

St. Peter's Church – The Way Forward – June 2015

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Introduction

This document is designed to guide the leadership and people of Saint Peter's in carrying out our mission. "The Way Forward" is a fluid, living document, with annual review by the Vestry, especially as the budget for the next calendar year is prepared. Some items may be added, or moved to an earlier completion date. Other items may be refined or otherwise changed to reflect what has been discovered in researching and exploring possibilities. Each year, the Vestry will extend the plan horizon for another year, and will do a major revision of our planning goals every 3-5 years.

Of course, there are many ongoing ministries and initiatives that are not specifically mentioned in the plan goals, such as our work with local schools, music programs for children and adults, maintaining the church building and churchyard and their history.

In many respects, this document is a deepening and broadening earlier plans, building on the work completed and explorations begun in the recent past.

- Beginning with a full-day retreat in May 2014, the vestry and clergy launched this planning process.
- In fall 2014-winter 2015, three discussions and a parish survey focused on dreams and aspirations in several ministry areas: pastoral care/hospitality/outreach, education/formation, and worship/music. Around 75 people took part in these sessions.
- In spring/summer 2014, congregational conversations resumed about space needs, following a hiatus while the church roof underwent significant repair and the congregation relocated to various sites for worship in 2012. Total attendance for the conversations was approximately 130. Notes from the two sets of discussions are available through links on our website.
- In several retreats and meetings, St. Peter's Vestry and clergy worked to combine the various inputs, focusing on short- and longer-term outcomes. The draft document was endorsed by the Vestry in March 2015, with encouragement to share with ministry leaders for their input and guidance.
- In May 2015, ministry leaders reviewed the plan with their respective groups for input and guidance, resulting in refinements to the document endorsed by the Vestry.
- The Vestry reviewed the refined document in June 2015, and implementation of shorter-term items began.

The Way Forward Steering Group:
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Context

Center City Philadelphia is thriving. There has been steady population growth in recent years, particularly among empty-nesters, millennials, and young professional families with small children. Each of these demographics is well represented here; there is opportunity to design worship and programs for continued growth. St. Peter's draws largely from 19106 and 19147, but parishioners come from all over the city and beyond, with many from NJ. Despite the rejuvenation of Center City, Philadelphia has the highest rate of deep poverty among the ten largest US cities. The Philadelphia School system is consistently underfunded and plagued with systemic problems. These problems call us to engage issues of systemic justice and seek ways to support the children and families, especially in our three neighborhood public elementary schools – McCall, Meredith, and Nebinger.

With other “mainline” Protestant denominations and institutional Christianity, The Episcopal Church is experiencing what demographers term “systemic decline.” For a host of reasons beyond our immediate influence, a growing number of people are not interested in attending or joining a church. Smart and thoughtful people within the church disagree about the best course of action – some calling for radical new ideas, some calling us to stick to our knitting and keep doing those things the church has always done best. At the very least, we are called to be attentive, creative, responsive, and embrace an entrepreneurial spirit.

Saint Peter's is thriving - an historic church seeking to deepen our relationship with Christ and each other. We are a congregation of 425 souls of all ages. Some have been members for decades, others are passing through. Some of us are Episcopalian; many are not. We represent a broad diversity of racial and ethnic backgrounds and are welcoming to all. We are singles, couples, and families; straight and gay. While attendance at Sunday worship has remained steady for the past decade, with a slight decrease in the past year, our pledge income is at a record level of \$495,000.

Everyone at St. Peter's is here with a high degree of intention and integrity, truly seeking and truly finding. Many of us understand ourselves to be on a journey of faith, responding to Christ's call and seeking to live in the Way of Christ. We are eager to integrate our faith with our daily lives. As a congregation, we welcome and honor each person and the gifts each of us have to offer. This is evident in the rich diversity of our ministries and activities and the enthusiasm and energy with which we carry them out.

Space has been a challenge at St. Peter's – much of our plan relies on enhanced space to carry out our mission and ministries effectively.

The joyous celebration of our 250th Anniversary several years ago, followed closely by our successful Raise the Roof capital campaign in which we raised \$1.7 million and replaced the roof, indicate healthy resilience and have contributed to a sense of confidence that we can tackle big challenges and embrace big opportunities. God has blessed us with extraordinarily bright and resourceful people who are eager to put their faith into action as we pursue The Way Forward.

