**St. John The Evangelist Episcopal Church**

**Strategic Planning Framework**

**Executive Summary**

**January 26, 2014**

***Presented at the Jan 26, 2014 Annual Parish Meeting***.

**OUR MISSION -- The Collect of St. John’s:**

*“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.”*

**OUR VISION**

At Saint John the Evangelist Episcopal Church, we pride ourselves on being more than simply a church building or even a worshipping congregation. We will be a thriving and nurturing community that cares about its members and serves Christ in the world. In the years ahead, we will build on our strong foundation. We will offer vibrant and meaningful worship, music, programs, and faith formation opportunities. We will cultivate innovative partnerships in the city around us, responding to our evolving community’s needs. We will serve as an inclusive cultural center in our neighborhood, nurturing and welcoming both longtime members and visitors of all ages, backgrounds, and experiences.

**THE PROCESS**

In 2013, a Vestry-appointed strategic planning commission began developing a three-to five-year framework to identify and work toward the vision for the church’s future. The entire congregation engaged in the process through Evangelist summary updates, stakeholder interviews, Sunday conversations, surveys and discussion groups. After collecting and assessing data, the commission identified recommendations for six priority areas:

***I.FAITH FORMATION:* “*Build us up in the knowledge and love of Him….”***

Faith formation involves nourishing our spiritual development so that we are prepared to live out the Saint John’s mission and identify strongly as committed Christians. Everything, from our worship and Faith in Action service work to our community life and welcome ministries, should contribute to this effort. Saint John’s will support Christian formation for members of all ages through new and existing programs and through external partnerships. Our programs will include existing and new formation and instruction, and will seek to infuse all of our gatherings with intentional spiritual practice. We will emphasize building healthy and strong relationships among members and the leaders who serve them and invite all to walk together with us, learning and growing in our journey of faith and discovery.

**Priorities**

* Provide opportunities for parishioners to deepen their relationship with God, including programs and conversations that build on the Sunday worship and other services.
* Encourage spiritual growth both individually and as a community by increasing opportunities for all adult members to discern and reflect on their relationship with God and prayer. Multigenerational programming will be incorporated into this effort.
* Strengthen the vitality and continuum of children’s and youth programming.

***II. WORSHIP: “Proclaim with joy the good news of your Son….”***

We aim to engage a diverse community of faith and enrich each member’s spiritual development through our worship. Our liturgical practice, highlighted by excellence in preaching, will draw from both traditional and contemporary Anglican practices. Our music program, with opportunities for participation from parishioners, will provide a broad repertoire and facilitate other special visual and performing arts events.

**Priorities**

* Attract, welcome and engage a diverse cross-section of our community through liturgy and the performing and visual arts.
* Continue the growth and excellence in liturgy and music programming, including recruiting new talent into our choirs and other liturgical ministries.
* Maximize and enhance our church space’s beauty and utility in more creative ways to further enhance the liturgy and the music.

***III. PROGRAMMING AND PARTNERSHIPS: “Our service to You in our service to others….”***

We will be a parish that seeks to understand the issues in our community. We will provide opportunities for meaningful involvement, from social activities to outreach beyond our walls. We will pursue partnerships with others in our community, using our shared assets to develop collaborative programming. This sustainable programming, along with thriving fellowship groups and volunteer opportunities—supported and led by staff and church members—will be available to parishioners. Service to community and pastoral care will be hallmarks, their comforting resources integrated into everything that we do.

**Priorities**

* Reinvigorate our volunteer engagement and management approaches so that communication is comprehensive and the availability of volunteer opportunities is well-integrated.
* Deepen community partnerships that leverage mutual strength; continue to strengthen our Holy Apostles partnership.
* Expand the objective assessment of current programs to ensure mission alignment and effective use of resources.
* Develop an effective, sustainable model of lay and ordained pastoral care.

***IV. MEMBER INTEGRATION: “Welcome all people into this community of faith…”***

We will thrive as “the church of the open door,” and we will be known across the community for our inviting spirit. We will nurture a growing congregation and invite visitors to consider making Saint John’s their spiritual home; and we welcome into our community every person who enters our building no matter where they are in their spiritual journey. We cherish a community that is diverse in all ways.

**Priorities**

* Develop clarity around the process of becoming a member, including the opportunities, expectations and criteria.
* Involve parishioners in welcoming visitors and encouraging membership; plus, identify and reach out to members who have become inactive.
* Seek new ways to welcome people who may be different from us.
* Cultivate a culture of invitation - equipping and encouraging our members to communicate the joy of our parish community and the faith it holds to the city around us.

***V. BUILDING AND INFRASTRUCTURE: (Our tools for mission/vision fulfillment)***

Our beautiful building in the heart of a vibrant neighborhood is an historic landmark and one of Saint John’s many treasures; it is a resource to be well-maintained and used faithfully for ministry. Our vision is to maintain and regularly update a building that serves our mission and community, a space that draws hearts and minds toward God.

**Priorities**

* Determine the best way to plan and fund our ongoing and future capital needs.
* Develop and implement strategies to make the most efficient and effective use of our physical space.

***VI. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY: (Our tools for mission/vision fulfillment)***

Generosity, gratitude, hope and charity are at the core of Saint John’s. We strive to make stewardship part of the fabric of our daily life together: for all of our members to take ownership and support our church’s programs and future by pledging toward our annual campaign and considering planned giving options. We will use our endowment judiciously and evaluate our plans for the future through an ongoing appraisal of our current resources and program impacts.

**Priorities**

* Create and deepen a culture and expectation of stewardship, and develop that value across all aspects of what we do, including new and existing member integration, programming and faith formation.
* Develop a financial plan that provides adequately for ongoing facility maintenance and replacement, funding from reserves for periodic capital replacement, and long-term preservation of endowment principal.
* Increase the endowment and planned giving program.
* Determine strategic ways to use our physical plant’s assets to generate additional revenue.

**NEXT STEPS**

After the commission’s findings are presented first to the Vestry and then at the congregation’s annual meeting in January 2014, the congregation will have the opportunity to provide further feedback. Parish commissions will begin to develop specific work plans for the years ahead to address the identified priorities and build a dynamic, vibrant future for Saint John’s.