



Raise Your Head by Lauren Wright Pittman
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DISCERNING MINISTRY: *Calling out Church Leaders* January 2025

What is a ministry?

In the Episcopal Church, every baptized person is called to bear witness to Jesus Christ and carry out Christ's work in the world according to the gifts we have been given. That work is our ministry, and we are all ministers of Christ.

How do I know what God is calling me to do?

We come to know our ministries by seeking and discerning God's will in prayer, listening to our friends in faith, and taking steps in faith. Often, knowledge of God's call comes through others who affirm our gifts for ministry.

Are people "elected" to ministry?

Most ministries—at work, home, the Church, or elsewhere—are not formalized. The most important "election" is our choosing or "electing" to carry out our ministry. Within the Church, however, there are several ministry positions that are elected by the congregation, including **Senior Warden**, **Junior Warden**, **Vestry Members**, and **Delegates** to Deanery and Diocesan Convention.

What is the Vestry?

The Vestry of St. Mary's is made up of twelve church members who are elected to two-year terms by the congregation to serve as trustees. Each vestry member helps lead a specific ministry team, and the full vestry meets as a body once a month to make practical and legal decisions for the functioning of the church. In between scheduled meetings, Vestry Members work to support and build up our parish life.

Together, Vestry Members share the responsibility to:

- DISCERN God’s will for the congregation through prayer, study of Scripture, and conversation;
- EXERCISE LEADERSHIP in counsel with the Rector and staff;
- MOBILIZE RESOURCES to support those carrying out the Church’s various ministries; and
- REPRESENT the diversity of practice and opinion in the parish

What qualifications do Vestry members need?

Vestry Members should be firmly rooted in their own spiritual journey, committed to living out – with God’s help – their own baptismal promises. (See *BCP*, p. 301-305.) They should demonstrate leadership skills and respect for diversity and difference of opinion. In addition to these qualifications, to be elected to the Vestry of St. Mary’s, a person must:

- Be a baptized member;
- Be at least 16 years old;
- Have received Holy Communion at St. Mary’s at least three times in the prior year;
- Be regular and faithful in corporate worship and in working, praying, and giving for the spread of God’s kingdom.

This chart lists the Vestry positions and the rotation of current members.

If reading online, click on the bold names to go to a detailed position description.

Current Vestry Members and Vestry Position Rotations				
Position (Bold = electing this year)	Current Term Began February	Next Term Begins February	Position Currently Held By	Nominated for Reelection?
Senior Warden	2024	2026	Sandra DeHart- Mayor	<i>n/a</i>
<u>Junior Warden</u>	2023	2025	Brad Sewell	Not standing for reelection
<u>Adult Christian Formation</u>	2023	2025	Eric Backman	Term limited out/ not eligible

Caring Ministries	2024	2026	Maggie Wilkinson	n/a
Children's Christian Formation	2024	2026	Amy Gruber	n/a
Community-Building Ministries	2024	2026	Maggie McKay	n/a
<u>Early Childhood Ministries</u>	2023	2025	Tom Nighswander	Not standing for election
<u>Growth and Communications*</u>	2024	2025	Cole Barker	Standing for election to a full term
<u>Outreach Ministries</u>	2023	2025	Sara Stoops	Standing for reelection
Stewardship Development	2024	2026	Al Alvarez	n/a
Worship	2024	2026	Charlene Davis	n/a
<u>Youth Ministries</u>	2023	2025	Tracey Burke	Not standing for reelection

* Cole was appointed to fill a vacated seat; they are standing for election to a full term.

DUTIES AND TIME COMMITMENT: VESTRY MEMBERS

Each person has a unique style and brings unique gifts to leadership.

This is only a general outline of the duties of a vestry member.

