

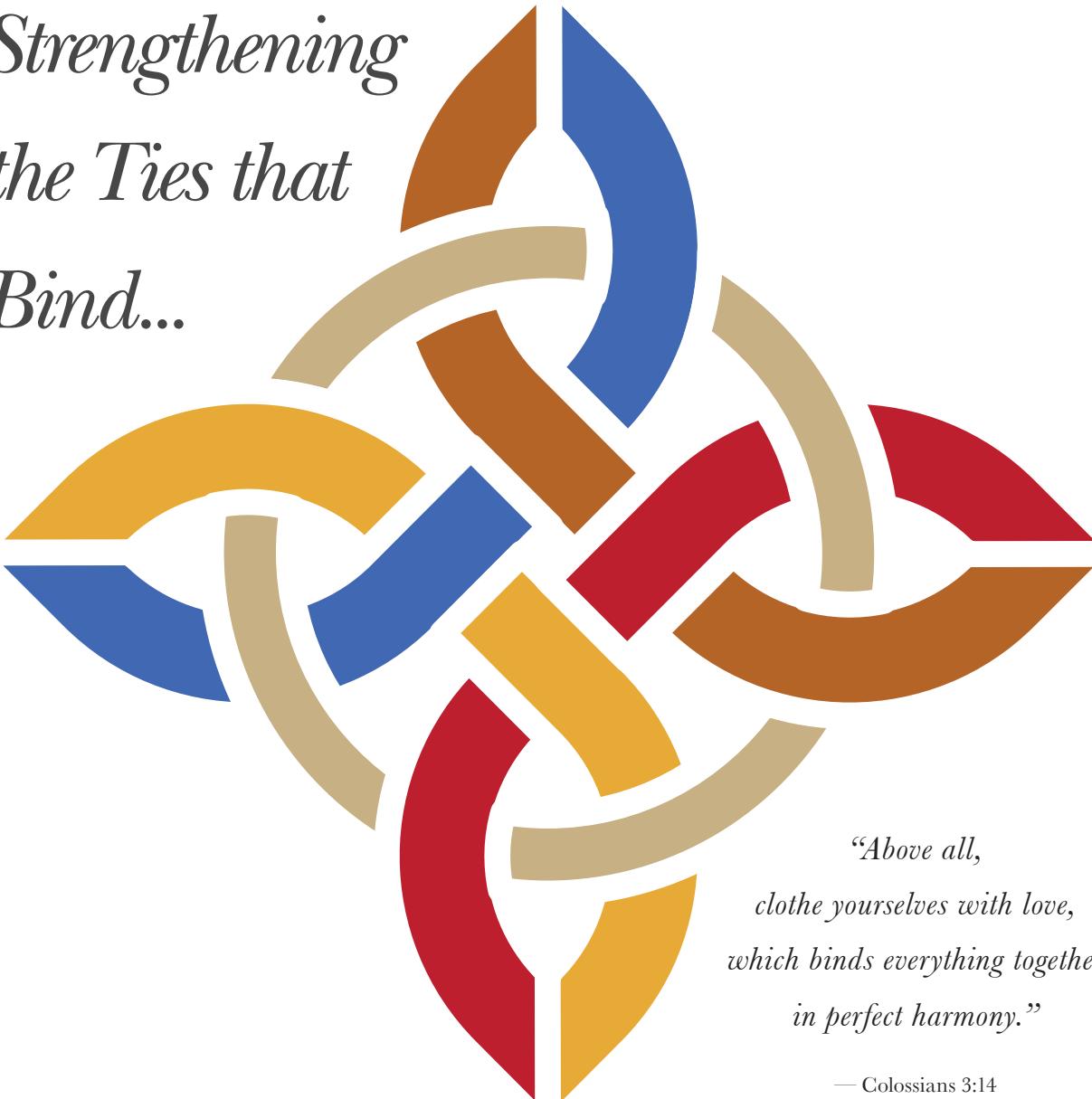


St. James's Episcopal Church

Strategic Plan

2016

*Strengthening
the Ties that
Bind...*



*“Above all,
clothe yourselves with love,
which binds everything together
in perfect harmony.”*

— Colossians 3:14

April 10, 2016

Dear Friends,

The pages that follow represent more than 12 months of prayer, listening, dreaming, and planning. In its ambitions, we believe this document reflects the hopes and dreams of our community over the next three to five years. It is a shared vision intended to strengthen the ties of love that bind us to Christ, one another, and the world.