Mission

St. Peter's is a church on a mission: To embody the love of God as Christ's heart, mind, and hands

Vision

St. Peter's: a thriving urban parish, welcoming to all, whose members nourish one another in journeys of faith, share the love of Christ, and serve the people of this neighborhood, city, and beyond

Values

- We are people on a journey seeking to live in the way of Christ.
- We feed people in mind, body, and soul.
- We pray as individuals and together; we worship God, sing and rejoice,
- We offer open hearts and open minds as we welcome one and all at Christ's table,
- We provide a safe place to ask questions and a supportive environment in which to live those questions.
- We reach beyond our congregation to serve others and strive for a just society.
- We call forth, share and honor the gifts of every person.

Five Areas of Focus

Our **Way Forward** has five areas of focus, based mainly on congregational conversations, vestry conversations, and priorities that have come up repeatedly. Each area includes short- and long-term priorities, responsible parties, projected resources, and time frames.

The areas of focus are:

- Worship/and Music
- Education/Formation
- Hospitality/Fellowship/Pastoral Care
- Outreach
- Organizational Health

St. Peter's is a church on a mission: To embody the love of God as Christ's heart, mind, and hands
Worship/Music - Our common life together is centered in worship and prayer. For many of us music is at the core of our worship.

Ministries/Committees: Altar Guild, Bell Ringers, Children's Worship, Choirs, Eat Laugh Pray, Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors/Intercessors, Meditation, Music, Nursery, Tower Room, Ushers, Vergers

Worship/Music Short-term (2015-2016)				
Big bullet items	Leaders	Resources	When	Status/comments
Pilot additional worship services (regular simple compline/evensong, services during special seasons)	Clergy, Music Director		Advent 2015	
Do Children's Service at Three Bears Park	Clergy, music leaders		Summer 2015	
Add regular (2x/yr) invitation and training for liturgical ministries (ushers, acolytes, choir, chalice bearers, lectors, etc.)	Ministry leaders, Clergy		Spring and Fall 2015	
Review/refine Music Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarify role/responsibilities of Music Committee - Foster community among parents/families of choristers and among adult choristers - Increase participation of young choristers from schools other than St. Peter's 	Music Committee, Music Director, Clergy		2016	Underway in March 2015, and will continue with new Music Director
Decorate worship spaces/property for different seasons	Altar Guild and others?	\$?	2016	flowers, fabrics, banners, lights, etc.
Worship/Music Long-term (2017 and beyond)				
Big bullet items	Leaders	Resources	When	Status/comments
Integrate Children's Service and "Big Church" -Explore adapting worship space for family/child-friendly service	Vestry, parents, others to discuss		Spring 2017 and beyond	
Hymn-sing (Gospel service) for community/congregation	Music Director, Music committee		Winter 2017	

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Education/Formation - As a learning community, we engage in and provide opportunities for education and spiritual growth.

Ministries/Committees: Adult Education, Church School, On Being

Education/Formation Short-term (2015-2016)				
Big bullet items	Leaders	Resources	When	Status/comments
Publish Faith Stories on our website	Dir Communications		2015	completed
Revitalize the Parenting Café	Claire, others		2015	Meeting March 15
Evaluate church school program as it is and imagine/plan for/implement an intergenerational model of Christian formation	Clergy, Parents, Adult Education Committee		2015-2016	
Plan for ongoing presence and support of seminarians, organ scholars, others in formation and in lay and ordained Church leadership roles	Vestry, Clergy	Explore partnerships w/seminaries and possible funding	2016	
Education/Formation Long-term (2017 and beyond)				
Big bullet items	Leaders	Resources	When	Status/comments
Assess current offerings and explore adding weekday evening with supper, programming, and choir rehearsals	Special task group		start discussing in 2016	
Intergenerational pilgrimage	Youth Group and leaders – and others		Summer 2016 or 2017?	Alternate with choir trip and all-church retreat? Local or out of town?
Create a summer week-long Bible camp for kids that includes creative activities	Special task group	\$	Summer 2017	Pilot something smaller with Youth Group?
Research, develop, offer opportunities for discipleship formation (e.g., DOCC), encouraging all to participate during a particular season	Education Committee, Clergy		Start in 2016	
Host regular faith and work and values discussions at places of work (e.g., law offices, hospitals around the city) or in wider community?	Education Committee, Small group leadership		2017	

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Outreach - We engage the needs of this neighborhood and the larger world seeking to serve and to create a just society

Ministries/Committees: Camp Get Along, Churchyard, Food Cupboard, Guatemala Partnership, P.O.W.E.R.

