

Embracing Our Future
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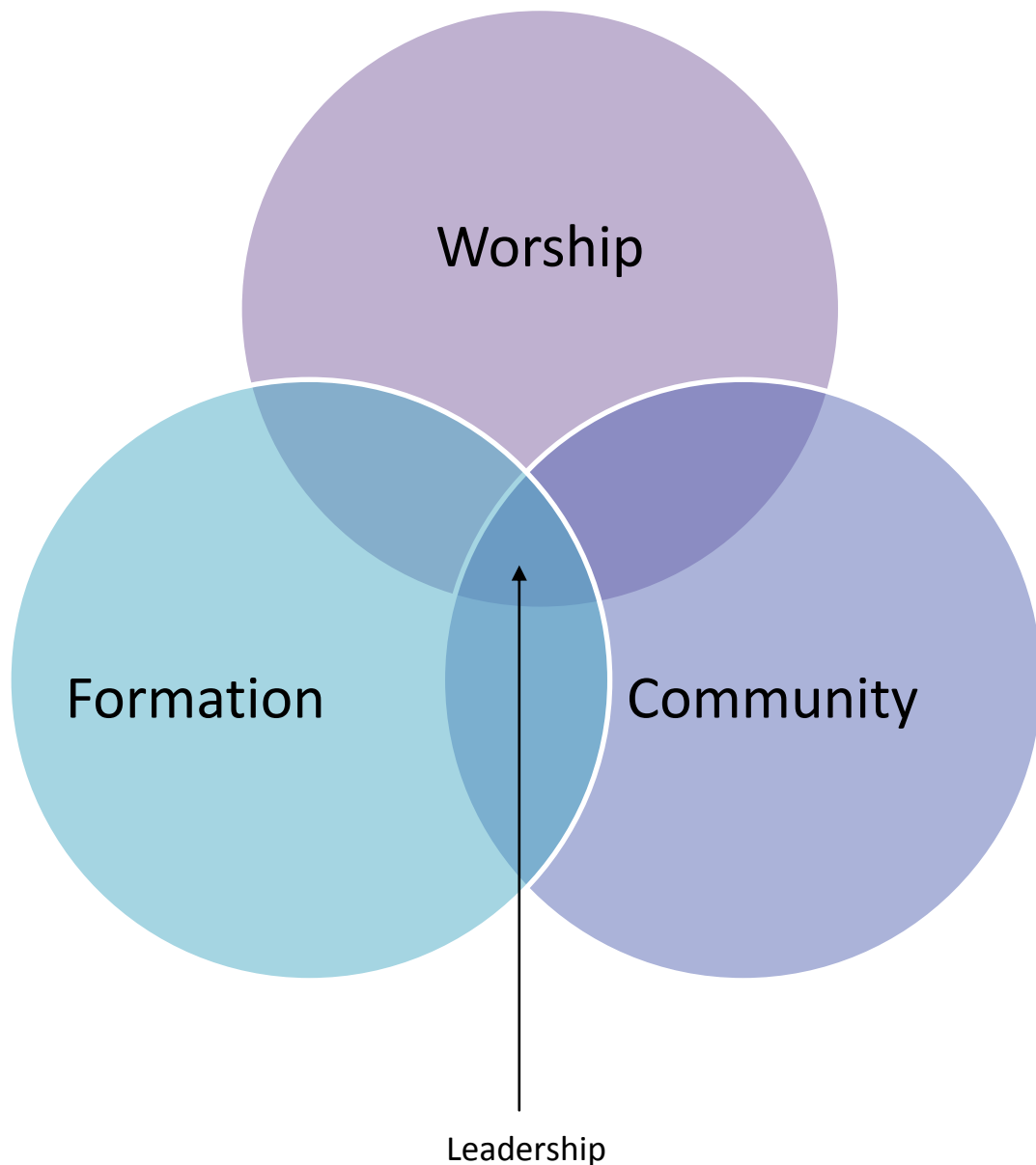
To Teach
To Teach

Celebrate
Celebrate

And Serve
And Serve

Christ

Christ



Introduction: On January 25, 2009, at the Annual Meeting of St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, a Mission Task Force was commissioned and selected by the Vestry to discern a possible path forward for our church. Some of the motivation for this action can be found in Dean Luck's annual report for that meeting, but generally speaking it was done to respond to growing concerns about where the church was headed, and to craft a possible path on into the future. Members of this Task Force -- which then met periodically over the next several months -- were (in alpha order) Jeffery Averill, Karen

Doerschuk, Elizabeth Elkins, Rebecca Livengood, Dean Thomas Luck, Sr. Warden Douglas Mouncey, Richard Pilgrim, David Ridings, and Jr. Warden Laurie Sanderson. The Task Force facilitator was Canon Karen Lewis of the Diocese of Central New York.