The inspiration for the title of this strategic plan comes from the text of an 18th century hymn, "Blest Be the Tie That Binds." The plan seeks to lift up and live out what St. Paul says so eloquently in his letter to the Colossians that, "love binds everything together in perfect harmony." During the past year of listening to the hopes and dreams of the parish, we heard over and over again the desire to strengthen and deepen relationships at St. James's. We heard the desire to strengthen relationships inside our parish in the ways we care for our elderly, welcome newcomers, invite members into ministry, and celebrate the gifts of our children, youth and young adults. We heard the desire to strengthen our relationship to Christ through more intentional times of prayer and study. We heard the desire to strengthen our relationships with the community and the wider world by growing our mission and outreach programs and involving more people in those ministries.

We are grateful to the many faithful volunteers who contributed their time, energy and insight to create this plan. Their hard work is a gift to our church and we are indebted to them for their ministry.

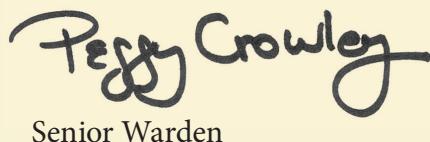
The Vestry is committed to this Strategic Plan. It was formally adopted during the Vestry's March 15th meeting. We hope you will read the plan in its entirety, remembering that it is a living document intended as a guide for our congregation as we move into God's good future.

The financial impact of this Strategic Plan on our operating budget will be substantial. Needed repairs, physical plant improvements, and staff changes will require additional operating expenses. If we want to carry this plan through to its completion, it will require significant and sustainable increases in pledges to our Annual Giving Campaign.

Please pray for our parish. Pray for the presence of the Holy Spirit to guide us. Pray that we will have the wisdom to know and to do God's will as we move into the future.

Faithfully,


Randy Hall Smith
Rector


Peggy Crowley
Senior Warden

Never Standing Still

St. James's has long recognized that, as we work towards building Christ's Kingdom on earth, standing still is not an option. We must always be moving forward in the name of Christ, but our efforts in His name require focus and coordination to be most effective. So, during the last two decades our rector periodically has gathered together a group of committed volunteers to help guide the mission of St. James's into the future through the development of strategic plans. These plans are valuable snapshots reflecting our parish's priorities and goals at any given time, and are used by our vestry as a way to implement the church's vision.

Hearing before Doing

In early 2015, our Rector, Randy Hollerith, met with the vestry to review the progress that had been made in achieving the goals of the 2010 strategic plan, and to discuss where a new plan might take our congregation. Mr. Hollerith then gathered together a new Strategic Planning Committee to help develop a roadmap for St. James's through the next several years. This group, whose names are listed on the following page, convened in January of 2015, and met for several hours each month. The committee benefitted greatly from the leadership and mentoring of the Rev. Dr. W. Victor Maloy, a leadership consultant and pastoral care specialist with the Virginia Institute of Pastoral Care, who kept the group both focused and open to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Knowing that any genuine strategic plan for St. James's must reflect the concerns and aspirations of our members, the committee adopted a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) model to gather information for use in their own visioning process. Hundreds of parishioners participated in more than 20 discussion groups designed to generate an honest assessment of where we are as a faith community today, and who we want to become over the next few years. Separate focus group sessions were held with the vestry and church staff. Leaders and participants in our Youth Ministry programs conducted their own visioning weekend devoted to developing a plan targeted to the needs of our middle and high school children. The committee also received feedback from Diocesan leadership, Beth Ahabah, and other neighbors. Additionally, more than 30 percent of our active parishioners responded to an on-line survey. From this wealth of information, the Strategic Planning Committee produced a vision that it hopes will bring us into closer communion with God and our neighbors – whether they be in the pew next to us or in the wider world.

