

Strategic Plan

Goal

At the Annual Meeting of Vestry in January 2007, the Strategic Planning Committee was created to take the findings of the exercises conducted in October and January and to begin work on a new Strategic Plan for the parish. The membership consisted of: Doug Green (Chair, Christ Church), Elmer Maracle (Christ Church), Steve Lindsay (Holy Trinity, resigned Autumn 2007), Cathie Vick (Holy Trinity, now Christ Church), Bill Brant (All Saints'), and the Rector. The last planning study of any kind was more than five years old and it was felt that, under the leadership of our new Rector, we needed to create for ourselves a vision and a plan that would help us through the next five years or so. Over the course of the year, the members of the committee met to complete the process of creating a Strategic Plan. The deliverable pieces of the Plan to date are: a mission statement, a vision statement, operating values, and the strengths and weaknesses internal to the parish organisation. There are still two main phases left to complete, after Vestry, including: an assessment of opportunities and threats external to the parish organisation and the development of a series of goals, objectives, and strategies to help us achieve our mission and vision.

Mission Statement

The first component of the Strategic Plan that the committee worked to develop was the mission statement. A mission statement “describes what our purpose is and why. It can simply answer the question, ‘Why do we exist?’ or ‘What is our reason for being?’”. After a number of meetings, the committee came up with a mission statement based on the information received from the October and January exercises, the Diocese of Ontario Strategic Plan, Holy Scripture, and our experience as parishioners. The mission statement was brought to the July meeting of Parish Council, where it was scrutinised and amended. With the approval of the Parish Council, the following is the draft mission statement the committee is bringing to Vestry for final approval.

Our mission, for the glory of God in Jesus Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit, is to:

- Celebrate all that God has done for us through worship and witness with others.
- Respond to our call to be disciples of Christ by sharing our faith, rooted in the Word of God, with others and encouraging others to become followers of Christ through word and action.
- Practise good stewardship of our human, financial and environmental resources, working to ensure that all of God’s Creation is viable for future generations.

- Grow ourselves and others by reaching out to our communities, following Jesus' example of generous caring, giving, and welcoming.

As a Christian Church, it seemed obvious that all that we do is for the glory of God and this ought to be stated clearly in our mission, particularly since this may be seen by people for whom this truth is not so obvious. We declare our orthodoxy as a Church by naming the Holy Trinity.

The four bullets contain the essentials that the committee believed informed our life and work together. Christians respond to God with grateful hearts for the blessings we receive from God, and so our primary purpose as human beings is to worship as a community with joy and celebration. Flowing out of this basic premise is the assumption that, as Christians, we are called to become active disciples of Jesus, the Christ, the Word made flesh. Thus, our faith in God is rooted in the revelation we have of God through Jesus, the Word, and we live out our faith in words and actions, hoping to reflect God's great love for all and therefore win hearts to Christ. Part of the trust that God has given the faithful, from the very creation of the universe, is to be good stewards. We manage, in accordance with the principles laid down in Holy Scripture, the people and things God has placed into our care to ensure that they are kept in such a healthful state that, at the coming of the King, we shall not have anything for which to be ashamed. Finally, our faith demands that we follow the very example of Jesus, striving to be like him as we grow in faith and love, reaching out beyond ourselves to those around us.

Vision Statement

Following the development of the mission statement, the committee next turned to the creation of a vision statement. A vision statement "is a vivid description of what the organisation wants to be in the future." This element of the Strategic Plan is what motivates us to grow and to change into what we see ourselves becoming.

It took considerable work to develop the vision statement because, unlike the mission statement, the vision had to be short and memorable. It had to paint a picture of who and where we want to be, conveying a sense of the prophetic call we have as a community of Christians to every grow into the full stature of Christ.

Building on material from other churches and organisations around the world, the sentence that the committee best conveyed a sense of who we want to be in language similar to the mission statement was the following:

Our vision is to be:
A Spirit-filled and life giving place where strangers become friends and friends become disciples.

