



ENGAGING GOD'S MISSION AT SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST

SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA



INTRODUCTION

*Gracious God, by your love you have called us to proclaim with joy the good news of your son. So build us up in the knowledge and love of him that we may welcome all people into this community of faith, and show forth our service to you in our service to others.
Through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.*

St. John the Evangelist is a dynamic, welcoming community. Since its beginning in 1881, St. John's has been known as a church that welcomes all people to come worship, pray, sing and learn. We are a parish that serves the needs of the poor and forgotten within our neighborhoods and the world beyond.

We are a family that experiences all of life's joys and sorrows - playing, laughing and mourning together. We look forward to sustaining this amazing faith community so those who follow us can enjoy the legacy we have grown to know and love so dearly.

We celebrate our past by striking a musical and liturgical balance, connecting who we are today with those who preceded us. We look forward to building upon our rich traditions as we continue to proclaim with joy the good news of Jesus Christ. This document is a representation of our community.



HISTORY

Throughout our history, strong lay leadership, pastoral care and outreach to those less fortunate have provided a strong foundation for St. John's. Disciplined fiscal responsibility has enabled us to expand our liturgical and musical offerings in our beautiful structure on the corner of Kent and Portland. Our willingness to work together and respect for diverse opinions have made us a strong, vital community.

Lay leadership has been significant to our past and present. St. John's has been blessed with many who have unselfishly led with gifts of time, talent and resources. Since 1884, Vestry committees have provided guidance and organizational structure and continue to do so today. Finance, Church Property, and Music are examples of key commissions for today's Vestry.

From our congregation's beginning, pastoral care by our clergy has been vital for our growth and for helping us reach our goals to serve God and our community. We have thrived and done our best work when we have felt tended and cared for. Recent pastoral care has been strong and expansive; consequently, the congregation has flourished. Our rectors have helped St. John's understand itself as it relates to the larger picture of America and the world.



Reaching out and looking beyond our doors has always been important to our members. St. John's has responded to the needs of the community and the world in amazing ways. For example:

- St. John's was the Seventh Ward Headquarters during the flu epidemic of 1918.
- In both the World War eras, women knitted and sewed clothing and bandages.
- In the mid-60s we supported Cuban refugees and provided aid to the locally deteriorating neighborhood in our area.
- We currently partner with Holy Apostles Church, a Saint Paul Hmong congregation.
- We recently funded building a clinic in Kayoro Village in Southern Uganda. According to one parishioner, *I came to St. John's partly because I heard of the community outreach—and I wept when we took on Kayoro Village.*

Liturgy and music have been instrumental to our worship and community life. Seldom has a Sunday or a festival been without the glorious sound of our Skinner organ. A rich choral tradition – from paid boys' choir in the early years, through concerts, evensongs and the annual Festival of Lessons and Carols has been essential for our parishioners.

Being fiscally responsible and good stewards has been core to our existence over the years. Whether dealing with pressing capital needs, supporting our annual budget or planning for the future, our leaders have been intentional in their financial planning and members have stepped forward to help. For example:

- Our first endowment fund, started in 1892 with \$73.40, has grown into several million dollars through generous benefactors.
- St. John's has consistently been committed to meeting an annual budget and pledging has been consistent since the church's early days.
- Debt has been consistently retired within reasonable time frames.
- The community has repeatedly risen to the occasion with its financial generosity, whether it has been to protect the stained glass windows, rehabilitate the undercroft or renovate the parking lot.



In the late 1980's, the congregation debated how best to make use of the varied services found in the recently revised Book of Common Prayer. Resolution of the matter is a salient example of our problem solving ability. A compromise, which rose from strong lay leadership, was struck to alternate between Rite I, Rite II and Morning Prayer on a monthly basis and demonstrates our community's ability to work together and remain flexible.

St. John's has been the spiritual home for many for over a hundred years. Families have memorialized loved ones with many stained glass windows, altar vestments and other items that enhance the beauty of our sanctuary. The Cass Gilbert-designed building itself is a legacy and from our beginnings we have valued and returned to this place of peace and comfort.



WHO WE ARE NOW

Many of the things we valued in our past are still vital to our parish, for example, pastoral care, strong lay leadership, preaching and musical excellence. Our parish identity can be understood in terms of some major themes.

When asked, *What is most important to you about St. John's?* this is what people said:

Spirit and Worship: How we connect with God

Sharing the spirit of the Lord in worship and deed.

My involvement with the Adult Choir because I worship through music as well as prayer.