Our Mission (what we do)

To live as Doers of the Word worshiping God and serving others to build Christ's Kingdom

Our Purpose (why we are here)

*To proclaim the good news of God in Christ
To seek and serve Christ in all persons
To strive for justice and peace among all people*

Our Vision (what we strive to achieve)

The fulfillment of Christ's Kingdom on earth

What We Heard

From all of the information the Strategic Planning Committee gathered, a common theme emerged. The members of St. James's want this church to be a place that helps us develop a stronger sense of community: with our fellow parishioners, with our neighbors outside our church, and with our God. This yearning for greater Christian fellowship runs through each of the objectives the Committee identified for the coming years

It also became clear that the things that inspire our congregation are similar, if not identical, to the things that cause us anxiety. For example, our congregation puts great store in demonstrating discipleship through service to our neighbors. However, there remains

a tension between the call to show mercy to those neighbors among whom we dwell and those who live beyond the seas. There is likewise a strong impulse to care for our own. This tension can be a blessing because it requires us to constantly ponder where we should spend our allotted time and resources. This plan offers opportunities to pursue both outreach and in-reach with equal vigor. We want to continue to be active in creating a just and integrated society.

The committee also heard repeatedly that we love our Clergy and music ministers, but in spite of our Lord's constant admonition to "fear not," we dread the day that they tell us they are leaving. But again, with that anxiety comes opportunities, and so the plan calls for greater lay participation in both the worship services and the music ministry so that, when the inevitable

transitions occur, our parish will lose none of its spiritual self-confidence. We also believe ourselves to be a church that throws open its arms to anyone who wants to learn about and experience the love that is in Christ. The plan provides additional opportunities for all of us to show how much we love our neighbors – as well as strangers – as ourselves.

In short, the Committee believes that if prayerfully considered and implemented, the 2016 Strategic Plan will help us strengthen those ties which bind us closer to God in Christ, to one another, and to the world beyond.

Strategic Planning Committee

Margaret Corwin

Ida Farinholt

Suzanne Hall

Rosie Messer

Thayer Montague

Mark Shuford

Alex Slaughter

Bobbie Ukrop

Henry Willett

*S*trengthening
the ties that bind
us to God in Christ,
one to another,
the community &
the world...



GOD IN CHRIST

We will strengthen the ties that bind us to God in Christ by:



Developing daily Morning and/or Evening Prayer services led by the laity and weekly Eucharist and healing services

Providing members of the congregation with additional spiritual opportunities to develop a deeper relationship with Christ

- Possible avenues may include instruction in contemplative prayer and like disciplines

Engaging our youth in worship services.

Possible ideas include:

- Recruiting, training and regularly scheduling young people to serve as lectors, ushers, lay Eucharistic ministers, and other roles that assist in worship
- Creating space for online devotionals, podcasts, and other media offerings prepared and presented by children and youth
- Integrating youth into the broader life of the parish by pairing youth with non-family members for mission trips, service projects, career mentoring, and other ministries of the church
- Increasing youth engagement in special youth ministry events such as trips and retreats
- Develop a contact plan so all youth in 6th-12th grades receive a personal phone call or visit from a member of the church at least once a school year to inquire about their well-being and to invite that youth to church

Creating a Youth Ministry Formation

Plan based on the values of community, love, acceptance, faithfulness, and fun

- Gather a dedicated focus group to assess current offerings, research trends and developments in faith formation, and partner with Ministry Architects to facilitate a collaborative Faith Formation Retreat

Providing broader opportunities for members of the congregation to witness to their faith. Possible ideas include:

- Sunday morning faith journey discussions
- Recorded reflections on spiritual topics for posting on the website
- Seasonal or topical written devotions composed by parishioners on Advent, Lent, Stewardship, Mission & Outreach, and other topics

Committing to a renewed balance between Sunday worship services and Christian education hour

Providing resources and guidance to allow families, groups, and individuals to create their own home-based prayer, study and worship disciplines

Cultivating the spiritual discipline of personal stewardship by:

- Embracing the spiritual aspects of tithing
- Creating a semiannual series of presentations on alternative forms of giving
- Integrating stewardship into educational and spiritual instruction for our children and youth

Exploring the creation of a formal lay led “Music Committee” to support the efforts of the Music Director and Organist

*Our faith life is the core of our community life.
In order to accomplish any of the challenges set before us,
we must be dedicated to prayer and worship.*



ONE TO ANOTHER



Strengthening the ties that bind us to one another by:

Engaging members in ministry through

- Strengthening our welcome ministry for newcomers
- Growing and nurturing Christians who are mature in their faith by expanding opportunities for small group ministry. Possible approaches may include
 - Couple and family Bible study groups
 - Increased support of Education for Ministry (EFM)
 - Faith groups focused on life events, such as marriage, divorce, raising children, career transition, death and dying
 - Establishing a sustainable Youth Ministry structure that promotes ministry stability and shared investment from lay-volunteers and staff alike
 - Create a Youth Ministry Committee with clear roles, responsibilities, and mutually agreed term commitments that will oversee the ministry