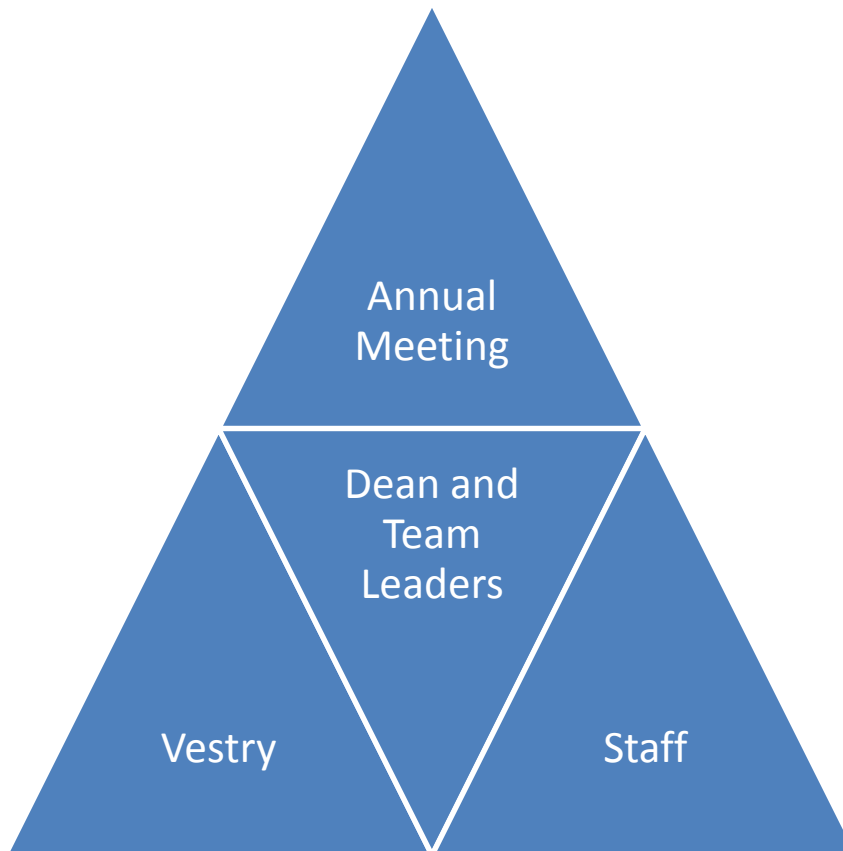
Following a decision-making format recommended by Canon Lewis, the group identified areas of concerns and strengths, developed "strategies" and "possibilities" for moving ahead positively in these areas, and formulated "action items" to implement them. One need only look at the overall outline of the Plan below to see a) the four areas identified (leadership, worship, formation/education, and community/fellowship/service), b) the nature of the strategies identified for each, c) the "possibility statements" subsequently developed, and d) the actions recommended throughout. In this whole process Anthony Robinson's book "Transforming Congregational Culture" -- a book that had been recommended to all congregations in the Diocese by Bishop Adams -- became an increasingly important influence in its articulation of ways to rethink what churches and congregations are all about in light of the Christian gospel. Indeed, the Plan below echoes many of the themes of this book -- especially in basing actions on a sense of "ministry" (acting out of what God has done for us rather than what we can do for ourselves) and developing a "ministry culture" focusing on worship, Christian formation and community involvement.

In the interests of identifying the center of the church's mission, the group developed the mission statement "to teach, celebrate, and serve Christ" -- a statement that nicely coheres with the three themes mentioned above as worship, formation, and community service-- and named the Plan "Embracing our Future".

The resultant Plan was recommended to the Vestry, and approved by that body, in May of 2009. It now functions as a set of guidelines for the clergy, the Vestry, the Ministry Teams formed out of it, and the whole congregation as the church moves on into shaping and embracing its future.

Embracing our Future: To Teach, Celebrate and Serve Christ

I. Leadership



Strategy: The Leadership keeps this purpose, “To Teach, Celebrate and Serve Christ,” at the forefront of all that we do.

Possibility Statement #1 – the Dean with the help of the Vestry and lay leadership, maintains the Cathedral’s focus on “To Teach, Celebrate and Serve Christ” while assuring the implementation of “Embracing our Future” on time.

