

**St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Wellesley**

**LONG RANGE PLAN,  
2006-2010**

**February 2007**



## *Executive Summary*

The *Long-Range Planning steering group* convened in 2005 with multiple objectives:

- to identify areas of strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities in the parish; *and*
- to set out a strategic vision to provide guidance to current and future staff and Vestry leaders.

Good planning is a *continuous* process, not a *spasmodic* one. Some new programs and structural changes within the church have been already implemented as a direct result of the planning work, and this “Long Range Plan” document itself should be thought of as a flexible road map.

Over the past two years, the plan has drawn on a range of inputs and activities:

- A parish survey with over 150 responses;
- Vestry retreats held in October 2005 and June 2006;
- Develop a lay-led adult formation “faculty” similar to the structure of the current Church School and youth faculties;
- A set of “guiding themes,” based on our baptismal promises. We want to:
  - grow in faith;
  - express our faith in action;
  - be better disciples of Jesus;
  - be a more inviting and nurturing community;
  - be better stewards of God’s gifts to us;
  - communicate more effectively, both with each other and outside the parish.
- Substantial Vestry and committee input and feedback throughout the period;
- *Ad hoc* interest groups formed to address particular issues; *and*
- Parish consultation sessions (2006 Annual Meeting, Lent, Sunday forums).

### ***Growing in faith: Worship & faith formation***

- Worship & music were both rated as “very important” by parishioner survey respondents.
  - Key changes initiated already: youth choir rehearsal schedule, psalter reading at the Sunday 8:00 a.m. Eucharist, lay liturgical minister participation in the Sunday 5 p.m. worship, brief musical preludes before the Sunday 8:00 a.m. Eucharist on special feast days.
  - Next steps: search for a new Director of Music and re-establishment of the *Music committee*.
- *Ad hoc Christian formation task force* – concluded that Christian learning is best viewed as a lifelong process.
  - This insight has driven a number of initiatives: the Sunday morning *Christian Learning Series*, an increased clergy role in Children’s Chapel, restructuring of the mid-week Lenten series.
  - Next steps include the creation of an *Education committee* (to subsume the current *Church School committee*) and an *Adult formation subcommittee*, and exploration of available programs in basic Christian doctrine.

### ***Faith in action: Outreach, pastoral care, and youth programs***

These are three vital parish ministries, each with unique challenges and goals to carry out the “faith in action” charge:

- The parish's *Outreach committee* has already begun a sustained effort to communicate their activities regularly to the wider parish, to raise awareness of ongoing initiatives and to encourage increased "hands on" participation. The "mission of the month" calendar is one example. Longer term goals are to widen the appeal of outreach opportunities and expand the financial capability to respond to unanticipated needs and crises.
- The parish's various "inreach" ministries have four important objectives – to increase the visibility of these ministries in the congregants' consciousness, to recruit new volunteers, to structure a more-clearly defined representation on the Vestry, and to explore new initiatives (particularly with respect to children, youth, and young adults).
- Key long-range objectives for the parish's youth ministries include increasing participation levels generally for all programs, improving communications, and (in consultation with participating parish families) identifying opportunities for improvements.

### ***Sharing our faith: Community building and fellowship***

The overarching goal of long-range planning has been to develop a better coordinated approach to community building and fellowship activities throughout the parish, resulting in several organizational changes:

- The establishment of a new *Fellowship committee* (with a corresponding new Vestry position) to continue many of the fellowship-oriented programs that *Service League* and the *Membership committee* have organized and ran in the past, and develop new fellowship initiatives for parishioners of all ages.
- Folding the *Service League* organization and finances under Vestry purview, to improve coordination of programming, finances, and communications across committees.
- Refocusing the efforts of the *Membership committee* on the important tasks of welcoming and orienting potential new members and fostering deeper engagement by existing members.

### ***Sustaining the vision: Stewardship of the parish's human, financial & physical resources***

Addressing issues of clergy and staff needs, facilities and spaces, and raising necessary financial resources is the role of the *Personnel, Property, Stewardship, and Finance committees*.

- Stewardship objectives are to grow the proportion of parish households making timely financial pledges and the amount pledged, to increase the targeting of communications to parishioners, to use technology effectively, and to begin planning for the parish's next capital campaign.
- Property objectives & priorities: Reestablish a *Property committee*; reassess the long-term property maintenance and repair needs; upgrade fire and smoke alarm and heating distribution systems; identify and prioritize other needed property improvements (electrical system, replacement windows, etc.). The preliminary cost estimates for these improvements are \$540,000 to \$610,000.

All of the initiatives and goals mentioned here cannot happen without an organized and thoughtful approach to communications. The objectives of the *Communications committee*, working collaboratively with all parts of the parish, are

- to deliver more coordinated and effective communications;;
- to target communications appropriately to parishioners' interests;
- to enhance media coverage of St. Andrew's activities; *and*
- to use electronic communications more effectively.

# St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Wellesley

## LONG RANGE PLAN, 2006-2010

### Background and purpose

#### Why plan? And why now?

A major emphasis of the Vestry's work during 2005/06 has been on *long-range planning*, looking ahead to a little beyond the end of this current decade. The last time that the parish undertook this task was in the late-1990s. A number of important innovations came about as a direct result of that work: the hiring of both a director of youth programs and a parish administrator, the youth mission trips abroad, the Sunday afternoon services, the memorial rose garden, our website, a new photo directory, staff voicemail and email, and more.

For much of the time since that last long-range plan, the Vestry members had been concerned primarily with pressing matters immediately in front of them: progressing the *Many Gifts, One Spirit* campaign, determining priorities in the disposition of those funds, making physical improvements in our buildings (and coping with the exigencies of leaking roofs and boiler failures), meeting the annual challenge of raising operating funds and developing budgets consistent with our expected income, and so on. Often, there's so much that demands attention in the near term that it's difficult to make the time to look much further ahead.

