

St. James' Anglican Church

"Building our Future"

A Strategic Plan for the Parish

Introduction:

In 2009, Bishop Terry Dance preached in the nave of the church; he spoke of a church in transition and declaimed: "The church of today is not the church of our parents and grandparents!" In many respects it was a call to action, a call that our parish has responded to by undertaking to develop a plan to aid us to make the transition Bishop Terry spoke about.

We have called this process "Building our Future" for it takes as the foundation of the plan our Anglican traditions of liturgy, community, worship and governance and constructs a plan to create a church and parish focused on the faith and ministry needs of the 21st century. The Chinese saying "May you live in interesting times" is one that has resonance in 2010. There is no doubt that our Anglican Church is working through a seismic shift in its history, one that could be as profound as our beginnings 500 years ago. The St. James' plan looks forward 3 years and can be considered as the first steps on our own unique transformation. "*Glory to God, whose power working in us can do more than we can infinitely imagine!*"

The Planning Process:

The Parish Council struck a Planning Committee in May 2010. (Committee members are listed in Appendix A) The committee commenced its work by reviewing all documentation and work done since 2008 (see Appendix B). There followed development of a vision statement, the St. James' "Marks of Mission", goals for each mission and action steps for the goals. Reports were made back to the congregation asking for reactions and suggestions. When requested, personal visits for one on one conversations were made by the Chair. The plan that follows is a living document, not fixed in stone, but providing a framework that allows for flexibility and responsiveness to changing circumstances.

Implementation:

The responsibility for implementing the strategic plan rests with the Parish Council. That does not mean, however, that the Council members will be the ones who carry out the actions outlined. If the work envisioned is to happen, it requires that every member of the parish be involved to the degree that they are able. To facilitate implementation, the Committee recommends a Planning Implementation Committee be struck to coordinate the work and report back to Council.

To this end, the Committee recommends that the Council have a permanent agenda item for its monthly meetings. The PIC Chair should become a permanent member of Council. A further responsibility will be to report to Vestry at the annual meeting.

As part of the budget process, Council should review the plan every fall and develop its action steps for the upcoming year. These in turn should be incorporated into the PIC report that goes to Vestry, with a request for Vestry approval to proceed with the proposed steps. As part of its monitoring function, we suggest that the PIC develop an annual Gantt chart to track the timing of the action steps

Those charged with the responsibility of chairing various committees and groups must be given terms of reference and then the authority to carry out the mandate as they best see fit. They in turn will be accountable to the Parish Council through the PIC. Authority and accountability lines must be clear to the Corporation, the Council, the staff and the lay ministers doing the work.

The Vision:

*St. James' Anglican Church...
exploring, sharing and celebrating God's love in the community
in word and deed.*

What are the principles underpinning the vision?

1. A focus on ministry that goes outside our walls to the wider community, both faith and secular.
2. A recognition that faith and spiritual journeys are not fixed; acknowledgement of doubts can be accepted, questions can be asked and answers explored openly.
3. Worship is a glorious expression of our joy in where we are as people of God, and we want to share that joy with others.
4. Following the teachings of St. James, we combine our spirituality with action. Faith works.
5. As Anglicans, the word of God as contained in scripture is important. The illumination of that word through the words of a homily or instruction is important. Both the words we speak, and how we speak them, to one another and to those we seek to touch will define us as a community that cares and nurtures.

What is the realization of the vision?

In 2014, if a visitor asks a Stratford resident where is a good church in the city, without hesitation the answer will be St. James! When asked why, our citizen will say: because you will be welcomed with genuine happiness and excitement that you have come; because the worship you will share in will bring you peace and joy and you will leave the church feeling that you have connected with God in a deep way; because you will be excited by the energy of the congregation and you will want to stick around and be part of their programs; because someone will invite you to join a group that is asking the tough questions about faith and you realize you are not alone in your wonderings; because you find out, like me, that St. James' is involved in our community's social issues like no other. And, oh yeah, my kids and their friends jam up there every Friday after school, and even play at services sometimes.

The Marks of Mission:

1. ***to declare to yourself and others that in all of life, in every minute of every day, we are all truly supported by our Lord Jesus Christ.***

This mission is a call to be intentional in our Christian life, pro active if you will, by first living our lives following the teachings of Jesus and the apostles as given to us in scripture. Next, by sharing our experiences and beliefs through the example of our actions. We recall the words of Richard of Chichester:

Day by day, dear Lord, three things of thee I pray: to see thee more clearly, follow thee more nearly, love thee more dearly.

This mission also reflects our belief that many seek spiritual nourishment and that we as parishioners are, through our own personal journeys, able to help seekers to begin their journey.