Welcoming and Openness

The breadth of inclusiveness we have found.

It's loving, open, welcoming spirit. When I first came, the very space felt like it wrapped its arms around me.

Community, Connections and Contiguity: How we connect with each other, now and across time

St. John's has been my Christian faith community almost my entire life. In this Holy and incredibly beautiful church, my own family of active members from three generations is always with me.



Our Church Community

As those who came before us, we experience St. John's as warm, welcoming, caring and generous, guided by compassionate leadership. We value the strong pastoral care which we have received from our rectors. We like the feeling that our leadership wants to know each of us, as well as our hopes and dreams. We remain committed to keeping our doors open and genuinely welcome all people into our community of faith. We enjoy traditional forms of worship coupled with a liberal theology. We treasure the consistent presence of musical excellence. Finally, we enjoy being together – in worship, outreach activities and social gatherings. We have liberal and conservative members, people who value tradition and those interested in expanding our scope. While we do not always agree, we always respect each other.

The process of searching for a new rector demonstrates the tenor of our community. What could have been a splintering time after losing a much-loved rector has remained gracious. Despite individual differences, the congregation has worked together in an open, giving and listening way. We are tied and committed to one another.

St. John's strength is its breadth.

I found the community I'd been seeking for a long time.

St. John's has been my Christian faith community almost my entire life. In this Holy and incredibly beautiful church, my own family of active members from three generations is always with me.



Spiritual Life: Music and Liturgy

Our parishioners, for the most part, are highly satisfied with our worship and preaching. We enjoy a good sermon, we want to be challenged and taught. We like sermons with relevance for today, offering guidance instead of scare tactics. There is a rotating schedule of services on Sunday morning. At 10 o'clock we use a variety of settings of the Rite II Eucharist service with a Morning Prayer setting of the Service of the Word on one Sunday each month and liturgy from the New Zealand Prayer Book for our First Sunday worship focusing on children and youth. Rite I is observed one Sunday a month at 10 o'clock and at the 8 o'clock service. The choir sings Evensong several times a year, and the service of Lessons and Carols is a popular tradition during Advent.

There are differences, expressed graciously, around balancing the traditional and the contemporary in liturgy and music. For every two comments about the importance of keeping the music the way it is, there was another suggesting adding contemporary music.

There is not a universal sense of what “contemporary” means. Guitars? Classical music from the 20th and 21st century? As we heard, *If ‘contemporary music’ means pop/folk, etc. I am totally against this in our liturgy. If it means classical music of high-quality, composed in recent decades, then this is welcome and appropriate.”* Some said, *“don’t change the music, others, change the music.”*

Our liturgical diversity speaks of a world community.

I appreciate that St. John’s does not shove down my throat others’ ideas of what is ‘spirituality,’ but lets me exercise my spirituality at my own level.

I am not a huge fan of contemporary liturgies but I understand others do like them.



More often, younger, newer members want more meditation, more contemporary music and liturgy and more variety, while older, longer-standing members are clear they do not want liturgy or music changed. Other members believe there is a need for meditation services, more use of the Book of Common Prayer and more opportunities for Bible Study. Balancing change and consistency is a recurring theme, and not just for St. John's. We believe that today and in the future, as in our history, the Holy Spirit will guide our community to develop our own best solutions to such issues.

The music at St. John's is one of the church's strong points. Not interested in seeing much change in this area.

I LOVE the music at St. John's, however I would also appreciate including contemporary music and music from other cultures a little more often.

Children's Programming

Our children's activities bind us together as a community through time, looking toward our future. They have helped attract and retain young families. A Sunday morning highlight for many is when the children join us for communion. Every month we have a First Sunday service which integrates children and teens into the Sunday worship service as singers, readers and prayer leaders. We support our youth group in their confirmation process and mission trips, along with hosting Teens Encounter Christ weekends twice a year. Dedicated, talented staff support our children and youth programming: children and teen choirs, Godly Play, Shepherd band, youth group. We have allocated resources to ensure that we have wonderful physical space for our children and youth programming.

Physical Space

Our physical space continues to be an important component of how people identify with the church – the artwork, the main sanctuary, the undercroft. Our building embodies the concept of the “importance of place.”

I enjoy the beauty of the physical space.

The sanctuary is beautiful, and I can't imagine that changing.