But it's prudent every so often to lift one's eyes from the immediate issues to make sure that we're still headed in the right direction and are adequately prepared to face what we might find around the bends down the road. About what trends and influences on the parish's future should we be most concerned? What things does St. Andrew's currently do well, and what things ought to be improved? Are we content to follow our current path, or should we decide on other routes? How should we respond to our Diocese's challenge to mission, and the specific goals for stewardship and membership growth that the Diocese has targeted? What are our priorities for the future? Planning ahead is a sensible activity for any organization, whether it be a multibillion dollar corporation or a small non-profit association of volunteers. And notwithstanding a firm belief in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, local churches are no exception.

#### What is our approach to long-range planning?

Good planning is better thought of as a *continuous* rather than a *sporadic* activity. This has two implications in the context of the parish's long range plans. *First*, the value of the exercise lies at least as much in the process of carrying it out – the thinking and research necessary to shape the plan – than it does in any "final" plan document. We certainly haven't waited to see the whole picture before launching the implementation of a number of the promising ideas that have emerged in the course of developing the plan. And *secondly*, no plan document is truly "final;" the plan should be viewed much as a flexible road map pointing out the directions in which this Vestry, this congregation, wish to head as seen in early 2007. If the past is a guide, events both outside and within our control (and the workings

of the Holy Spirit) will doubtless lead to a tweaking here, a rethinking there, and perhaps even the abandonment of some expressed objectives that are subsequently judged to be ill-advised.

Our own plans have been developed within the context of the Diocese of Massachusetts' *Mission Strategy*, the development of which began some two to three years prior to our commencing the exercise. The Diocese has articulated a clear vision (and challenge) under the four headlines of *Inviting, Forming, Sending, and Serving*, and has translated that vision into a set of eight implementation goals to be achieved by 2013.<sup>1</sup> The mission strategy concludes

"If we are faithful to our vision and goals, by 2013 we imagine that we will see

- 50% growth in Sunday attendance in the Diocese as others are drawn to know the life-saving reality of Jesus Christ; *and*
- 15% growth in stewardship each year in every parish, with 85% of parishioners participating.

We trust the Holy Spirit will guide us as we respond in faith and gratitude. Let us join God's mission to reconcile the world in love."

Moreover, the 2003 General Convention of the national church passed a resolution calling for Episcopal parishes to double in Sunday attendance by the year 2020. Starting in 2007, meeting this goal requires an average annual growth rate of 5½%.

### **How has the Vestry gone about this task?**

In spring 2005, the Vestry established an ad hoc *Long-range planning steering group*. One of the first initiatives was to undertake a survey of the whole parish, to explore opinions about all aspects of our life together and about the future of the parish. Over 150 parishioners completed either the full questionnaire made available on-line or the shorter pencil-and-paper version. The results provided some clear messages. On the whole, parishioners expressed very high levels of satisfaction with most aspects of parish life. Their priorities for the future focused on attracting and welcoming new members (easily the most important one); maintaining existing staffing levels; repairing, maintaining, and improving the church buildings; improving the church school; and giving more emphasis to outreach.<sup>2</sup>

As the results of the parish survey became available, each church committee or program was asked to discuss the evolution of their area of parish responsibility through the end of this decade, in the light of the survey findings. Where it was felt that there were gaps in the coverage of the parish's existing committee structure – particularly concerning adult faith formation and property – groups of parishioners were formed to consider those matters.

The work and thinking of the individual committees was all brought together in a 6½-hour Vestry retreat in October, 2005. There we considered the totality of our parish life together, clustered under four headings: "Worship and faith formation," "Faith in action" (pastoral care, outreach, youth programs),

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<sup>1</sup> <http://diomass.org/diomass/index.cfm?objectID=26ADB66D-F1FF-A620-96DFDB46786A4318>

<sup>2</sup> An executive summary of the survey findings was prepared and is available at [www.standrewswellesley.org/documents/surveysummary.pdf](http://www.standrewswellesley.org/documents/surveysummary.pdf).

“Attracting, welcoming, and retaining members,” and “Sustaining the vision” (stewardship, finance, property, and personnel). Each of the four sessions involved a brief presentation of the strategic thinking of the relevant committees, along with breakout discussions among the participants.

A fifth session looked at relevant features of our “external” environment, and in a final session the group as a whole made a start in organizing and summarizing what seemed to be most important from the day’s thinking. The steering group subsequently rephrased these “guiding themes” and presented them to the Vestry for approval.

During the spring of 2006, the committees were asked to translate the guiding themes into *objectives* within their own areas of interest. These were collated and discussed by the Vestry in a second half-day retreat, held in June 2006. Again the steering group worked both to synthesize the individual committee contributions and to foster discussions between the different parts of the parish where it appeared to be beneficial to do so. The results of this two years of thinking, discussing, inter-relating, and praying together are summarized in this document.

## Guiding themes for our plans

As we considered our parish life together over the next five or six years, we saw much in what we currently do that is good and which we wished to perpetuate. However, we also believed that the parish could and should grow in several ways, to keep our baptismal promises. We identified the following as our highest priorities for improvements in our life together:

*We want to **grow in faith***

We want to add to the opportunities that the parish provides to members of all ages to deepen their Christian faith. We view faith formation as a *lifelong* journey.

*We want to **express our faith in action***

We want to strengthen our outreach ministries and our witness for justice and peace within our communities and the world at large.

*We want to be **better disciples of Jesus***

We want to understand Jesus’ commission to us as his disciples, and deepen our commitment to follow his teachings in our home, work, and community lives.

*We want to be **a more inviting and nurturing community***

We want to attract and welcome new members into the parish, and respond meaningfully to the needs of all parishioners for faith formation, fellowship, and pastoral care.

*We want to be **better stewards of God’s gifts to us***

We want to make wise choices in the use and conservation of all of our parish resources — our financial assets, our physical property, our God-given talents, and our time together (on Sunday mornings and at other times).

