

St. Peter's Church – The Way Forward – revised October 21, 2015

Contents ~

Introduction

Context

Mission

Vision

Values

Five Areas of Focus

Appendices

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.

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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 | scheduled |
| Do Children's Service at Three Bears Park | Clergy, music leaders | | Summer 2016 | |
| Add regular (2x/yr) invitation and training for liturgical ministries (ushers, acolytes, choir, chalice bearers, lectors, etc.) | Ministry leaders, Clergy | | Spring and Fall 2016 | |
| 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 | Music Committee, Music Director, Clergy | | 2016 | Underway as of March 2015, and continuing 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 | |
| Consider hymn-sing (Gospel service) for community/congregation | Music Dir, Music Cttee | | Winter 2017 | |
| Increase participation of young choristers from schools other than St. Peter's | Music Director | | 2016-2017 | |
| Plan choir trips and tours to serve as spiritual/cultural enhancement for members, outreach for particular communities, and a vehicle for recruitment and musical growth | Music Director, Music Cttee, clergy | | 2016 and beyond | |

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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 | Assoc Rector, 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 | |
| Explore 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? |
| Consider 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 -Part-time director started in summer 2015 |
| 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 parish and community “ownership” and care of the churchyard | Churchyard Gardeners, others | | 2016 | |
| 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 | Stewardship Committee? | | 2016 | |
| 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.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 | |
| Hospitality/Fellowship/Pastoral Care Long-term (2017 and beyond) | | | | |
| Big bullet items | Leaders | Resources | When | Status/comments |
| Consider training, sending lay ministers to PA Hospital or Jefferson on a regular basis | Pastoral Care Team | | 2017 | |
| Consider a parish weekend at a camp/retreat | Special task group | | 2017 | |
| Explore 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 | | 2015 | Near completion |
| Plan for sabbaticals for our clergy | Vestry | | 2016 | |
| Explore ways of increasing number of tour guides and finding additional ways to communicate the history of St. Peter's | Guides, Communication Director | | 2016 | |
| Make our current property accessible to all regardless of physical ability – restrooms in church, steps/ramps | Property Committee, Vestry | ?? | 2016 | 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 | | 2015 and beyond | |
| 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 | | 2017 | |

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