Outreach Short-term (2015-2016)				
Big bullet items	Leaders	Resources	When	Status/comments
Food Cupboard -Expand food cupboard ministry through partnerships with other churches -Leadership Planning -Develop ways to strengthen community and encourage interpersonal interaction	Food Cupboard leadership group	\$10,000 total 1-yr grants	Start Jan 2015	-Three partnerships well underway -Leadership Group exploring Food Cupboard management with Servant Year
Research/develop/launch an after-school music/arts program in partnership with others	Special task group	Grant funding	2016 start research	
Continue Guatemala – consider new partnerships	Guatemala Committee		2015	
Evaluate partnership with POWER	POWER Committee		2015	
Prayer board on wall around church	Dir Communications		2015	Completed May 2015 – extended through June
Ashes to Go for Ash Wednesday	Clergy		Annually	Completed for 2015
Find creative ways to increase community “ownership” and care of the churchyard	Churchyard Gardeners, others		2015	
Explore partnerships with local businesses (restaurants, boutiques, etc.), food trucks or other way to run coffee shop with/for Food Cupboard, other	Food Cupboard Leadership Grp, others		2015 and ongoing	Exploration begun – implementation (if appropriate) in future
Discuss how to share our many gifts with the larger community				
Outreach Long-term (2017 and beyond)				
Big bullet items	Leaders	Resources	When	Status/comments
Mobile food cupboard	Food Cupboard leadership grp	Grant funding	?	Grant submitted 1/2015
Increase non-parishioner attendance at St. Peter's programs through publicity, invitations, etc.	Dir. Communications		2017 and beyond	

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Hospitality/Fellowship/Pastoral Care - We welcome one and all, gather in fellowship and mutual support, and care for one another.

Ministries/Committees: Book Group, Church Tour Guides, Greeters, Hospitality, Intercessory Prayer Group, Knitting Group, LGBTQ Fellowship, Pastoral Care Team, Sages, S.P.P.I.T.+, TNT, Youth Group

Hospitality/Fellowship/Pastoral Care Short-term (2015-2016)				
Big bullet items	Leaders	Resources	When	Status/comments
Nurture small groups by: - bringing leaders together to stress importance of role/ministry - providing tools for lay leaders of Sages, TNT, SPPIT, etc. - using opportunity to integrate scripture, faith, life - creating new small groups if needed - providing opportunities for different small groups to interact with one another and with groups outside church	Small group leadership, clergy		2015 and beyond	
Host one event per quarter (party, pot luck, progressive dinner, summer concerts, annual meeting as a fun event, etc.)	New party planning task group		2015 and beyond	
Continue/increase support for Youth Group - collaborate with other churches and community groups - foster youth group leadership - connect youth with mentors (intergenerational) - youth faith stories	Youth Group members and leadership, vestry, others		2015	
Create a multi-generational team to figure out how to help new parishioners become involved	New task group		2015	
Train and send lay ministers to PA Hospital or Jefferson on a weekly basis	Pastoral Care Team		2015	
Hospitality/Fellowship/Pastoral Care Long-term (2017 and beyond)				
Big bullet items	Leaders	Resources	When	Status/comments
Host a parish weekend at a camp/retreat	Special task group		2017	
Develop a community kitchen to offer parishioners and the larger community a way of connecting, engaging outside worship	Building Our Future Task Force		?	

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Organizational Health - In order to carry out our many and diverse ministries, we strive to be good stewards of our resources, and nurture organizational health.

Ministries/Committees: Archives, Communication, Finance, HSPCPC, Investment, Personnel, Property, Stewardship, Vestry

Organizational Health Short-term (2015-2016)				
Big bullet items	Leaders	Resources	When	Status/comments
Continue Marketing/Communications position	Vestry, Rector	Funding outside endowment	2015	Suggested title: Dir for External Relations
Complete sale of school building	Vestry		3/2015	Completed!
Plan for sabbaticals for our clergy	Vestry		2015	
Make our current property accessible to all regardless of physical ability – restrooms in church, steps/ramps	Property Committee, Vestry	??	2015	Will require building modification
Continue investigating feasibility and long-term plan for sustainability of entire campus, including new construction or alternatives if construction is not feasible -Engage parishioners in decision-making	Building Our Future Work Groups, Vestry			
Organizational Health Long-term (2017 and beyond)				
Big bullet items	Leaders	Resources	When	Status/comments
Maintain a campus that fosters community and is welcoming to those who may view the church building as intimidating	Communication Director, Property Committee		?	
Digitize parish records and archives	Archives Cttee and others			

Links to documents on website – available upon request

- Congregational Conversations – presentations, background data, summarized discussions
- Duffy building history document
- The Way Forward discussion notes – Pastoral Care/Hospitality, Education/Formation, Worship/Music, Survey