*We want to **communicate more effectively***

both within and beyond our parish community. This includes telling our story to newcomers and people who are not members of the parish; encouraging clearer, more transparent, and more efficient communication between the parish leadership and members; and better coordination and exchange of information and ideas between different interest groups within the parish.

## **Growing in faith: worship and faith formation**

### **Introduction**

“Growing in faith” and “becoming better disciples of Jesus” were clearly identified as among the most widely-supported of the guiding themes. Our most central activity is to gather together for worship and learning, chiefly on Sunday mornings but also at other times of the week, and the long-range planning process devoted considerable time and energy to reviewing the parish’s current offerings in worship and Christian education.

The parish’s *Worship committee* and an *ad hoc Music long-range planning group* met several times to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of our current programs, and in particular to review the responses that parishioners had made to questions about music and worship in the all-parish survey. The levels of satisfaction with worship at St. Andrew’s were very high, but we did receive several recommendations for changes that we felt merited adoption as long-range objectives.

At the same time an *ad hoc Christian formation task force* reviewed the parish’s existing formation programs for children, youth, and adults. The all-parish survey indicated that these were seen as varied, comprehensive, and of high quality. The basic tenet of the task force was that Christian learning is best viewed as a *lifelong* process, extending well beyond the traditional priority of religious education for children. The task force worked to determine what should be changed or added to the current program to foster lifelong learning for all members of our congregation.

We were impressed, too, by the empirical evidence that a concentration on excellence in worship and teaching is a key driver – perhaps *the* key driver – of parish growth. In a 2005 Diocesan workshop, leaders of All Saints’, Beverly Hills (a church that has experienced a large growth in numbers in recent years) observed that they had not consciously set out to grow *per se*: they viewed their growth as a by-product of a strong focus on worship and faith formation programs. And Diana Butler Bass, in addressing the 2005 Diocesan convention about her study of “successful” churches in the mainline denominations, remarked that virtually every one of the congregations that she had judged to be successful placed a strong and continuing emphasis on adult faith formation programs.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Diana Butler Bass (2006), *Christianity for the Rest of Us: How the Neighborhood Church is Transforming the Faith*, Harper.

## **Worship and music**

Our main long-range objectives in worship and music are

- to enliven our Sunday-morning worship by strengthening our parish choirs;
- to examine worship offerings on Sundays and at mid-week services with an openness to adding or changing liturgical practices as appropriate;
- to assess whether the times of our mid-week services could be adjusted to accommodate more members of the congregation; *and*
- to acknowledge and support the spiritual formation of those parishioners performing lay liturgical ministries (chalice bearers, lay readers, acolytes, and lay Eucharistic ministers).

The responsibility for progressing towards these objectives will rest with the clergy (canonically responsible for all matters to do with worship) advised by the *Worship committee* (and, it is hoped, a reinvigorated *Music committee*), and with the Director of Music.

As a result, at least in part, of the on-going long-range planning discussions, several steps have already been taken that are consistent with these objectives:

- Youth choir rehearsals have been moved to Sunday mornings;
- A reading from the psalter has been introduced into the 8 a.m. Sunday Eucharist;
- The 5 p.m. Sunday worship now has a lay liturgical minister scheduled to assist; *and*
- Brief musical preludes have been played before the 8 a.m. Sunday Eucharist on special feast days.

Other steps are beginning or are anticipated. In order of priority, they are:

- The search for a new Director of Music, with wide input from interested parishioners and with the re-establishment of an active *Music committee*;
- A careful evaluation of the overall “Sunday experience” from the viewpoints of both established parishioners and “newcomers,” with sensitivity to simultaneously accomplishing our goals with respect to worship, Christian formation, and hospitality;
- A review of the timing of mid-week liturgies, possibly adding a service at a time more convenient for more people; *and*
- Working with the Communications committee to find the best balance among in-service announcements, Sunday bulletin announcements, email announcements, and other communication channels.

## **Christian formation**

Our main objectives in Christian formation are

- to add programs to augment the existing offerings, especially on Sundays when the largest proportion of the congregation is able to gather;
- to increase coordination among the parish’s religious education offerings, to build a program dedicated to *lifelong* spiritual formation;
- to improve communication about Christian formation offerings; *and*

- to explore ways to offer more support for life transitions.

The responsibility for progressing towards these objectives will rest in the near-term with the Vestryperson for education, with the *Church School committee*, and with the clergy. It is hoped to revise the committee structure for this area of ministry (as summarized below) to bring more lay participation into various facets of the work. As adult Christian formation activities expand, it will be important that this be led by lay volunteers, so as not to place undue additional work and reliance on the parish's clergy.

Several steps have already been taken as a direct or indirect result of the long-range planning work:

- A new Sunday morning, between-services *Christian Learning Series* was introduced in September 2006;
- The clergy have been playing an increased role in the Children's Chapel program;
- The mid-week Lenten series is being restructured to have a stronger intergenerational element; *and*
- Fellowship events, often with an intergenerational component, are being planned to an "at least monthly" calendar, in response to a suggestion originating from the *Christian formation task force*.

But there is still a lot to do in this area over coming years, to bring us towards the vision of a top-notch program emphasizing lifelong learning. Here are some of the anticipated tactics, roughly in order of priority:

- Building on the existing *Church School committee*, create an *Education committee (or Christian formation committee)* to supervise the planning, coordination, and implementation of education programs for children, youth, and adults;
- Create an *Adult formation subcommittee* to oversee the scope of offerings and to coordinate with other teaching faculties;
- Develop a lay-led adult formation "faculty" similar to the structure of the current Church School and youth faculties;
- Explore more fully the available "off the shelf" programs developed in recent years that provide adult courses in basic Christian doctrine,<sup>4</sup> and consider their applicability for use at St. Andrew's, either in a group setting, individually over the Internet, or some combination of the two;
- Consider offering other new adult formation opportunities addressing (for example) prayer, pastoral support, fellowship, or Bible study;
- Review (and promote or sponsor, when appropriate) programs available in the wider community that may be helpful to parishioners involved in major life transitions (such as bereavement groups or other support groups);
- Look for opportunities to collaborate with neighboring churches to achieve a critical mass for participation and to make more effective use of teaching resources. This could be done by offering

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<sup>4</sup> These programs include *Disciples of Christ in Community (DOCC)*, the *Alpha Course*, *Via Media*, and *Living the Questions*.

more community-based programs at St. Andrew's and by participating in programs offered by other institutions in Wellesley and surrounding towns; *and*

- Examine the parish calendar and survey parishioners to identify the most propitious times to offer Christian formation programs.