Outreach: Faith in Action

The people of St. John's are deeply committed to faith in action and support many programs that help individuals outside of our church. As one parishioner said, *Outreach has strengthened the parish*. Current programs include:

- Providing emergency shelter for homeless families throughout February
– Project Home
- Collecting food and making monthly deliveries to local food shelves
- Cooking meals for homeless families quarterly
- Participating in Habitat Build with other churches every June - Faith Builders
- Providing transitional housing and support to struggling families
- Project Kathleen
- Running The Huge Sale (giant rummage sale) twice a year
- Providing support and resources for unemployed adults -The Big Net
- Supporting the health clinic in Kayoro Village, Uganda - Give Us Wings
- Adopting needy families for Christmas - Episcopal Church Services

We faithfully support our Faith in Action programs with personal contributions and budget line allocation. We tend to rely, however, on the same group of people to carry out the work and have not added as many new volunteers to the roster as we would like.



What Would You Like To See Change?

Parish members said they are looking for more diversity and more outreach to youth, young families, the disenfranchised and the neighborhood. Members also voiced a desire for more variety in worship, more tradition (e.g., incense once in awhile) and some contemporary offerings.

What Do You Hope Never Changes?

- The welcoming, openness and sense of community
- How we worship through liturgy and music
- The physical and material aspects of the church

Conclusions from the Survey and Focus Groups

We are a bit conflicted about growth. On one hand, we want to grow due to our commitment to being a welcoming community. On the other hand, we recognize that growth can be uncomfortable. As a parish we are, on the whole, extremely satisfied with our current situation, thus realize growth may bring change in some of the things we value the most. We do not want change for the sake of change. We want thoughtful growth; growth that is built on our strengths and fits with our long-term goals. Although we are diverse in age, income levels, geography and sexual orientation, we desire to be racially diverse. Increasing the parish's racial diversity needs to be an ongoing discussion.

We love our services and music based in the Anglican tradition yet understand exploring and offering alternative worship forms is important to some people. It may also attract new members. Some feel strongly that the music should remain traditionally Anglican. Others are curious about alternative liturgies and musical options.



WHERE WE ARE GOING

Our Goals

These four major goals provide a path for us to follow, guided by The Holy Spirit in a way that brings new life, new beginnings and new fellowship to St. John's.

- Sustain our traditional forms of worship while creating new opportunities for individual and community spiritual development.
- Provide opportunities to connect with a living, evolving church.
- Build and strengthen our welcoming community.
- Broaden our spiritual response to God's call to mission through philanthropic and stewardship opportunities.



Sustain our traditional forms of worship while creating new opportunities for individual and community spiritual development.

Gracious God, by your love you have called us to proclaim with joy the good news of your son...

We proclaim our joy in worship services using variety in liturgy and excellence in music. Though there is satisfaction throughout with our current services, there is interest in exploring liturgical forms and service and music styles which may appeal to a broader demographic.

WE SEEK to explore liturgy and music, which maintains our current standard of excellence while providing opportunities for more contemporary, meditative, or multicultural worship experiences.

Provide opportunities to connect with a living, evolving church.

So build us up in the knowledge and love of Him ...

Lay ministry training and small groups may help our congregation grow without sacrificing the intimate spiritual relationships that we currently cherish.

WE SEEK to be intentional about leadership development within the parish, strengthening current programs and developing new opportunities for learning and involvement.

Build and strengthen our welcoming community.

...that we may welcome all people into this community of faith...

Newcomers and visitors alike highlight the welcoming nature of St. John's. We are working to foster a sense of belonging for a growing number of young families and aspire to nurture their development. We also recognize the lack of racial diversity despite our location near an area of significant racial and cultural diversity.

WE SEEK to be more organized and intentional in our welcoming, both in our manner and in our practices.



Broaden our spiritual response to God's call to mission through philanthropic and stewardship opportunities.

...and show forth our service to you in our service to others...

Service to local, national, and world communities has always been a priority of St John's. In recent years service has taken on a new vitality. Still, there is room to improve connectedness and participation.

WE SEEK to expand the focus on service and its delivery to incorporate a greater portion of the St John's community, thereby becoming a stronger arm of God's work in the world,

Our stewardship, while generally strong, has seen no increase in the number of pledges in the last several years.

WE SEEK to restore the emphasis on pledging to support God's work in the world.

...through Jesus Christ Our Lord...

Rector Responsibilities

St. John's identified four primary rector responsibilities:

Pastoral Care – Our parishioners seek out guidance and counseling in many areas, both in times of sadness and loss and in times of happiness and celebration. Our new rector will be the glue that holds us together, will have an open heart and mind, and be a good listener who heals and advises.