The committee felt that this statement fit well with the mission statement and also with the discipleship model of ministry that is at the heart of the Strategic Plan of the Diocese of Ontario. A Spirit-filled place is one which is inflamed with passion for the Gospel of Jesus Christ, whose death gives us life. We see ourselves on a journey, growing from being a congregation of people who come together as strangers to a community of disciples walking together in the footsteps of Jesus. This statement was presented and accepted without amendment at the September meeting of Parish Council.

Operating Values

Determining the operating values of the parish was the next step in the development of the Strategic Plan. Values govern how an organisation conducts its relationships with parishioners and the wider community, suppliers/service providers, staff, and other stakeholders. They reflect our culture, attitudes and behaviours. In the world of the Church, many of our operating values are already determined for us, through Scripture, Tradition, or Canon Law. In the Parish of Tyendinaga, the committee created this list of values for the consideration of the Vestry:

Compassion	A sincere caring for other people.
Authenticity	To be faithful to our mission.
Relationship	We believe that God calls the Church to be a community of Christian followers who live in sacrificial, loving relationship with one another.
Integrity	To be honest with ourselves in our work as disciples.
Transformation	To experience the life-changing presence of God in our lives, leading us to claim our share of the Kingdom.
Action	Our goal is to mirror the example of Jesus.
Service	To give of ourselves to others who need our help.

Many of the examples that the committee had to look at when developing the list of operating values used some form of mnemonic. We thought that was a useful way to teach the values, because it is important that everyone in the parish understand that, when making decisions in the future, the outcome of the decision will be informed by what we say our values are. The first letters of the seven words that characterise our values spell the word “CARITAS”. This is one of the Latin words for love and it connotes a brotherly or neighbourly love. It is the antecedent of the modern English meaning of the word “charity”. Since, at its core, the Gospel can be summed up in the Two Great Commandments of Jesus—love God and love your neighbour—it was thought that a word that conveyed a sense of love was a useful memory word for the values by which we take decisions.

Most of the bullets are fairly self-explanatory. All are rooted in our understanding of the fundamental teachings of the Bible and the tradition of the Church. It was a happy coincidence that the words that were chosen to complete the “CARITAS” acronym also have an element of the journeying that was important in the framing of the vision statement. Sometimes, a person’s first experience of God in

Christ may be through the compassion a Christian shows them in faithfulness to the expressed mission of the Church (authenticity). As people come together, in any number of ways, to celebrate their common bond in Christ Jesus, relationships are born and nurtured. With the fostering of the relationship, fellow disciples are able to hold one another accountable (integrity) and the transformative power of God’s love is revealed. As each Christian grows in faith, the cycle continues by responding with action and service, the outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual faith, and the hope continues that, through action and service, new followers of Jesus may be touched by the compassion of the Body of Christ.

Internal Strengths and Weaknesses

The final component that the committee has looked at thus far is an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses that are part of our parish, in other words, the things over which we have some control. Intentionally reflecting on and knowing our own strengths and weaknesses has an important role in the development of the objectives that will be the tangible working-out of the Strategic Plan. The following list is the final draft, amended and approved by the Parish Council in November. The areas of strength and weakness are standard categories for this kind of exercise.

Internal Strengths

Area of Strength	Description
Products and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving: Monthly contribution to food bank, Christmas Shoe boxes • Special Learning opportunities: Lenten Series, Foundations of Faith, Bible Studies • Fund Raising: Good response to ‘challenges’ (e.g. Feast of Talents) • Strong Liturgy and Music Program • Baptism Program – preparation • Pastoral Care • Vacation Bible School
Assets/ Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Priest has a strong presence as a speaker and educator.
Direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic planning developed a new Vision and Mission for the Parish
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yearly dividend to the Parish from Holy Trinity
Organisational Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Organizational Structure (Parish Council) • Wardens in place • Strategic Planning Committee in place
Processes , Policies, Procedures	
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish of Tyendinaga Website up and running • Weekly bulletin full of information
Fellowship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fellowship after every Sunday Service • Fun Nights • Every 3rd Sunday All Saints and Christ Church worship together