## ***Faith in action: outreach, pastoral care, and youth programs***

### **Introduction**

Almost all of St. Andrew's many ministries have one or more components that require translating our faith into some form of action. The areas of ministry addressed here – outreach, pastoral care (or “inreach”), and youth programs – have been clustered together partly because of their affinities to each other and partly because there are other major themes of the long-range plan that logically embrace many other faith-into-action programs. We highlight these three ministries, while realizing that they are related to many other programs not specifically addressed under the heading of *Faith in action*.

### **Outreach**

This ministry comprises all the programs in which St. Andrew's works with and/or assists people in need who are not themselves members of the parish. The parish's *Outreach committee* coordinates these ministries, and reports to the Vestry through its chairperson.

The strengths that have been evident in this program in the recent past include a strong constituency for the outreach ministry to play a major role in our parish life, a thoughtful independent review of our outreach efforts by Janet Giele, strong leadership (combined with the infusion of new members and new momentum into the *Outreach committee*), and an increasing financial commitment.

At the same time, the program faces several challenges as it looks ahead. The parish has a diverse variety of outreach programs, requiring some measure of prioritization and coordination. The volunteer base is diffuse. Communication of outreach opportunities and developments to the parish at large has long been a concern, both to encourage more extensive parishioner engagement and to help the congregation appreciate all that is being done in their name and on their behalf. The *Outreach committee* will need to fill some roles previously handled by the St. Andrew's *Service League*. And responding in a timely way to *ad hoc* financial needs, without launching a myriad of independent financial appeals, is also a challenge.

The *Outreach committee* has articulated several interrelated objectives as part of the long-range plan:

- *Encourage greater participation among parishioners in all forms of outreach activities* (essentially, donation of financial resources, of time, of skills, and of professional expertise). This objective has several facets. There has been some call to provide more opportunities for “hands on” projects within easy access from Wellesley, including ones that can make good use of intergenerational participation. There's also a perceived need for involvement in projects that can use short-term, limited, or intermittent commitments. The *Outreach committee* wants to encourage a greater proportion of parishioners to engage with at least one outreach opportunity, and they stress the community-building benefits of such involvement. And there's also a need to identify successor

“champions” for legacy programs currently represented by senior members of the committee – that is, to put the next generation of leadership in place.

- *Improve the communication of outreach ministries to the parish.* This objective includes making more effective use of bulletin boards and the parish website, both for information (including photographs) and for recruitment; clearer explication of individual projects and the overall program; and taking advantage of more face-to-face opportunities to report to the parish on outreach initiatives.
- *Widen the appeal of the outreach opportunities.* There is a perceived need for projects affording the ability to volunteer time on a flexible or limited basis, for more “hands on” (as distinct from financial donation) opportunities, for more projects offering “whole family” participation, and for partnering with other churches in town or in the Diocese.
- *Expand financial capability.* This is always a challenge, particularly during those times when the overall financial viability of the parish is most stretched. But we do want to be able to respond to future unanticipated pressing needs for help with the same alacrity and determination that the parish responded in 2005 to Hurricane Katrina. The parish should continue to grow its outreach commitment as a share of the annual operating budget, and should unify and clarify its reporting to parishioners regarding the uses to which their contributions have been put.

Some outreach initiatives proposed under the ægis of long-range planning have already been implemented:

- The *Outreach committee* has developed a calendar in which a different “mission of the month” is highlighted throughout the church year;
- New program offerings have been added to those supported by St. Andrew’s in response to some of the identified “gaps” (for example, a growing knitting/handicrafts ministry, and the serving of dinners at the Framingham Salvation Army facility); *and*
- An adult mission trip was undertaken to Christ Church, Bay St. Louis and to *Camp Coast Care*, followed by several working visits by individual parishioners.

The responsibility for progressing towards our objectives in this ministry area lies with the Vestryperson for outreach and with the *Outreach committee*.

## **Inreach**

In addition to the extensive pastoral work carried out by all members of the St. Andrew’s clergy team, the parish has a *Lay pastoral care team* comprising approximately fifteen parish volunteers whose work is coordinated by Cecilie Godderidge. Members of the team meet for training session once a month, and each of them calls regularly on one or more members of the parish who are confined to their homes or have chronic medical challenges. This group is augmented by a small number of Lay Eucharistic Ministers who are trained and licensed by the Diocese to bring the Eucharistic elements to shut-in parishioners.

The parish has a number of other similar ministries. An informal network, coordinated by Donna Kell, provides meals to parishioners for relatively brief periods, usually after hospitalization or some other

family or individual crisis. Another informal network, coordinated by Janet Flett, provides transportation for parishioners who need help in getting to and from medical appointments.

The strengths of all of these programs are a clearly-focused mission, the high levels of commitment evidenced by the volunteers, strong leadership over a sustained period of time, strong clergy support, and (in some cases) a limited time commitment for volunteers. The challenges mostly derive from the fact that these ministries are not particularly well-known within the parish. While Our Lord cautions us against trumpeting our good works,<sup>5</sup> both the level of volunteer resources and the continuity of program leadership would be better assured by raising the visibility of these ministries somewhat.

Accordingly, the objectives for the inreach ministries are

- to increase the visibility of these ministries in the consciousness of the parish without compromising necessary confidentiality;
- to recruit new suitably-qualified volunteers for these ministries;
- to structure a more clearly-defined representation and responsibility for these ministries on the Vestry; *and*
- to develop inreach ministries appropriate to the needs of children, youth, and young adults.

