

STRATEGIC PLAN

St. John in the Wilderness Episcopal Church

Approved by the Vestry on June 13, 2006

We, the Members of the Vestry, wish to credit the hard work and dedication of the members of our Advisory Committee for the following revision of our strategic plan. Your thoughtful approach to Church growth has resulted in a valuable tool to guide us in our work through 2007. Our sincere thanks for a job well done!

Members included: Amy Hawley, Chair, Will McBride, Judy Kroesch, James Anthony, Gayle Kasmani, Janet Waller, Max Stevenson, Krista Sullivan, Joanna Torgerson, Nancy Jagusch, Tim Hammond, Vestry Representative, Therese Branby, Senior Warden-Advisory

INTRODUCTION

The goal of the Advisory Committee to the Vestry was to develop a strategic plan for the next 18 months that would guide this faith community's growth and transition from a pastoral to program church. This plan, along with an appendix containing detailed discussion information on each focus area, was accepted in its' entirety.

COMMUNICATION

STRATEGY: To develop and implement methods to connect the various parts (clergy and staff, lay leadership, committees, members, and the community) of our church effectively with one another so that all the activities and programs of St. John's are well coordinated toward fulfilling our mission to the greater glory of God.

Define and support the rector's role in a program church and educate the parish.

Key Measure: Meet planned new pledge goal.

Develop a communications plan to educate and integrate new members into the parish community.

Key Measure: Achieve a 10% Ratio of new member joiners to total ministry joiners.

Restructure communications between the many working committees and between working committees and church leaders.

Key Measure: Evidence that committees are working together to achieve common goals.

Better integrate St. John's into the surrounding community.

Key Measure: St. John's is invited to participate in two community activities by the city or other churches by 1/1/08.

NEWCOMERS AND LAITY

STRATEGY: To develop a program to integrate new members into St. John's.

Expand new member orientation.

Key Measure: Ratio of joiners to visitors.

Formalize the membership process.

Key Measure: Ratio of joiners to visitors.

Expand adult education offerings to suit differing needs of parishioners.

Key Measure: Successful implementation of the SHAPE program.

Improve hospitality.

Key Measure: Number of persons at coffee hour.

Expand and improve ministry offerings

Key Measure: Viability/membership and activity level.

SPACE

STRATEGY: Enable St. John in the Wilderness to meet the needs of a growing congregation, to pinpoint the church as a central figure in the larger White Bear area community, and to allow for a stronger and more diversified future by effectively using our space consistent with the goals of a program church

Reconfigure our existing space.

Key Measure: Development of design blueprints by 1/1/07

Update what we have.

Key Measure: Form a list of targeted improvements by 1/1/07

Plan for future expansion.

Key Measure: Build a plan showing projected congregation size, meeting space

Requirements and building utilization by 12/31/07

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

STRATEGY: Provide a structured environment for growth and continuity so that we can easily assimilate staff members and all church members. The structure should enable ease of transition, enhance the flow of information, and avoid duplication of effort.

Analyze and identify the various functions of St. John's.

Key Measure: Achievement of policy and procedure checklist items by a set time.

Examine the goals/best use of resources with regard to each component.

Key Measure: Achievement of policy and procedure checklist items by a set time.

Determine needs of each component.

Key Measure: Achievement of policy and procedure checklist items by a set time.

Review in what ways the needs of each component overlap or conflict.

Key Measure: Achievement of policy and procedure checklist items by a set time.

Prioritize and institute needs on a workable schedule.

Key Measure: Achievement of policy and procedure checklist items by a set time.

Implementation Plan for Strategic Plan Detailed Action Plans and Measurements

COMMUNICATION

STRATEGY

Develop and implement methods to connect the various parts (clergy and staff, lay leadership, committees, members, and the community) of our church effectively with one another so that all the activities and programs of St. John's are well coordinated toward fulfilling our mission to the greater glory of God.

1. Define and support the rector's role in a program church and educate the parish.

Actions:

- Develop a focus group that defines, outlines and enrolls the parish on the rector, lay leadership structure and expectations for St. John's.
- Develop a communication plan to clearly inform on prospective changes.
- Complete review of MMR annually.

Measures:

- Reduce the rector's involvement in working committees by 50%
- Transition the responsibility for creating and the ongoing operations of committees from the rector to lay leaders by 1/1/08.
- MMR completed annually and actions identified and completed.

2. Develop a communication plan to educate and integrate new members into the parish community.

Actions:

- Implement the Ministry Coordinator position
- Develop a means of capturing members' skills and passions and linking up with the needs of the various ministries
- Assign mentors to help new members integrate (e.g., go to the same service, take to coffee, be with them at fellowship events, talk about ministries and volunteer opportunities)

Measures:

- Twenty new members or involved in a committee at St. John's by 1/1/08
- Twenty-five members or matched to ministries by 1/1/08.
- Ministry Coordinator in place by 1/1/07.
- 10% Ratio of new member joiners to total ministry joiners.