Internal Weaknesses

Area of Weakness	Description
Products and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Native content / expression in Liturgy • Absence of young families at Sunday morning Services • No Sunday School and Youth programs
Assets/ Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space constraint limits flexibility in liturgy and use of space
Direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different congregations have different styles of welcoming—good stewardship of visitors to ‘appropriate’ church a possibility
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christ Church is in a re-building stage (congregation) • Lack of an integrated Treasury. Presently we have All Saints, Christ Church, and the Parish plus the Rectory
Organisational Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No outreach committee or formal parish mission structure (All Saints’ has an outreach committee and Love in Action and the Mohawk Guild are technically ‘outside’ the parish)
Processes , Policies, Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are sometimes blockages which we can’t eliminate that prevent us from pursuing our mission • Lack of written procedures for routine/ yearly tasks in the areas of Standard Operating Procedures and Administrative Practices
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not getting the word out to our people, particularly those who don’t come to church (all ages) • The Newsletter (Tyendinaga) doesn’t go to all people in the Parish Community • Lack of opportunities to share witness in church
Fellowship	

As can be seen by the above table, there are a number of strengths and weaknesses that were identified not only by the committee but by the parish at large. The October 2006 exercise at All Saints’ proved to be a rich resource for the committee when considering internal strengths and weaknesses. Members of the Vestry are invited to comment on the list and to suggest changes, additions, or deletions.

Ultimately, the objectives and strategies that the Strategic Planning Committee will develop after the Annual Meeting of Vestry will be largely informed by these two lists. As a parish, we will focus on which strengths we wish to continue to build up and which weaknesses we would like to turn to strengths.

The purpose of this chart is *not* to create a list of strengths which will lull us into a sense of complacency and self-satisfaction that we have done all the work we need to do, nor is it to try to eliminate all of the weaknesses. Perfection is the preserve of God alone.

Where do we go from here?

At the Annual Meeting of Vestry, the Strategic Planning Committee seeks the input of the wider parish community into its work. As the Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Internal Strengths and Weaknesses have already been reviewed by Parish Council, it is the committee’s hope that the Vestry

will approve them. Upon approval, the committee will complete its current task, which is to create a robust Strategic Plan that will take us to at least 2013. The components of the Plan which are, as yet, unfinished, are:

- an assessment of opportunities and threats to our mission which lie outside the parish;
- the setting of goals: specific accomplishments that must be reached in order to achieve an overall result, generally the Vision;
- objectives: specific actions that must be achieved in order to realise the Vision. They help to measure how effective the implementation of a strategy or action plan is;
- action plans: real, measurable action steps that address issues arising from the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and which are measured by objectives.

The committee will complete its task in the months following the Annual Meeting of Vestry and will present the Strategic Plan to the parish for final approval. Once it is approved, a matrix will be created which will outline in detail who will be responsible for the execution of the strategies and in what time frame objectives and goals are to be achieved. The Strategic Planning Committee will then change roles slightly, from developing and overseeing the implementation of the Strategic Plan, to assessing and reviewing on a periodic basis the overall success of the Plan and suggesting course corrections where necessary.

Conclusion

The Strategic Plan is an important document for the Parish of Tyendinaga. The committee hopes that you will read all of this information carefully and feel free to comment on any or all of it. This Plan will become our foundational governing document when it is approved and will dictate how the parish governs its life together. It is essential that everyone have a voice and understand the document because it will influence many facets of our worship, outreach, hospitality, stewardship, education and administration.

This is our vision of the future. With the guidance of those called to positions of leadership in the parish, we will move forward into the future with the Strategic Plan to show us the way. As Jesus always called people to follow him, we will follow the urging of the Holy Spirit in our community as we seek to achieve a vision that will call us to a place where we are not yet to be a people who we are not yet.