

# Strategic Planning Committee Report to the Vestry

November 2014

October 22, 2014

To: Vestry of Good Shepherd Episcopal Church  
From: Strategic Planning Committee  
Re: Five-Year Strategic Plan

Dear Vestry Members,

The Strategic Planning Committee is pleased to offer this document for your consideration. You will find enclosed a description of the task that was set before the committee, the process they followed, and a set of recommendations to guide the parish in the coming five years. The Committee met at least monthly between March and October, held many conversations with a large number of ministry heads, and prayerfully discerned both the best of what Good Shepherd currently does and how the parish can capitalize on those strengths to become the church we want to be in the next five years.

By intent, the focus of the Committee was narrow. Read narrow as strategic, a term that is described on page 3 of this document. The Committee focused on what might be done to grow the parish membership numerically by targeting two specific markets: those in the community most like us as we currently are and families with younger children. This should not be taken as saying the Committee was unconcerned for diversity, but rather that as a first five year plan the parish should maximize its current strengths to attract those most like us yet who currently do not have a church home. This follows from strategic thinking on our “brand” (i.e., who we are and what we offer) and our “market” (i.e., those in our community who are looking for what we offer). The data that were used to identify our markets are described on page 3.

Many, many potentially helpful suggestions were identified during our conversations. While you will find a compendium of those suggestions starting on page 6 this report, our purpose was primarily to identify more abstract categories of current strengths and future actions, and leave it to the vestry liaisons, or subcommittees of the vestry, working with their ministry heads to determine the specific actions to be executed. Our experience through this process tells us that there is no shortage of enthusiasm among our ministry heads and that you will find them eager to work with you.

In Christ’s service,

Rev. Dr. Bill Breedlove  
Ms. Suzy Christensen  
Mr. David Hourdequin  
Mr. Dave Larsen  
Ms. Liz McLamb  
Ms. Cheri Pinner  
Dr. Tom Wilkerson

## **Executive Summary**

Good Shepherd Episcopal Church has a stated parish goal of numerical growth in membership and growth in families with children among that membership. As an aid to our collective work toward that growth, a Strategic Planning Committee was called and tasked with identifying where the parish can capitalize on ministries with current high levels of energy and do more of what the parish already does well in order to attract and retain new members.

Because church communities are voluntary associations, they have some of the same traits of all voluntary associations. One of those is that like-minded people tend to choose to associate together. Thinking strategically about this means our growth plan should focus on targeting and making an appeal to those in the community who are most like us and the families with children we seek.

Current high levels of energy in the parish and excellence can be captured by three categories:

1. Community Building
2. Serving Others
3. Spirituality

Future action areas where the parish might choose to do more capitalizing on its current sources of high energy and excellence are:

1. Become better known in the community
2. Build more relationships with other community organizations
3. Become a community resource

## **Recommendations**

We find that Good Shepherd currently does excellent work and has a high level of energy in the following areas. Our recommendation is that the vestry works with ministry heads to sustain and enhance the work being done in these three areas in particular.

1. Community Building - Welcoming, building relationships, and sharing information. Examples include Grazers Groups, the Hospitality Ministries and Parish Life Ministry, Deacon Guidry's work with youth, and the Communications Committee.
2. Serving Others - Caring for the needs of others. Examples include Country Fare, Outreach in its many forms, and the Order of St Luke.
3. Spirituality - Caring for our spiritual needs. Examples include Worship, the Choir, the Healing Gardens and Grounds ministries, and the Adult Formation ministry.

Our recommendation is that the vestry work with affected ministries and provide future resources toward these actions in particular.

1. Promoting the parish - Becoming better known throughout the area by communicating all our areas of excellence to the community, but focusing especially on our target groups and where and how they receive information and the kind of information they are seeking.
2. Connecting the parish - Becoming better connected to other community organizations, but focusing especially on connecting with organizations that currently serve or engage members of our target groups.
3. Opening up the parish - Becoming a community resource, but focusing especially on the needs and interests of our target groups.