



Raise Your Head by Lauren Wright Pittman
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DISCERNING MINISTRY: *Calling out Church Leaders* January 2024

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 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	Up for Reelection?
<u>Senior Warden</u>	2024	2026	Sandra DeHart-Mayor	Standing for reelection
Junior Warden	2025	2027	Thad Hunter	First term
Adult Christian Formation	2025	2027	Bobby Jeffs	First term
<u>Caring Ministries</u>	2024	2026	Maggie Wilkinson	Not eligible for reelection
<u>Children's Christian Formation*</u>	2024	2026	Amy Gruber	Standing for reelection
<u>Community-Building Ministries</u>	2024	2026	Maggie McKay	Not eligible for reelection
Early Childhood Ministries	2025	2027	Michelle Bertrand	First term
<u>Growth and Communications</u>	2025	2027	Vacant	Electing to complete a term
Outreach Ministries	2025	2027	Sara Stoops	Second term

<u>Stewardship Development*</u>	2024	2026	Al Alvarez	Not eligible for reelection
<u>Worship*</u>	2024	2026	Rilene Ann	Standing for election to full term
Youth Ministries	2025	2027	Kristina Reza	First term

* Rilene was appointed to fill a vacated seat;
she is 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.

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- **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 7

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 1, 2026 to January 31, 2027.

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.

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 1, 2026 to January 31, 2027.

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 the Rev. Michael at Michael@Godsview.org, CCing Manager@Godsview.org. Nominations will be accepted during the Annual Meeting on February 4 *only* 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: SENIOR WARDEN

The position of Senior Warden is unique in that, by our bylaws, "the Rector shall nominate one or more candidates for the position of Senior Warden to stand for election at the annual meeting." Other Vestry Members may self-nominate or be nominated by a Nominating Committee. The Senior Warden is the primary elected lay leader of the congregations and serves as a principal liaison between the parish and the Rector and as a leader to the Vestry.

The Vestry may be considered the committee convened by the Senior Warden that "supports the assigned ministry area."

- **Senior Warden-Specific Responsibilities (2-4 hours/month)**
 - Establish and oversee subcommittees or working groups tasked with Insurance and Risk Management, Budget and Finance, Long Range Planning, Planned Giving, and Personnel. *(1 hour/month)*
 - Hear and honor the desires and concerns of the congregation, and, when appropriate, bring them to the Vestry for discussion or action.

- Help guide and oversee the financial, legal, and ministry work of the parish. Work on special projects or tasks and share in the work of various Vestry subcommittees, as needed. *(1-2 hours/month)*
- Share your thoughts, hopes, and dreams with the congregation, as part of the spiritual leadership of our church.
- Provide feedback, encouragement, backup, and support for the Rector in the complex task of life and leadership in the Church, family, and community.
- Ensure that the Clergy and Rector are adequately compensated for their work, in accordance with comparable standards in Dioceses of The Episcopal Church, and educate the Vestry and Church membership as needed in the mutual responsibilities of care for their caregivers in ordained and paid lay ministry.
- In the unlikely absence or disability of the Rector, the reins of leadership of the Church canonically fall to the Senior Warden.
- **Vestry Responsibilities** *(See page 3; about 10-13 hours/month)*

MINISTRY LEADERSHIP POSITION DESCRIPTION: CARING MINISTRIES

This area of ministry, formerly Pastoral Care, focuses on helping the congregation truly become “a ministering community,” not simply a “community gathered around a minister.” Its goal is to help and support the congregation in caring for one another in Christ’s name.

- **Caring Ministry-Specific Responsibilities** *(4-6 hours/month)*
 - Coordinate fall and spring workshops. Select topic, coordinate training, attend, conduct evaluation, and report findings to Vestry and Caring Ministries Team
 - Assist team leads for the following ministries:
 - **Calling Ministry** connects with parishioners near and far by phone
 - **Eucharistic Visitors** take Holy Communion to homes or hospitals
 - **The Prayer Chain** prays for those in need
 - **Loving Support** provides meals or other assistance for those homebound, newly bereaved, or needing support due to pregnancy, accident, etc.
 - **Dreamers** practice dream interpretation for health and wholeness
- **Vestry Responsibilities** *(See page 3; about 10-13 hours/month)*

MINISTRY LEADERSHIP POSITION DESCRIPTION:

CHILDREN'S CHRISTIAN FORMATION

This area of ministry's foundational mission statement is the Children's Charter for the Church. We live this out by working to include children in all aspects of parish life, worship, and ministry, and in various programs which teach and share the love of God in Christ Jesus.

This ministry was formerly known as "Children's Ministries."

- **Children's Formation-Specific Responsibilities (6-8 hours/month)**
 - Sunday School for grade-school children (Kindergarten-6th Grade)
 - Summer "pull out" program during service
 - Christmas and other seasonal activities, pageants, or programs.
 - Children serving as acolytes, readers, Eucharistic Ministers, etc.
 - Children's activities
 - Children's music programs
- **Vestry Responsibilities (See page 3; about 10-13 hours/month)**

MINISTRY LEADERSHIP POSITION DESCRIPTION: COMMUNITY-BUILDING MINISTRIES

The focus of this area of ministry is to create and carry out events and programs that help the people of St. Mary's, newcomers and longtime members alike, to become better acquainted and to share their lives of faith.

- **Community-Building Specific Responsibilities (4-6 hours/month)**
 - Along with the ministry team, plan and carry out ~8 special events per year.
These may include:
 - St. Patrick's Day
 - Maundy Thursday
 - Church Picnic
 - Annual Meeting
 - Christmas Party
 - Explore other community-building activities, particularly outings, that are widely inclusive of a variety of ages, abilities, and interests.
- **Vestry Responsibilities (See page 3; 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.

MINISTRY LEADERSHIP POSITION DESCRIPTION: STEWARDSHIP DEVELOPMENT

This area of ministry focuses on building up a strong year-long program of Stewardship Education, emphasizing joyous giving to God from all that God has given us and growing grateful hearts among its leadership and among the people of St. Mary's.

- **Stewardship-Specific Responsibilities (4-6 hours/month)**

- Encourage and model stewardship through
 - Personal testimony and example
 - Ongoing education, special classes and trainings
 - Soliciting newsletter articles on stewardship from parishioners
 - Special events
- Oversee and organize the annual pledge drive
- Coordinate Stewardship mail-outs and the pledge ingathering.

- **Vestry Responsibilities (See page 3; about 10-13 hours/month)**

MINISTRY LEADERSHIP POSITION DESCRIPTION: WORSHIP

Worship ministry encourages, develops, and supports vital and varied worship services, involving as many people as possible in offering their gifts to the praise and glory of God.

- **Worship-Specific Responsibilities** (4-6 hours/month)
 - Support the ministry of the Rector, who has canonical responsibility for all worship oversight.
 - Plan and implement ongoing liturgical education about our traditions and their living meaning for us today.
 - Develop Worship task forces to help plan liturgical services or seasons.
 - Oversee and support development of liturgical additions or improvements
 - Work with music leaders as they plan for services and liturgical seasons
 - Plan special services, e.g. All Saints Day, Instructed Eucharists, Blessing of Animals, services of Lessons and Carols, and Holy Week services.
 - Solicit newsletter articles from parishioners on liturgy and worship.
 - Support the ministries of clergy, acolytes, musicians, readers, ushers, altar guild, and other worship leaders.
- **Vestry Responsibilities** (See page 3; about 10-13 hours/month)