3. Restructure communications between the many working committees and between working committees and church leaders.

Action

- Restructure the Ministry Forum to become a clearing house for committee communication and a means for resolving conflicts
 - a. Vestry representation at meetings.
 - b. Devise a database of committees, members, resources, activities, schedules and format for ready access
 - c. Utilize master calendar for scheduling church activities (paper and on-line)
 - d. Set standards around creating a committee and informing the church
 - e. Integrate committee meeting times and major activity schedules into the annual planning process
 - f. Implement standardized minutes for working committees
- Have group examine and recommend all possible communication avenues for effective communication. The Voice, The Small Voice, Website, Verbal, etc.

Measures:

- Increase participation in the Ministry Forum by 50%
- Evidence that committees are working together to achieve common goals
- General understanding of what the church is doing and little sense of discord or fragmentation

4. Better integrate St John's into the surrounding community.

Actions:

- Improve first line of communication (voice mail system and parish administrator's information bank)
- Establish communications with key civic and community leaders
- Identify and implement two opportunities to serve the greater community by 2008.
- Make better use of available media sources including newspapers, local publications, television, and signage (more consistent press coverage)
- Become by doing a center of attention and activity in the community (e.g., a polling place, space resource for community education, sponsor programs and speakers of interest to the greater community)

Measures:

- Three community activities that take place at the church or on behalf of the church by 1/1/08
- Two activities involving or benefiting the larger community by 1/1/08
- St. John's is invited to participate in two community activities by the city or other churches by 1/1/08.

NEWCOMERS AND LAITY

STRATEGY: To develop a program to integrate new members into St. John's

1. Expand new member orientation.

Actions:

- Luncheon – assess number per year
- Episcopal 101 / Inquirers Course
- Assign “buddies/mentors” to each new family unit to help guide, act as a resource

Measures:

- Orientation classes attendance numbers
- 1 year follow up survey to determine how we did.
- Numbers – how many joined
- Orientation classes attendance numbers

2. Formalize the membership process.

Actions:

- Process steps, timing
- Communication of responsibilities/benefits of church membership

Measures:

- Orientation classes attendance numbers
- 1 year follow up survey to determine how we did.
- Numbers – how many joined
- Orientation classes attendance numbers

3. Expand adult education offerings to suit differing needs of parishioners.

Actions:

- More choices/ “tracks”
- Vary length/timing of sessions – to suit differing needs of parishioners
- SHAPE program – for newcomers, for existing members

Measures:

- Number of different offerings in a calendar or school year
- Attendance levels
- # individuals who have completed SHAPE program

4. Improve hospitality.

Actions:

- Greeter ministry
- Welcoming announcement at start of each service
- Signage improvements

Measures:

- Survey new and existing members
- Attendance at services
- Measure integration of verbal welcome/announcements at services

5. Expand and improve ministry offerings

Actions:

- Social Groups
- Service Focused Groups
- House Groups (spiritual/support focus)
- Singles Groups
- Church-wide Fellowship events
- Elderly assistance

Measures:

- # of groups
- Viability/membership and activity level
- Resource to lay leaders

SPACE

STRATEGY

Enable St. John in the Wilderness to meet the needs of a growing congregation, to pinpoint the church as a central figure in the larger White Bear area community, and to allow for a stronger and more diversified future by effectively using our space consistent with the goals of a program church

1. Reconfigure our existing space.

Actions:

- Evaluate who is meeting on the same day/time and needs meeting space rooms. Determine if additional parlors or more smaller meeting areas are needed, keeping in mind the “hominess” appeal of meeting spaces by keeping some semblance of design throughout a room. Consider how lighting is handled during different times of the day and evening.
- Plan for usable storage, perhaps making better use of the church basement. Think of access to storage areas from both inside and outside of the building.
- Make use of our property as a way of bringing the church to the attention of others in the community by hosting speakers, festivals, or concerts. Make use of a “multimedia” room to help host such events.
- Regard the church property in its entirety as being a multiuse space. For example, temporarily relocate meeting, worship, and administration areas while undergoing a permanent reconfiguration effort.

Key Measure:

- Development of design blueprints

2. Update what we have.

Actions:

Codes and accessibility

- Obtain floor plans of the church.
- Seek advice from a building inspector on current building and safety codes need to be met.
- Consult with an architect specializing in church buildings to help us evaluate our options.
- Investigate smart energy techniques and environmental controls.
- Promote ownership of energy conservation. Organize a “winterization committee”, for example, to ensure that window treatments are in good shape.
- Invite people with effective signage towards education, fellowship times, or suitable accessibility parking and entrances.

Security

- Inhibit and enable different security zones depending on usage. For example, restricting elevator usage to only certain floors..
- Reconfigure restrooms, offices, and meeting spaces to fit in with security

zones.