Action Plan:

1. Establish timetable for implementation.

2. Leadership brainstorming with lay leaders to generate ideas on methods/procedures to maintain focus on St. Paul's.
3. Prioritize generated ideas and assign responsibilities for implementation to groups/individuals.
4. Develop and implement leadership development education to encourage future leadership in the congregation and to improve the skills of current leaders.
5. Establish on-going ministry review and evaluation process to ensure effective implementation.

Possibility Statement #2 – The Vestry, working with the Dean and other parish leaders, develops and implements organizational structures, policies and procedures which will establish a congregation that is ministry focused and consistent with the purpose “To Teach, Celebrate and Serve Christ”.

- A. Specifically, the congregation commits to being a congregation that is ministry focused, meaning we act out of what God has done for us, and not out of our own volitions.

Action Plan:

1. Develop plans to educate congregation on what it means to be ministry focused.
 2. Develop and implement plans for members of the congregation to invest in being ministry focused.
- B. Specifically, the Vestry meetings follow a discernment-style process which focuses on long-term parish goals, ensures on-going status reports of assigned tasks, and routinely provides for evaluation of both staff and all parish programs and priorities.

Action Plan:

1. Develop discernment process for use in all decision-making activities.
2. Create a volunteer recognition/thank you program.
3. Develop policies and procedures including but not limited to: staff evaluation, building usage, weddings funerals, communications, finances, pastoral care, etc..
4. Vestry to determine what information is necessary on an

on-going basis to ensure effective decision-making, including orientation materials for new Vestry members.

5. Establish/revise appropriate committees necessary for implementation of “Embracing our Future”; including committee descriptions, responsibilities and reporting structure.

- C. Specifically, the By-laws are being amended as necessary, to implement appropriate organizational structures.

Action Plan:

1. Review current By-laws and determine where revisions, deletions or additions are necessary to support desired changes in the organizational structure.

II. Worship

Strategy: In order “To Teach, Celebrate and Serve Christ”, St. Paul’s Cathedral plans, designs, and offers worship services (liturgies, preaching, music) of the highest quality in the spirit of tradition and creativity, with an eye to worship as opening a space for making connections with God and being transformed thereby.

Possibility Statement #1 – The “Ministry Team for Worship” plans and designs high quality traditional and non-traditional liturgies and music prior to each liturgical season with input and feedback from the congregation and appropriate leadership. Brief educational moments are worked into every service to explain the purpose of that service’s liturgy and/or music.

Action Plan:

1. Establish purpose, responsibilities, desired gifts and skills of members, and accountability structure for the Worship Ministry Team.
2. Recruit members for Worship Team.
3. Worship Ministry Team establishes planning procedures and congregational feedback process.

III. Formation

Strategy: In order “To Teach, Celebrate and Serve Christ”, St. Paul’s Cathedral develops and implements all-congregational and all ages Christian Formation programs.

Possibility Statement #1 – The Vestry, working with the Dean and other parish leadership, develops and implements a “Ministry For Teaching Team” which oversees the church’s formation programs for all ages. This team’s primary charge is the development and oversight of teaching programs for both children and adults in the spirit of Christian Formation. Secondly, however, this team considers ways other than formal teaching programs to advance the enterprise of Christian Formation within and beyond St. Paul’s Cathedral.

Action Plan:

1. Establish purpose, responsibilities for team’s members.
2. Establish educational priorities for both children and adults.

Possibility Statement #2 – In the spirit of Christian Formation, St. Paul’s Cathedral develops small-group opportunities or ministries within which people may reflect upon and articulate their own faith-stories – specifically, and only for example, in small-group, faith-sharing Bible-study groups.

Action Plan:

1. Select, recruit and train small-group facilitators.
2. Review successful intentional small-group ministry programs in other churches/denominations.

IV. Community

Strategy: In order “To Teach, Celebrate and Serve Christ” St. Paul’s Cathedral builds Christian Community and Fellowship within the congregation, and reaches out both to serve and to draw in those beyond its doors.

Possibility Statement #1 – St. Paul’s Cathedral provides opportunities for building Christian community within the church by promoting authentic Christian Fellowship, a ministry culture and an attitude of hospitality toward all.