For the time being at least, the responsibility for progressing towards our objectives in this ministry area lies with the Rector and with the people actively engaged in the ministries.

## **Youth ministries**

The St. Andrew's programs targeted to young people of and above the typical age of confirmation comprise the *Youth inquirers' class*, the *Middle School* and *Senior High youth groups*, a new *Senior seminar*, and an informal but vital network of former members of these programs now in college or graduate school. These ministries have strong links with our faith formation programs as well as with our outreach program. They are coordinated and overseen by the Director of Youth Ministries.

The *Youth inquirers' class* typically comprises young people in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. It is often seen as a recognized rite of passage connected with growing up in the church, and it is a well-established program that is engaged actively by many parish families. There is a well-organized curriculum and strong leadership coordinated by the parents and the parish staff. The Diocese is moving to arranging confirmation services at the Deanery level, which implies a change in the way we have done things in the past. Our first involvement with a Deanery confirmation occurred in 2006, when over thirty St. Andrew's young people were among the large Deanery group confirmed at a Saturday service in our church.

The *Middle School* and *Senior High School youth groups* are well-established programs with dedicated staff support and a structure understood by both students and their families. The *Middle School group* provides an easy transition from earlier grades into the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, understood and anticipated by families, and there is a growing pool of parents active as volunteers or consultants. Similarly, the *Senior*

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<sup>5</sup> *Matthew* 6:1-4.

*High group* has a good network of adult advisors comprising both parents and former members. It has a well-established tradition of mission and outreach involvement that has strong parish support. In the recent past, the SHYG has been responsible for coordinating the Acolyte ministry for Sunday services.

The *Senior seminar* is a relatively new program, still viewed as being in a pilot phase. It has a stronger Christian formation-orientation than have the youth groups. A group of senior high school members has been meeting monthly with the Rector, the Director of Youth Ministries, and Sarah Fink to discuss spiritual and ethical questions generated by the group. So far, there has been good participation, strong initial parent interest, and good discussions of interesting topics.

There are challenges common to all of these programs: scheduling, communication, and integration. Many young people have busy after-school and weekend schedules, and finding optimum times for events is hard. While most participants can be contacted easily and quickly via email, it is often difficult to get responses to program communications. And the various programs could benefit to their mutual advantage if there were greater coordination in certain ways.

These are the long-range planning objectives identified for the youth ministries:

- Continued efforts to help confirmands and their families adjust to the new Deanery-based confirmation program;
- Continued experimentation with the *Senior seminar* program, to explore possible new or additional elements and formats;
- Forging more connecting links between the different programs for young people – the transition between the inquirers’ class and the youth groups and senior seminar, for example, or greater integration of the *Middle school youth group* with the *Church school* program;
- Continuing emphasis on improving communications, especially looking to the St. Andrew’s website as a currently underutilized resource;
- Undertake a study (perhaps annually, as a “season kick-off” exercise) of parish families with young people in these age groups to develop a more coherent view of typical schedules, concerns, and relevant talents and willingness to engage on the part of both the children and parents;
- Generally, increased participation levels in all of the programs, both by the young people themselves (among parish families and their school friends) and by the support group of interested parents, former members, and other adult parishioners with relevant skills;
- Providing more resources and opportunities for the parents and other adults involved in these programs to interchange ideas and shared learnings, and to discuss Christian parenting; *and*
- Developing a more formally structured ministry with college students, both the former members of the youth programs and those attending the nearby academic institutions.

Much of this list reflects initiatives that are already underway, spurred in part by the long-range planning exercise. The responsibility for progressing towards our objectives for these ministries lies with the Director of Youth Ministries and the Rector.

## *Sharing our faith: community building and fellowship*

### **Introduction**

Within the St. Andrew's parish family, special events, volunteer committees, and personal interactions can serve to strengthen, enhance, and nurture the bonds of community and fellowship. The work of the parish depends upon – and thrives when – individuals assist with *Bargain Haul*, donate *Silent Auction* items, greet people arriving for worship, serve on a committee, teach Sunday school, help distribute food, and/or host coffee hour.

With today's hectic pace and the tight budgeting of many individuals' time, there is a desire to adapt and streamline the organizational structure and to improve communications, to make it easier for volunteers to find fulfilling roles and to participate in fellowship events between the times when we meet regularly for worship. While we have a talented and industrious professional staff, the parish relies primarily on the volunteer service and the God-given talents of its members to serve on the Vestry and on the various committees that undertake the programs of the church. Volunteer time and expertise are valuable resources that need to be used efficiently and effectively. That is one component of being "better stewards of God's gifts to us," the fifth in the list of guiding themes for our long-range plan.

Traditionally, St. Andrew's has benefited from a rich calendar of fellowship-oriented events. However, the responsibility for planning and implementing these events has been shared by different committees and organizations within the parish – most notably, the *Service League* and the *Membership committee*. In recent years, this approach has created some critical issues that have been the focus of much discussion and thought throughout the long-range planning process:

- The *Membership committee's* role in planning and providing hospitality for various fellowship events requires a good deal of time and volunteer resources, leaving less time to focus on that committee's other important role: the welcoming and integration of new members and the fostering of increased engagement by established members.
- *Service League* has traditionally planned and hosted many vital events and fundraisers for St. Andrew's, but as a functionally independent, "self-run" organization with limited Vestry representation, the communication and coordination with other committees has been less than optimal.
- In addition, participation in some *Service League* events (notably the luncheons) has declined and the recruitment of a significant *Service League* officer slate on an annual basis has grown more and more difficult in recent years, due partly to changing life-styles and partly to having to compete for the time of potential Vestry candidates.

