- a. Align the Council and Budget year by finalizing the bylaw revision. Complete the process started by the 2024-2025 Council.
  - b. Drive succession planning for Council members to support 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year members.
  - c. Implement the 2026 budget process and execute December congregational meeting (Q3).
  - d. Continuing Resolutions: Establish a goal and schedule to update CRs across all boards. (Q4)
  - e. Discern the priorities and chairperson(s) for a capital campaign (Q1 2026)
  - f. Determine the ideal model for “captain” roles (altar guild, care teams, food ministries).
  - g. Revisit retreat action items quarterly to drive incremental improvement within operations.
- 3. Council Action Items**
- a. **Board of Administration:** Complete the Audit Process documentation by October. Appoint committee lead for key administrative functions/processes.
  - b. **Board of Property:** Complete exterior door painting, and establish a service call log.
  - c. **Board of Congregational Care:** Begin a conversation with Pastor about care teams.
  - d. **Board of Witness and Outreach:** Meet with staff liaison (Shelby) to outline the events for the next 6+ months, and the responsibilities for each event lead.
  - e. **Board of Learning:** Present an updated Youth Standards Policy for Council approval before the congregational meeting in December.
  - f. **Board of Worship:** Determine the first step to exploring a children’s music program, perhaps with an interest meeting for the congregation.