Action Plan – Whole Team + PS#1:

1. The initial/interim implementation Community/Fellowship Team reports of its work and recommendations to the Vestry no later than early fall 2009.
 - a. This group may augment its membership as it sees fit, and will continue to serve until a permanent, Vestry-approved Team is put in place (hopefully not later than January 2010.)
 - b. Both the latter permanent Team (perhaps named the “Community/Fellowship Ministry Team”), and the initial/interim Team will have oversight over ALL community/fellowship matters as represented in the three Possibility Statements connected to the Strategy Statement governing community/fellowship.
 - c. Efforts should be made to coordinate any initiatives with similar ones of the other Teams (Worship, Formation) in order to reduce the chances of duplication, and to foster both whole-church involvement and efficiency.
 - d. Initiatives by individuals in the church should be encouraged but all Teams need to be prepared to select certain projects for sponsorship and recommendation which will then be SPC (or whole-church) initiatives and become appropriate for support by SPC resources.

2. Specific to Possibility Statement #1, this Team (interim or permanent) will identify, initiate, recommend, and/or otherwise plan for how best the church might build a sense of community within the congregation, keeping in mind the church's focus on ministry culture and an authentic Christian fellowship of "hospitality".
3. Small groups are vital to the health and success of the Church (example: Ushers). As such the Team will play an appropriate part in helping to attract, recruit, welcome, and work to build community and sustainability.
 - a. Such plans must keep in mind the need to be welcoming to those outside the immediate congregation that may be visiting or considering becoming a part of the church.
 - b. It would be wise to build in feedback and evaluation mechanisms along the way in order to judge if and how such programs are working.
 - c. It may also be wise to create a sub/group/committee of the larger Team (perhaps the "Fellowship" group) whose purpose would be to focus on this aspect of community/fellowship and report back to the Team.

Possibility Statement #2 – St. Paul's Cathedral pro-actively reaches out to the larger community in promoting its unique strengths and identity, and in outreach efforts to draw people in. Specifically, the Vestry develops "Community/Outreach Ministry Team" to initiate and coordinate such efforts – for example, efforts to: 1) promote an image of a cathedral church on a new path, 2) mount "Come and See" programs, 3) maximize building use in exciting new ways, and 4) identify other attractive strengths of our programs for promotion.

Action Plan:

1. See Action Item #1 under Possibility Statement #1 above.
2. Specific to Possibility Statement #2, this Team (interim or permanent) will identify, recommend, and/or develop programs and plans for promoting St. Paul's Cathedral Church beyond its doors and to the larger community in order to draw new people in.

- a. A sub group/committee (perhaps the “Promotions/Outreach” group) should be created to focus on this task and report its findings back to the Team.
- b. Some examples of efforts and programs in this regard are to be found in the Possibility Statement above.
- c. It would be wise to build in feedback and evaluation mechanisms along the way in order to judge if and how these efforts/programs are working.
- d. Initiatives and programs should: 1) keep both local national, and international opportunities in mind; 2) be conscious of intergenerational opportunities, 3) keep Diocesan goals and priorities in mind; and 4) be aware that both short- and long-term projects are possible.

Possibility Statement #3 – St. Paul’s Cathedral identifies and develops mission strategies to the larger community and world. Specifically, it initiates this by identifying those groups, people, and/or communities near and far – and the needs they might have – in order to better identify who specifically they might serve, and how they might best do it. (Minimally, there would need to be coordination for this effort and the “outreach” effort in Possibility Statement #2 above.)

Action Plan:

1. See Action Item #1 under Possibility Statement #1 above.
2. Specific to Possibility Statement #3, this Team (interim or permanent) oversees efforts to identify and promote specific mission strategies and projects in order to serve the larger community of those in need – emphasizing in the process the ministry focus of SPC and the importance of hands-on efforts (as opposed to simply raising and sending money).
 - a. It might be wise to establish a sub-committee/team (perhaps the “Service/Missions” group) whose job it would be to focus on this aspect of the Team’s work, report its findings back to the Team, and make sure

there is coordination between similar efforts by other sub-groups (e.g. of the team).

- b. It would be wise to build in feedback and evaluation mechanisms along the way in order to judge if and how these programs are working.

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Celebrate and Serve Christ*

ST. PAUL'S NEEDS YOU FOR THE FUTURE!!

For this plan to succeed everyone at St. Paul's needs to be part of the ministry of St. Paul's. Interim Ministry Teams have been formed for Worship, Formation and for Community. All we do at St. Paul's needs to come within one of these focuses of ministry. Please consider joining one of these ministry teams. Now, more than ever, St. Paul's needs for each and every one of us to embrace our future, to teach, celebrate and serve Christ.