Key Measure:

- Form a list of targeted improvements

3. Plan for future expansion.

Actions:

- Evaluate the number of cars parked for attendance for typical services. Compare this with data of the working maximum capacity of our worship space, usually thought of as 80% of filled seats.
- Evaluate the number of cars who turn away for lack of suitable and convenient parking.
- Investigate usage of alternate parking space keeping in mind our current expansion bank parking, other possible off street parking options, and consideration of our neighbors' needs.
- Investigate parking expansion opportunities that may be required only from time to time, for example on holidays.
- Consider purchasing properties adjacent to the church property.

Key Measure:

- Build a plan showing projected congregation size, meeting space requirements, and building utilization

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

STRATEGY:

Provide a structured environment for growth and continuity so that we can easily assimilate staff members and all church members. The structure should enable ease of transition, enhance the flow of information, and avoid duplication of effort.

- 1. Analyze and identify the various functions of St. John's; e.g.,**
 - a. St. John's as a Spiritual home
 - b. St. John's as an employer
 - c. St. John's as a member of the White Bear Lake community
 - d. St. John's as a building facility
 - e. St. John's as a member of the Diocese of Minnesota
- 2. Examine the goals/best use of resources with regard to each component.**
- 3. Determine needs of each component.**
- 4. Review in what ways the needs of each component overlap or conflict.**
- 5. Prioritize and institute needs on a workable schedule.**

MEASUREMENTS:

To have assessed, written and/or updated and implemented the following policies and procedures by 1/1/08.

I. Staff/office

- a) Automatic back-ups of financial records, policies and procedures of organizations, committee structures, Vestry minutes and by-laws?
- b) Back-ups of financial records, policies and procedures of organizations, committee structures, Vestry minutes and by-laws secured in a safe place?
- c) Office and staff policies, procedures, responsibilities, and job descriptions ?
- d) An annual review of office and staff policies, procedures, responsibilities, and job descriptions?
- e) An outline of responsibilities (such as central ordering policies and staff responsibilities)?
- f) Policies to avoid/prevent staff and clergy "burn-out"?
- g) Personnel policies, hiring practices, with annual revisions if needed and more flexibility. (Personnel committee duties) is this the same as c?
- h) Policies on confidentiality and privacy?
- i) Safe church training for all appropriate members?
- j) Record keeping policies & training?

- k) Record of insurance coverage for drivers for church events with appropriate consent forms from riders?
- l) Vestry minutes organized and retained in a safe for the life of the church (can this be included in a above?)
- m) Copies and descriptions of each staff's job requirements and detailed job procedures for ease of immediate replacement? is this the same as d?
- n) Current canon law manuals and diocesan directories available in the church library?
- o) Record retention & review policies?

II. Wardens/Vestry:

- a) A list of former Wardens & Vestry members?
- b) A "Former Warden Committee" in place to be an ad hoc committee for special consultation or a special project?
- c) Annual Review/Revision of church by-laws to accommodate a growing church and for better flexibility?
- d) Job descriptions for Vestry members and Wardens?
- e) regular reviews of ministries and objectives?
- f) Plans/procedures available to identify & organize small group ministries?

III. Within Vestry Committees, volunteers & organizations:

- a) an organizational structure (outline of the organization, scope of activities, mission and a list of all members, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses with copies for the church office updated annually?)
- b) Appropriate assistance for volunteers so that volunteer time is best used?
- c) All records dated?
- d) Annual pledge cards to give to newcomers on a timely basis and planned giving cards for all church families?
- e) A form outlining requirements for membership to help newcomers learn how to transfer to our church?
- f) An informational meeting on "what is an Episcopalian and what the Episcopal Church stands for", etc.
- g) Procedures for Stock giving and selling?
- h) Policies and procedures for letting bids and contracts?
- i) Policies and procedures for advertising staff jobs?
- j) Building and equipment use policies?
- k) Policies for cemetery plot sales and cemetery rules?
- l) Committee leadership rules and "shadow policies" to insure transition of new leaders?
- m) Member information such as: time/talent surveys that can be fully utilized by staff and committees; information on how to get in touch with individuals at work and whom to contact in case of an emergency?

- n) Revision of our existing bylaws to add flexibility necessary for a growing Church and improve our ability to best utilize the skills and abilities of leadership volunteers.

IV. General:

- a) Good record keeping/Policies/Procedures updated annually for staff, committees and vestry?
- b) Ability to identify and use the Vestry, expertise of congregational members (attorneys, etc) and wardens or appropriate personnel?
- c) A policy to review all every 18 months to 2 years?
- d) Are policies bound and available to the membership?
- e) Oversight of committees so that target dates, procedures, etc. are consistent and are in a similar format/context?
- f) Ability to exchange information forms with other larger churches?
- g) Periodic legal review of record keeping/Policies/Procedures?
- h) A process to add things to the lists and to prioritize them?
- i) Lay and staff person to support and coordinate the strategy and measurements.
Can this go at II. Wardens/Vestry b above?