Helping adults to discover the rewarding work of partnering in ministry with youth by serving as: youth leaders, confirmation leaders, mission trip leaders, mentors, retreat chaperones, and major event coordinators. Possible approaches include:

- An annual volunteer recruitment process led by the Youth Ministry Committee
 - Ongoing coaching and support of volunteers by Youth Director and clergy
 - Expanding opportunities for retreats and pilgrimages. Possible approaches may include: a newlywed retreat and a Holy Land pilgrimage

Increasing by 20% the number of pledging households through the

- creation of a permanent stewardship committee that will
 - Study the stewardship potential of our parish
 - Explore undertaking an every-member canvass
 - Conduct a national review of stewardship methodologies

Enhancing our communications through

- Analyzing the current configuration and needs of the Communication Office
- Enhancing digital communications through the development of a Doers mobile “app”
- Creating opportunities for increased interaction and conversation through the use of members as: reporters, photographers, and videographers
- Market our Doers’ mission by promoting our brand through promotional items
- Expanding the visibility of the Vestry through digital and print media
- Creating a Youth Ministry Communication Plan that informs the congregation, and the community about what God is doing through youth ministry at St. James’s

Assuring the church’s response to members in need and to seniors in particular, through

- Training a lay-led pastoral care team with emphasis on supporting parishioners through major life events
- Targeted support groups
- A more robust meals ministry
- The Doers Action Network



*Our community is only as strong
as we are willing to see
and serve Christ in one another.*

Improving planning and maintenance

of our buildings and grounds through

- Exploring the need to renovate the Parish House
- Planning for the replacement of aging systems including
 - The HVAC chiller serving the sanctuary, Sunday school building, and parish house
 - The main electrical panel in the Sunday school building
 - The fire alarm system
 - Completing needed maintenance and repairs to the steeple
 - Exploring additional cellular leasing opportunities in our steeple space



Improving staffing levels and efficiency

through

- Offering competitive salaries to attract and retain a talented staff
- Creating a part time administrative position to support Stewardship and Development
- Expanding Facility Manager position from half-time to full-time
- Expanding Facility Coordinator position from half-time to full-time



COMMUNITY & WORLD



Strengthening the ties that bind us to community & world by:

Expanding mission opportunities

within, the city and the world by

- Growing the financial resources that support our mission programs
- Sponsoring a long term international missionary
- Exploring the possibility of sponsoring a refugee family
- Emphasizing intergenerational mission trips
- Coordinating with the Diocese to mentor parishes trying to build mission programs

Expanding new and existing outreach ministries in the community by

- Exploring new opportunities such as
 - Circles, a city initiative to nurture families out of poverty
 - REAL, a program to support those reentering society from incarceration
- Strengthening our volunteer support for the St. James's Children's Center
- Exploring opportunities to expand space for the Circle Center
- Renovating the Catacombs for 12 step groups and other possible uses
- Doubling our financial resources dedicated to outreach

Strengthening our justice advocacy to

change societal structures by

- Creating programs and events to work toward racial reconciliation
- Partnering with African-American congregations for conversation, worship and service
- Working as advocates for regional transportation improvements

Enhancing our environmental stewardship programs by

- Promoting sustainable practices at church, in the home, and elsewhere
- Raising parishioners' awareness of the impact of climate change on impoverished and vulnerable populations around the world

Creating broader participation by our church community in outreach and mission ministries by

- Incorporating our commitment to institute an annual sustainable Servant Sunday
- Extending to newcomers and members a personal invitation to engage in ministry

Becoming a “church without walls” by

- Increasing its digital outreach. Possibilities include
 - Podcasts
 - Webinar Bible studies
 - Video access to educational programs and classes
 - Promotional videos to share the life of our parish
- Creating another ongoing speaker series similar to WomanKind
- Seeking opportunities for interracial and cross cultural engagement
- Assuring accessibility to visitors of every age through
 - Improved signage
 - Better handicapped access to our buildings
- Expanding availability of our buildings for the use by groups in the community that share our values

*Our calling is to be
the hands and feet
of Christ in the world.*





St. James's Episcopal Church

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