As a direct result of the long-range planning activities and a focus on the growth and nurturing of membership, a number of radical changes have been proposed to the structure of the parish's community building and fellowship ministries. At the highest level, the overarching goal has been to *develop a better coordinated approach to community building and fellowship activities* throughout the parish – one that includes oversight, organization, and communication. These changes were developed intensively through the latter half of 2006, particularly with the work of an *ad hoc* task force formed to

guide the integration of the Service League more fully into the parish governance structure, and are already well on the way to fruition.

## **Fellowship**

Specifically, these are the objectives and tactics espoused for fellowship ministries in the long-range plan:

- Establish a new *Fellowship committee*, chaired by a new Vestry position for fellowship, to take primary responsibility for all existing and future activities for which a major purpose is fellowship. This includes such events as the annual picnic and pancake supper (previously the responsibility of the *Membership committee*), coffee hours, teas, and other hospitality events (much of which were the responsibility of the *Service League*).
- Fold up the *Service League* as a separate, independent organization with its own governance and financial structure, transferring its finances and programmatic responsibilities to the oversight of the Vestry and of the parish's various committees, while ensuring the maintenance of all successful *Service League* initiatives.
- Specifically, pass the oversight responsibilities for the *Service League's* two major fund-raising activities – the annual *Bargain Haul* and *Silent auction* – to the new *Fellowship committee*, augmented by serious efforts to generate support from other parish committees.
- In planning for and implementing the work of the new *Fellowship committee*, strongly encourage cooperative efforts (and the sharing of responsibilities) with other committees as appropriate (for example, with the *Outreach committee* for events raising outreach funding, with the *Membership committee*, and with the *Church school* or proposed *Education committee*).
- Develop an annual calendar of both existing and new fellowship events so that at least one such event is planned for each month of the program year.
- Build and nurture programs that meet needs across different parish constituencies – for example, seniors, young families, new members, and so on. Place an emphasis on intergenerational, “whole family” activities.

The responsibility for attaining these objectives will lie with the proposed new Vestry position for fellowship and with the proposed new *Fellowship committee*. It is hoped that this committee will have a broad membership, drawing particularly on its predecessor organizations: on active members of the *Service League* and on members of the *Membership committee* interested in maintaining their roles in providing hospitality.

Many of the changes identified in this ministry area are already well-advanced. At their December 2006 meeting, members of the Vestry received with great gratitude the transfer of assets from the *Service League*, and expressed an intention to incorporate the League's spending priorities of recent years into the parish's budgeting and spending practices. That is to say, in the future 50% of the proceeds from *Bargain Haul* and the *Silent auction* will continue to be dedicated to outreach, while the other 50% will be allocated to needs within the parish that have historically been supported from *Service League* funding.

An important derivative of this change is that, by incorporating what were hitherto *Service League* responsibilities into the parish's annual budget and financial accounts, those documents will in future provide a more holistic, clearer, and easier-to-understand picture of the parish's spending and priorities.

The establishment of a new Vestry position for fellowship requires an amendment to the by-laws, and this is scheduled to be addressed by vote of the parish at the January 2007 Annual Meeting. If that proposal is approved, the new Vestryperson will also be elected at that meeting.

## **Membership**

Without its current responsibilities for organizing various fellowship events, the *Membership committee* can focus its attention more clearly on the attraction and integration of new members, and on the nurturing of greater levels of involvement and participation by existing members. The objectives identified for this ministry are:

- Improvements to the parish's current approach to welcoming and orienting potential new members, including consideration of friendly greetings, access to information, the coffee hour, and follow-up with people expressing an interest in possible membership.
- Improvements to the coordination with the Church school on identifying and following up with newcomers whose first contact with the parish is by registering children for the Church school.
- Encouragement of increased participation by potential, new, and established members, through (for example) personalized invitations, the assignment of contacts ("buddies") within the parish, and targeted communications.
- In close collaboration with the other cognizant committees, the encouragement of a greater variety of "small group" opportunities for education, outreach, fellowship, and community building that are easy to engage in even on an intermittent or discrete basis (for example, bible study, monthly fellowship events, one day outreach volunteer events, and special events such as *Bargain Haul* and the *Silent auction*).
- Build programs that encourage the integration of new and established members into the life and ministries of the parish across different parish constituencies – for example, seniors, young families, and so on – placing an emphasis on intergenerational, "whole family" activities. This objective should be pursued in close collaboration with the *Fellowship* and *Stewardship committees*.

Responsibility for pursuing these objectives will rest with the Vestryperson for membership and the *Membership committee*. Again, much of this work is underway already, spurred by the impetus of long-range planning. In 2006, the procedures for "exit greeters" (who support the clergy in identifying newcomers as they exit through the narthex after a service, and obtain the information necessary to permit a follow-up) were made more comprehensive and systematic. Also, there are strong overlaps with other ministries in the parish, including worship, communications, pastoral care, and Christian formation.

## Communications

From an early stage of the long-range planning, improvements to both the content of, and the means used for, parish communications were identified as high-priority objectives that permeate every other ministry of the parish. The language of our guiding themes expressed this concern comprehensively yet succinctly:

*“We want to **communicate more effectively***

*both within and beyond our parish community. This includes telling our story to newcomers and people who are not members of the parish; encouraging clearer, more transparent, and more efficient communication between the parish leadership and members; and better coordination and exchange of information and ideas between different interest groups within the parish.”*

Specific objectives identified for this ministry are

- to deliver more coordinated and effective communications both to promote events and to encourage increased participation/volunteering;
- to increase the targeting of communications to parishioners, so that they increasingly receive information that is tailored (in content or presentation) to their own particular circumstances or interests;
- to enhance the media coverage of St. Andrew’s activities, both within Wellesley and over an expanded geographical footprint; *and*
- to make greater and more effective use of electronic communications, as a means to disseminating information in a more cost-effective, timely, attention-grabbing, and personalized way (including periodic redesign and frequent up-dating of the parish website, expansion of the website content, increased use of email for news and invitations, updated equipment, and well-trained staff and volunteers).