*Preaching is important but
pastoral care is very important.*

Leadership – Our new rector will be a skillful administrator who can manage a talented staff, oversee the financial framework to sustain our financial health, and nurture and support our lay leaders. Our new rector will have the administrative skills to manage growth of the parish and our programs, leading us with humility and compassion. Our new rector will understand the importance of partnering with our lay leadership in decision making.

Worship Leader – Our new rector will guide us in our individual and collective spiritual journeys through liturgies and inspiring, enlightening sermons. We wish to provide worship services which retain current parishioners and attract newcomers. We also trust that our beloved traditions and music will remain, balanced with worship services that satisfy our thirst for something beyond the traditional.

Christian Formation – We view Christian formation as the lifelong process of growing in relationship with God, ultimately transforming us into the people God wants us to be. Our new rector will guide us by building our knowledge of and commitment to Christianity and our Episcopalian faith.



SUMMARY

St. John the Evangelist is a cornerstone parish in St. Paul. For nearly 130 years we have served the spiritual needs of our faith community and reached beyond our walls to serve God in all people. We hope that this document provides appropriate insight to potential rector candidates. We believe that our parish's character provides fertile ground to a rector who understands the opportunities we offer.

The St. John the Evangelist Discovery Team

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APPENDIX

Methodology

The 14-member Discovery Team was named by the St. John's Wardens and approved by the Vestry in May of 2010 after applications and nominations were taken from the parish as a whole. It was designed to consist of a cross-section of age, gender, service preference, and talents. We were charged with creating a profile of our parish so that as we search for a new rector, potential candidates could get an initial introduction into the history, current character, and future goals of St. John's.

Initially, the Team was divided into two working sub-groups: (1) the History Subgroup, asked to research the past and more recent history of St. John's, and (2) the Survey Subgroup, asked to discern the current condition of the parish, including what parishioners treasure and what they would like to change.

The History Subgroup used a previously published book¹ about St. John's and examination of annual reports from the last 20 years as well as interviews with long-standing members. The Survey Subgroup prepared a survey to include input from as many parishioners as possible. In June, 2010 we surveyed our parish members (309 households) via e-mail and paper and 177 completed surveys were returned. Complete survey results are listed in this appendix.

We followed up in July with a series of four focus group discussions, which were individually monitored by the Discovery Team's co-chairs or professional focus group leaders. The questions and topics were determined by the Team as a whole after the Survey and History subgroups gave presentations to the Team and subsequent analyses and discussions were completed.

With an understanding of our past and our present, we worked to incorporate what we had learned into an understanding of what we want for the church's future. To do that we evaluated two vital topics – major church goals and rector responsibilities – by conducting a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) exercise and then analyzing findings from that exercise, along with the survey, focus group and history data. The results from these exercises were consolidated into four primary goals and four rector responsibility areas.

1. Baker, Robert Orr, *A Centennial History of the Parish of Saint John the Evangelist, Saint Paul*, H.M. Smyth Publishing Company, Inc., St. Paul, Minnesota, 1981.

Survey Results

Discovery Team Survey Subgroup

- Who Are We?
- Who completed the survey?
- What do they think of life at St. Johns?
- What do they want in a Rector?

Who responded? 177 Surveys

- 62% Female
- 96% White
- 94% Consider themselves Episcopalian
- The average age was 57.8 years
- The average tenure as an Episcopalian is 38.19 years.
- The average tenure at St. John's is 18.08 years.
- The correlation between the two is high: .59
- On average, respondents have been Episcopalian for 63% of their lives.
- On average they have been attending St. John's for 30% of their lives.

The respondents showed a variety of attitudes toward change.

- Younger respondents have lower negative attitude scores.
- Both negative and positive attitude toward change are associated with higher overall satisfaction.
- This would indicate that the "change neutral" respondents have the lowest satisfaction and the "ambivalent" respondents have the highest satisfaction.
- Both change scales are related in unsystematic ways to various specific satisfaction items, reflecting who is satisfied with what, not satisfaction per se.

Summary of who responded

- Slightly more female than male
- Overwhelmingly white
- Long-time Episcopalians
- They have been at St. John's a while
- A substantial proportion of their life has been spent within the Episcopal church and/or with St. John's
- The survey respondents tend to be older

When we look at the relationship between age and overall satisfaction (across all topics), there is no systematic trend. The same is true of tenure as an Episcopalian and time at St. John's. However, age and tenure are related to specific satisfaction measures (these will be mentioned as those topics are discussed).