GOAL	2011	2012	2013
to seek new ways to bring God's love to the community through developing relationships in the community and eliminating the boundaries between us	through our personal example of words & action encourage a culture of acceptance & loving kindness - tool: Worship Culture Pack	Continue seek out and/or create opportunities/activities to develop relationships with the community	Continue
to encourage personal spirituality	conduct Christian education programs in fall and Lent invite the wider community to our programs	conduct Christian education programs in fall and Lent invite the wider community to our programs	conduct Christian education programs in fall and Lent invite the wider community to our programs
to initiate dialogue and shared ministry with the faith community	organize a Wardens/Clergy meeting of the 3 Anglican parishes to explore common issues and areas of cooperation continue existing shared programs/activities	2nd annual Wardens/Clergy meeting of the 3 parishes review these programs for effectiveness develop interdenominational sport initiatives	3rd annual Wardens/Clergy meeting of the 3 parishes develop interdenominational cultural activities
to offer creative opportunities to worship God in body, mind and spirit	maintain our choral tradition as exemplified in Evensong services, Lessons and Carols	initiate a "Christian Worship Week, a showcase of different styles of worship music	offer variations of worship at different times of the day and week: e.g. Taize, jazz vespers, Christian rock, gospel

2. to nurture seekers and ourselves to grow in faith

A consistent theme that resonated through the congregational responses in the parish survey and the SWOT meetings was the yearning for a deeper spiritual life, not only for themselves but for those who are not part of our parish family. With this mission, we recognize that despite the pressures of the secular world in which we live, many are looking for a way to deeper belief and meaning. By nourishing ourselves, we become ready to nourish others.

GOAL	2011	2012	2013
to design and implement a membership process for welcoming new parishioners, mentoring and looking after all parishioners	reconstitute the Membership Committee with new terms of reference; prepare process & get approved by Council; provide training for sidespeople, lay readers & Eucharistic Assistants	introduce new ways of recognizing parishioners' gifts; develop & implement training program for mentors; annual training for lay ministers	build on work of previous 2 years, enhancing with improvements & new programs annual training for lay ministers
to create opportunities for spiritual development & spiritual service, helping individuals discover where their personal ministry lies	support & promote current contemplative ministry initiatives;	support & promote current contemplative ministry initiatives; research, develop, promote opportunities in workshops, Christian education, conferences, small groups, on line courses	support & promote current contemplative ministry initiatives
to bring to all parishioners a greater awareness of the dynamic life of the parish	use communication paths such as telephone trees, social media, Internet to get the message out	review communication efforts and amend as needed	continuous review of communications for effectiveness
to create programs for children and youth that bring our young people into a closer relationship with God and into fellowship with fellow parishioners	work with our young people to establish a praise band; review church school curriculum for effectiveness & make changes as necessary	develop a process to promote church school to the wider community; institute a dynamic youth activity program to operate off Sundays	Review all programs for effectiveness & efficiency and propose changes as needed
to help parishioners & new members come to a better understanding of the Anglican Church of Canada, our liturgy & our parish	provide educational moments via the Parishioner and Internet, instructive Eucharists, homilies	host an Open House which will focus on the key principles of faith & liturgy	

3 *to respond to human need with service, care and love*

This mission recognizes our legacy from our patron saint, James, who exhorts us to put out our faith to work by following the teachings of Christ to help those in need. Furthermore, we do these deeds without judgement or expectation of return. The goals encompass the work we do within the parish and what we do in the wider communities of our city and the world. The third goal is an acknowledgement of the time constraints on families and the changing nature of volunteerism.

GOAL	2011	2012	2013
to ensure effective pastoral care	create a pastoral care committee (terms of reference to be set by the Council); prepare a report on small group (cell) ministry	review mandate of committee; add pastoral services as determined; implement small group ministry	create a parish health committee; review small group ministry program with intent of expanding
to support and strengthen our current outreach efforts, both locally & nationally/internationally	continue current outreach programs as determined by the Outreach Committee; proceed with the emerging relationship with First Nations	continue current/implement new outreach programs as determined by the Outreach Committee organize parish trip to the Diocese of the North	continue current/implement new outreach programs as determined by the Outreach Committee
to assist parishioners, particularly young family households, to identify opportunities for service	create a posting board (bulletin board & online) to highlight activities particularly relevant to young families and invite family participation	create a small group ministry for young family households; resume the Opportunity Fair	

4. *to seek to right the wrongs of society*

This mission calls on us to be proactive in dealing with the social issues in our own community, and to recognize and act on the injustices we see in the world beyond our city. Our Outreach Committee is already at work on the goals established for this mission statement. Indeed, support for the Outreach Committee's activities was very strongly articulated by respondents in the survey and at the SWOT meetings.