The responsibility for progressing towards our objectives in this ministry area lies with the Vestryperson for communications and the *Communications committee*. However, because this is a ministry that cross-cuts with all aspects of parish life, it will be very important for every group within the parish to consider, in a more dedicated and continuous way, both the messages that they wish to communicate and the various means available to accomplish that. The *Communications committee* will act primarily as a facilitator and coordinator, rather than as a generator of message content.

## ***Sustaining the vision: stewardship of the parish’s human, financial, and physical resources***

### **Introduction**

The lay leaders of St. Andrew’s – the Wardens, Clerk, Treasurer, and other elected members of the Vestry – shoulder a variety of responsibilities for the parish. The most visible of these is to act as the executive board of the parish, responsible for strategy on all matters other than those which canon law specifically vests in the Rector. Another is to support the clergy and other professional staff as they lead or carry out the many different ministries that draw each of us to the parish. Less visible but equally

important are the responsibilities necessary to ensure that St. Andrew's continues to have the physical, human, and financial resources necessary to support these many ministries – to “sustain the vision.”

Appropriately, the long-range planning process has focused initially and primarily on the ministries and on the vision itself, on what would be called in a non-religious organization the program and mission. Only after goals and objectives for the ministries are clear is it time to reconsider the adequacy and stewardship of our resources to carry out these plans. Do we have the clergy and staff required for the leadership, support, and implementation that we expect? Do we compensate them appropriately for the work that they do? Do we have facilities and spaces to enhance our worship and other ministries? Can we raise the necessary financial resources and have we allocated our funds in the wisest and most astute ways? Reviewing, recommending, answering these questions (and others like them) is the role of the *Personnel, Property, Stewardship, and Finance committees*. These committees could be said to focus on the “business” responsibilities of the Vestry.

## **Stewardship**

The St. Andrew's *Stewardship committee* is responsible for keeping parishioners aware of our responsibilities for the Christian allocation of the God-given resources of our time, of our talents, and of our treasure. While Our Lord is recorded in the gospels as saying nothing or little explicitly about many of the social or ethical issues that cause controversy among some types of his followers these days, He did have a relatively large amount to say about how we should regard and use our “wealth” and our level of commitment to His teachings. While the most visible role of the *Stewardship committee* is in the fall when it solicits pledges of financial giving for the coming calendar year, stewardship is a ministry that is more properly seen as undergirding many aspects of our life together. It complements the role of the *Membership committee* in challenging us to consider the priorities we express in the allocation of our precious time – one resource for which we are all given an *equal* amount, week to week – and to engage more fully in the life of the parish.

*Pledged* income is very important to St. Andrew's, as it is to most other parishes. While we have grown our endowment significantly over the last twenty years, the income drawn from that source is still only a small contributor to our annual income. Parishioner giving in 2006 accounted for roughly 81% of the operating funds, while endowment income – the financial earnings on our savings – accounted for only 8%. Timely pledging of parish giving for the following calendar year is important because only if they have a reasonably sound forecast of the next year's income can the Vestry members make sensible, responsible decisions about spending. Parishioners expect and want the parish to be financially responsible, not to spend beyond our resources, but the responsibility that is implicit in that wish is that we tell the parish the amount that we promise to give in time for that information to be used in annual budgeting.

During the long-range planning process, *Stewardship committee* members have participated in national and Diocesan workshops, and have met twice with a consultant, the Reverend Con Quinby. They have consulted a range of published resources for ideas that have worked elsewhere and may have applicability to St. Andrew's. Several major emphases have emerged from their deliberations. First, that stewardship messages to the congregation need to be tied closely with *theological* considerations, not just expressions of financial or volunteer needs. Secondly, that the stewardship ministry should be

viewed more properly as a *year-round* activity, both by the committee members and the parish at large, rather than just a “stewardship season” emphasis in the fall. Thirdly, in advocating good stewardship to parish members, we should not assume that “one message fits all,” but the messages should be tailored to the interests and circumstances of the individual parishioners. Relatedly, the approach to our stewardship messages should be varied from year to year.<sup>6</sup>

Accordingly, the long-range objectives for the stewardship ministry are

- to grow over time both the proportion of parish households making timely financial pledges (that is, *before* the beginning of the calendar year to which they relate) and the amount pledged, in real (inflation-adjusted) terms, thereby permitting specific, measurable financial targets;
- to increase the targeting of communications to parishioners, so that they increasingly receive information that is tailored (in content or presentation) to their own particular circumstances or interests;
- to raise the visibility of the importance of good stewardship (of time, of capabilities valuable to the parish, and of financial resources) throughout the full church year – liturgically, programmatically, and in communications with parishioners – and to develop a “stewardship calendar” as an aid to doing that;
- to use technology (particularly electronic communications and payment methods) more effectively to enhance the flow of both pledges and payments; *and*
- to begin planning for the parish’s next capital campaign.

The responsibility for progressing towards our objectives in this ministry area lies with the Vestryperson for stewardship and the *Stewardship committee*.

## **Property**

The parish’s *Centennial Capital Campaign* (1992-94) financed major refurbishments to the sanctuary, Room 2, and the parish hall. It also established an annual draw-down of \$10,000 from the endowment to build a fund that could be used, as necessary, to cover longer-term maintenance and repair needs than those recurring items that are included in the annual budget. It was hoped that the existence of this fund would insulate the annual budget somewhat from the “shocks” of major expenses that arise from time to time, often on a “need to fix as rapidly as possible” basis.

The idea was basically a good one, but the annual amount has proved inadequate to fulfill the objective of having a “cushion” fund building to a level high enough to cover these longer-range needs as they arise. In most recent years, the spasmodic, unanticipated repair and maintenance costs have exceeded the annual property budget amount by more than the \$10,000, so the draw-down has typically gone straight to defraying these “overruns” on a year-to-year basis, without accumulating any balance in a “long-term maintenance” reserve fund.

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<sup>6</sup> For example, the 2006 theme was on the theology of stewardship, while for 2007 we have focused on the role of St. Andrew’s in parishioners’ daily lives, and how as individuals we can “make a difference.”