In general, how satisfied are you with St. John's?

- The overall satisfaction was 84.6%
- The average of the 10 specific items was 80%
- Individual items ranged from 70.2% - 86.7%

How satisfied are you with the liturgy?

- Global: 84.4%
- Average of 8 specific items: 75.5%
- Specific items ranged from 66.4% – 84.3%

In general, how satisfied are you with our faith community?

- Global: 86.1%
- Average of 7 specific items: 83.4%
- Specific items range from 69.4% - 90.9%

Satisfaction with our community

- 36 Comments: 19 needs, 4 neutral, 13 positive
- Clear themes
- Diversity: 17
- Growth/outreach: 11
- Welcoming: 8
- Financial: 3

It is a picture of a desire for growth, increased diversity and welcoming spirit and continued financial stability.

How satisfied are you with the music program?

- Global: 89.1%
- Average of 10 specific items 83.3%
- Specific items ranged from 68.3% - 90.8%

Satisfaction with music - Change and Age

- Negative attitude toward change is associated with average music satisfaction, satisfaction with the choir and opportunities to participate. More satisfied people are more change resistant.
- The longer you have been an Episcopalian, the more satisfied you will be with the music program and the choir.
- Age, tenure as an Episcopalian and at St. John's is associated with satisfaction with special music.

How satisfied are you with the education programs?

- Global: 78.2%
- Average of 4 specific items 75.1%
- Specific items range from 71.9% -79.3%

Satisfaction with fellowship

- Global: 81.4%
- Average of 4 specific items: 76.1%
- Specific items ranged from 69.2% – 79.9%

How satisfied are you with communications?

- Global: 85.4%
- Average of 5 specific items: 81.7%
- Specific items range from 75.5% - 87.3%

How satisfied are you with outreach?

- Global: 82.5%
- Average of specific items: 77.9%
- Specific items range from 69.9% – 84.8%

How satisfied are you with the physical space?

- Global: 90.6%
- Average of 11 specific items: 80%
- Specific items range from 67% to 93.7%

Survey Results Continued

What is most important?

- 149 diverse responses
- They seem to be at so many different levels
- What we do, who we are, why we are here, the material, the philosophical, the concrete, the ethereal... how to make sense of it all?
- Most people used more than 1 theme in their answer, but one was usually dominant...
- Regardless of how people said things... 3 themes emerged: 1) Spirit & Worship, 2) Welcoming and Openness and 3) Community, Connections, & Contiguity

1) Spirit & Worship (38)

How do we connect with God? Examples:

- Reading on the scripture of the day
- Praying and worshipping
- Sharing the spirit of the Lord in worship and deed.
- My involvement with the Adult Choir because I worship through music as well as prayer.
- Having a place to worship and be spiritual.

2) Welcoming and Openness (42)

How do we connect with those new to and outside of Saint John's? Examples:

- The breadth of inclusiveness we have found.
- Its current attitude of warmth & love for all people
- It's outreach programs
- How welcoming the clergy and congregation are - I felt welcome the first day I attended.
- It's loving, open, welcoming spirit. 1 Corinthians 13
When I first came, the very space felt like it wrapped its arms around me.

3) Community, Connections, & Contiguity (69)

How do we connect with each other, now and across time?

Examples:

- St. John's has been my Christian faith community almost my entire life. In this Holy and incredibly beautiful church, my own family of active members from three generations is always with me.
- Always being there.
- Other members.
- Tradition.
- The community of faith with a diversity of experience and interests.

Satisfaction with music - Change and Age

What would you like to see change?

- 133 Responses
- More:
- Diversity!!! Outreach to youth, young families
- Outreach to the disenfranchised, the neighborhood
- Variety in worship, more tradition (incense once in a while) and some contemporary... how about Saturday evenings?
- Growth, but not for growth's sake

What do you hope never changes

- 135 Responses
- Welcoming, openness, community (70)
- Liturgies & music (39)
- Physical & material (23)

What do people want in a new Rector?

- Decision making style
- Priest participates in a parish group that makes the decisions: 51%
- Priest consults group, then makes decisions: 47%
- Priest makes final decisions: 2%
- 27 Comments

Rector Roles

- Importance ranged from 63.3% to 93.8%
- Evangelism
- Music Ministry
- Ecumenism
- Stewardship
- Administration
- Social Outreach
- Theology
- Teaching
- Youth Work
- Counseling
- Liturgies
- Spiritual Guidance
- Pastoral Care
- Preaching
- Crisis Ministry