- **Vestry Responsibilities-All Vestry Positions (About 10-13 hours/month)**
 - **General Responsibilities (About 6 hours/month)**
 - Help guide and oversee the financial, legal, and ministry work of the parish. Work on special projects or tasks in your area of ministry and share in the work of various Vestry subcommittees, such as Nominating Committee, Personnel Committee, etc. (1-2 hours/month)

- Prepare for Vestry meetings by reading and organizing materials and attend meetings of the Vestry, held on the second Monday of each month, traditionally from 6:30-9:00 P.M. *(2.5 hours/month)*
- Attend the Annual Vestry Retreat *(usually a Friday evening session and a daylong Saturday session, during early February or March)* and any special trainings or work sessions held throughout the year *(usually 2-3)*.
- Share your thoughts, hopes, and dreams as part of the spiritual and corporate leadership of our Church.
- Attend and support regular and special events in the life of St. Mary's, and be active and visible in the community's worship life.
- Be a leader in stewardship and in giving back in thankfulness to God from the time, talent, and treasure God has given you.
- Maintain an active prayer life or spiritual discipline of prayer, meditation, or Bible study and strive to grow in your relationship to God in Christ. Pray for those with whom you share ministry that God may use you as an instrument of grace, healing, and reconciliation.
- **Ministry-Area Specific Responsibilities** *(About 4-6 hours/month)*
 - **Identify and recruit people** who have the gifts and interests to support your team's ministries, including a co- or vice-chair for your team.
 - **Convene monthly meetings** on a regular scheduled basis to brainstorm, plan, coordinate, and carry out ministry in this area. *(1-2 hours/month)*
 - **Communicate with your team**, and provide them with training, encouragement and support to carry out their work. *(1-2 hours/month)*
 - **Report to the congregation** about the needs, joys, challenges, and successes of these ministries.
 - **Meet with the staff liaison** for your area of ministry. *(2-3 hours/month)*

Individual Vestry position descriptions start on page 6

DEANERY AND DIOCESAN DELEGATES

What are Deanery Representatives and Diocesan Delegates?

Our Deanery Representatives are also Diocesan Delegates and are elected to both positions simultaneously. This year, St. Mary's will elect at least four persons as Delegates. This is a one-year term, serving from February 2, 2025 to February 2, 2026.

Our Deanery is made up of the Episcopal churches of Southcentral Alaska. **Deanery Representatives** provide a vital link between St. Mary's and the other Episcopal churches of our area, and work to publicize and promote Deanery activities. Delegates from each congregation gather for an Annual Meeting each spring – this year, May 1-3 in Homer.

The Diocese, not the parish, is the basic unit of Episcopal Church life – no one parish can ever fully represent the richness of the Church. Each fall, parishes across the Diocese of Alaska send **Diocesan Delegates** to gather at Diocesan Convention. Together we take counsel for building up the Church, share in the breaking of bread, join in prayer and fellowship, set our diocesan budget for the upcoming year, and to share a common life and witness in this larger gathering of Christ's body. Delegates carry the story of St. Mary's to the convention and return to share with the congregation the story of our Diocese.

At our annual meeting, in addition to electing Delegates to the next Diocesan Convention, we also elect **Alternates** who will attend the convention should the elected Delegates become unable to attend. This is a one-year term, serving from February 2, 2025 to February 2, 2026.

I'm interested! How do I get started?

We're glad you asked! We need **YOU** to help discern who God may be calling to ministry in our congregation. Look around you. Who among us do you recognize as having the gifts and heart needed by the Church today? Is it you? Is it others as well?

- **PLACE NAMES** into consideration for nomination by forwarding them to Rev. Michael at Michael@Godsview.org, CCing Manager@Godsview.org. Nominations will not be accepted during the Annual Meeting on February 2 *except* for any positions that are still without candidates at that time.
- **IF NOMINATING YOURSELF**, complete the Candidate Information Sheet linked in your newsletter and on the Annual Meeting page at godsview.org, and email it to Michael@Godsview.org and the church office at Manager@Godsview.org.
- **FOR MORE INFORMATION** about this process or to provide feedback, please email the Rev. Michael at Michael@Godsview.org or call 563-3341.

Thank you for contributing to the life and mission of St. Mary's by discerning your choices! In your prayers this month, pray for our parish, the candidates for ministry, and the Church.

DETAILED VESTRY POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

MINISTRY LEADERSHIP POSITION DESCRIPTION: JUNIOR WARDEN

The primary focus of this area of ministry is the maintenance and safekeeping of Church property, and consideration of present and future needs of the congregation that may be met by the Church property.

- **Junior Warden-Specific Responsibilities (About 8 hours/month)**
 - Organize, and recruit where needed, a Facilities Team, to advise and help with the work of the Junior Warden.
 - Along with the ministry team, oversee the operations and maintenance of facilities and equipment, schedule and meet with subcontractors, review bids, organize work teams, and plan for any needed future renovations and modernization.
- **Vestry Responsibilities:** See above; about 10-13 hours/month

MINISTRY LEADERSHIP POSITION DESCRIPTION: ADULT CHRISTIAN FORMATION

The Adult Christian Formation Ministries team focuses on the ongoing Christian formation of adults through education and other participatory events.