GOAL	2011	2012	2013
to create awareness of issues both in our parish and our community	facilitate congregational access to the Anglican Journal online & the Diocesan Social Justice web site; produce displays & fact sheets	organize speakers, presentations & workshops as needed; produce displays & fact sheets	organize speakers, presentations & workshops as needed; produce displays & fact sheets

GOAL	2011	2012	2013
to initiate debate & facilitate action	partner with community groups & other churches on local social justice action (e.g. Stratford's Food Security Group)	consult with the City's Social Services Department for areas of need & develop programs to address	implement services identified in previous years
to speak out on social issues as a congregation, & to encourage people to speak out as individuals	prepare letters to & organize meetings with our MP, MPP, Mayor for the congregation	organize advocacy training	

5. to safeguard the treasures of the earth for new life

A Benedictine prayer says: O glorious God, your whole creation sings your marvellous work; may heaven's praise so echo in our hearts that we may be good stewards of the earth. And so may we be in our parish as this mission calls us to take our stewardship to a new level.

GOAL	2011	2012	2013
to establish "green goals" as per the Diocesan Environmental Committee	review & update WMHIS policies & procedures (Immediate need); strike an Environmental Committee & prepare terms of reference for approval by Council; for the information of the parish, prepare an inventory of enviro action to date	set goals & present to the parish; begin implementation	prepare the parish to apply for a Green Award from the Diocese
to speak out on environment issues & advocate for the good care of creation		organize information forums; prepare advocacy statements	

6. to build St. James' to be a strong, dynamic and responsive church

If the foundation for our spiritual growth and mission is our Anglican tradition, our St. James' building provides the foundation for the work we do. This mission encompasses goals that deal with the physical plant and what is required in terms of the organizational support systems in order to realize our vision.

The reconstitution of the Membership Committee, identified above, is also an important factor in the analysis of the parish organizational needs as an accurate, always up to date membership list is crucial to their efforts.

GOAL	2011	2012	2013
to review and amend the parish's organization map	strike a team of parishioners & provide terms of reference; prepare report with recommendations for Council (mid year)	continue with implementation of recommendations	review parish map for effectiveness and efficiency
to develop a financial accountability model which will result in the parish having a balanced budget annually	the Financial Review Committee to monitor expenditures, assist with identifying revenue streams & work with the Treasurer to set the budget; ensure committee heads, staff are trained in the financial procedures for committing/spending funds (post 2011 Vestry) formalize in writing policies & procedures regarding accounts, record keeping & disbursements	FRC to ensure policies & procedures are carried through; provide training where necessary	FRC to ensure policies & procedures are carried through; provide training where necessary
to reconvene the Stewardship Committee	establish new terms of reference; recruit a Chair	develop & introduce a new model for Stewardship work with the capital campaign	complete implementation of the stewardship program
to create an internal communication & accountability model	update & maintain an accurate database of parishioners & parishioner activities	reactivate the Safe Church program, with the first step being an inventory of what is currently available in the office	

GOAL	2011	2012	2013
to maintain for the use of future generations the fabric of the buildings & property	the Capital Campaign team to develop the campaign to raise Council identified target; investigate fund raising software a& potential in Powerchurch; ensure that maintenance of God's Holy Acre is sustained in perpetuity	continue campaign; ensure that maintenance of God's Holy Acre is sustained in perpetuity; take measures to ensure compliance with all legal (& more) accessibility requirements	continue campaign; ensure that maintenance of God's Holy Acre is sustained in perpetuity

Recommendations:

- that the Parish Council release the strategic plan to the vestry for comment and the Strategic Planning Committee review and respond to all comments
- that the strategic plan be presented to 2011 Vestry for formal adoption
- that the Parish Council strike a Planning Implementation Committee as soon as possible
- that the first task of the Planning Implementation Committee be to set out the scope of its work
- that the Planning Implementation Committee use a time line such as a Gantt chart to plan out activities for the coming year and to use as a monitoring tool
- that the PIC be empowered to set performance measures for action steps in consultation with appropriate committee chairs/heads of groups
- that the Council be updated monthly on the implementation plan
- that the PIC and the Capital Campaign work together and establish a strong communication link
- that in 2011 the 3 implementation priorities of Council should be: organizational review and restructuring; membership services; communication processes

Going Forward:

“As followers of Jesus we are called, just as the early disciples were, to go with him on His mission, and more than that, we are called to continue His mission in the world on His behalf. But no one of us does it alone. We do it as a church, as a community of people who share in the one Holy Spirit. [We are reminded by Tim Dearborn that] it is not the Church of God that has a mission in the world, but the God of mission that has a church in the world.”* This plan is mission centred, a plan that takes its foundation from scripture and builds the kingdom of God in ourselves and our community.

In embracing the strategic plan, the parish of St. James' takes up the call of Jesus to be in and of our community, exploring, sharing and celebrating God's love in word and deed.

* excerpted from a homily given by the Rev'd Tom Patterson, June 27 2010