The more recent *Many Gifts, One Spirit* capital campaign funded further significant improvements to the property, most notably in the chancel area, the kitchen and other basement areas, the second floor of the office wing, and the Montessori wing. In obtaining building permits for this work, we have been under pressure from the town's fire department to upgrade the church's fire and smoke alarm system also. This was done throughout the basement as part of the refurbishments there, but has yet to be done for the rest of the property. While tested regularly without problem and in compliance with the code for older property, the system does not meet the standards that would now be required for new construction.

Another significant concern is with the church's steam heating distribution system, which has been the primary cause of the "unexpected" repair cost overruns over recent years. This ancient network of pipes is increasingly developing leaks, and we are overdue to consider replacing the whole system, perhaps with another method of heat distribution. Our roofs, also, have been a chronic draw on resources, but we believe that they are in reasonably good shape at the moment.

The Vestryperson for property works with the sexton on issues of routine maintenance and repairs, sometimes in consultation with Jan Gleysteen who donates his time as the church's architectural consultant. For the purposes of long-range planning, an *ad hoc Property LRP group* was formed to review priorities and make recommendations for objectives in this ministry. In approximate order of priority, they are

- to reconstitute a *Property committee*, meeting on a periodic basis (quarterly or semiannually, say) to review priorities and tactics, and advise on all property matters;
- to reundertake an updated assessment of our long-term property maintenance and repair needs, and (as a result) to recommend to the Vestry, in consultation with the *Finance committee*, a revision to our policy for accruing an adequate long-term maintenance reserve;
- to upgrade the smoke and fire alarm system to meet the code requirements for new construction;<sup>7</sup>
- to undertake a major upgrade of the church's heating system, replacing (rather than "patching") the distribution system;<sup>8</sup>
- to make good progress towards undertaking a number of other long-identified calls for property improvements (that it would, in fact, be sensible to do at the same time as work on the heating system) – an upgrade of the electrical system,<sup>9</sup> replacement of the windows in the office wing to conserve energy,<sup>10</sup> and air conditioning in the office wing;<sup>11</sup> *and*

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<sup>7</sup> While difficult to foresee with any precision, an initial rough estimate for these costs is in the range of \$55,000 to \$75,000.

<sup>8</sup> Approximate costs are thought to lie in the \$140,000 to \$165,000 range.

<sup>9</sup> Approximately \$75,000 to \$100,000.

<sup>10</sup> Approximately \$170,000.

<sup>11</sup> Approximately \$100,000.

- to work with the *Finance committee* to develop recommendations to the Vestry concerning the financing of these physical improvements.<sup>12</sup>

The responsibility for progressing towards our objectives in this ministry area lies in the first instance with the Vestryperson for property, and with (it is hoped) a reconstituted *Property committee*.

### **Human resources**

The parish's *Personnel committee* sets and oversees personnel policies for the staff, budgets for staff compensation and fringe benefits, and advises the Rector, Wardens, and Vestry on matters concerning hiring, supervision, retention, and termination. Like the *Finance committee*, the *Personnel committee* is more often a facilitator than it is an originator of new program initiatives.

The Diocese sets guidelines for clergy compensation, and we typically use those guidelines to influence decisions about compensating lay professional staff as well. Clergy compensation is, in fact, a complex topic, because different parishes and clergy have many different arrangements regarding the provision of housing (and defraying related costs), housing allowances, and other components of the total compensation package.

The objectives identified in the long-range plan for this ministry are

- to help other parish ministries accomplish any of their objectives that have human resource implications; *and*
- to review the compensation of our staff in light of the Diocesan guidelines and other relevant benchmarks, to ensure that we provide compensation appropriate to a parish of our size and characteristics.

The responsibility for progressing towards our objectives in this ministry area lies with the Vestryperson for personnel, the *Personnel committee*, and the Rector.

### **Financial matters**

The parish's *Finance committee* advises the Vestry on all matters pertaining to the financial affairs of the parish: capital and operating budgets, investment, risk management, and financial performance. A major annual responsibility of this committee is to recommend an annual operating budget that balances the mission of the parish with the financial resources that can be foreseen to be available to carry out that mission.

The objectives identified for this ministry are

- to help other parish ministries accomplish any of their objectives that have financial implications;
- to work more closely than hitherto with other committees, particularly those (like stewardship, property, personnel, and outreach) that have a strong financial component to their decisionmaking, perhaps by planning some collaborative meetings within the annual calendar; *and*

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<sup>12</sup> In total, a formidable \$540,000 to \$610,000.

- to work progressively towards presenting financial reports to the parish that provide a more holistic and “user friendly” view of our financial affairs, indicating more clearly the parish’s income sources and spending priorities.

The responsibility for progressing towards our objectives in this ministry area lies with the Vestryperson for finance, the Treasurer, and the *Finance committee*.

### **A Vestrywide objective**

At various stages in its long-range planning deliberations, the Vestry has wondered aloud about our collective *efficiency* in planning and carrying out the parish’s various ministries. Do we have too many committees? Do we have too many meetings? Is there some advantage to “clustering” meetings, such that several related committees might meet at the same time? Are we making optimal use of the electronic media, and how far can modern telecommunications reduce the need for face-to-face interaction?

Other than a general agreement that we want to be as efficient as possible in the use of our time devoted to parish administration, these discussions have not so far resulted in concrete proposals that have looked closely at the practicalities of instituting changes. However, this topic will be revisited, with a general objective of exploring with an open mind any ideas that could help us improve our stewardship of time devoted to carrying out the parish’s mission.

### **In conclusion**

We believe that the work, thinking, and praying that the Vestry and many other parishioners have devoted to this activity over the last two years has already begun to bear substantial fruit, and we hope and trust that it will continue to help shape parish life to the better.

### **The long-range planning steering group**

Jessica del Prete	Edie Dolnikowski
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Pam Henrikson	Michael Kemp
Bill Lorenz (resigned June 2006, on moving to London)	