- **Adult Christian Formation-Specific Responsibilities (4-6 hours/month)**
 - Along with the ministry team,
 - plan and promote the programs and events for adult Christian formation, including regularly occurring programs (Sunday morning forum, Bible Workbench, educational offerings, etc.), seasonal offerings, and small groups;
 - provide support, encouragement, and resources for the development and maintenance of various adult Christian formation programs and events;
 - recruit facilitators, set up classrooms, arrange audio/visual equip, and provide signage for Sunday morning classes, to direct parishioners to the right location and advertise and promote the day's classes. Take down after classes and secure equipment.
- **Vestry Responsibilities:** See above; about 10-13 hours/month

MINISTRY LEADERSHIP POSITION DESCRIPTION: EARLY CHILDHOOD MINISTRIES

This area of ministry focuses on teaching and sharing the love of God in Christ to, with, and for preschool-aged children. It has as its foundational mission statement the Children's Charter for the Church¹. We work to include preschool-aged children in all aspects of parish life, worship, and ministry.

- **Early Childhood-Specific Responsibilities (2-4 hours/month)**
 - Participate in planning and carrying out various ministries, including:
 - Sunday School and Nursery programs,
 - Christmas and other seasonal pageants or programs,
 - Little Seedlings (parents of newborns or toddlers groups), and
 - Other ministries as they arise.
- **Vestry Responsibilities:** See above; about 10-13 hours/month

MINISTRY LEADERSHIP POSITION DESCRIPTION: GROWTH + COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRIES

The Growth and Communications Ministries team aims to create ongoing church growth through programs of invitation and welcome, celebrating the gifts and inclusion of newcomers. To that end, we coordinate internal and external communications focused on newcomers to increase pathways toward becoming a part of St. Mary's and to create a more intentional presence in the broader community as a progressive and welcoming church.

- **Growth and Communications-Specific Responsibilities (2-4 hours/month)**

Along with the ministry team,

 - Craft St. Mary's message to emphasize the unique ways that we understand the Gospel and its application to 21st-century North American life.
 - Develop and implement a welcome program to fully connect with new members and visitors.
 - Work with other established committees at St. Mary's, including Outreach, Adult Christian Formation, and Community-Building to help and support newcomer folks in finding their way at St. Mary's.

Vestry Responsibilities: See above; about 10-13 hours/month

¹ [Children's Charter for the Church - The Episcopal Church](#)

MINISTRY LEADERSHIP POSITION DESCRIPTION: OUTREACH MINISTRIES

Outreach Ministries focuses on leading St. Mary's in serving the needs of the community, state, and world through activities and events in which we share of ourselves in Christ's name. Outreaching ministry changes the giver as much as (or more than) it changes the recipient of the gift. This ministry group helps support outreach ministries such as providing food and/or meals various local organizations, outreach to homeless persons, support for Millennium Development Goals, and distribution of outreach grant money from St. Mary's.

- **Outreach-Specific Responsibilities (2-4 hours/month)**
 - Help develop and participate in outreach events and activities
 - Coordinate one meeting a month of leaders of various outreach ministries, such as Clare House Meal Team, FISH support, AFACT, homelessness ministry team, LGBTQA+ ministries, Malawi ministries, and support their team efforts.
 - Oversee the Mission Outreach funding application and review process once per year and help decide how best to leverage and utilize our outreach funds.
 - Participate in Long Range Planning about future ministries of St. Mary's.
- **Vestry Responsibilities:** See above; about 10-13 hours/month

MINISTRY LEADERSHIP POSITION DESCRIPTION: YOUTH MINISTRIES

Youth Ministries work with, and for, Junior and Senior High School students to deepen their experience and understanding of the Gospel, themselves, and the world through study, community-building, and service.

- **Youth-Specific Responsibilities (2-4 hours/month)**
 - Recruit and organize a Youth Ministries Team to help plan and support ministries to and with youth and their parents or caregivers.
 - Attend Youth special functions and events and establish a working relationship with our Youth members and their parents, where appropriate.
 - Support the ministry of Jesus Java.

Vestry Responsibilities: See above; about 10-13 hours/month