



Dear Members & Friends of the Parish of the Epiphany,

The Letter to the Romans contains one of scripture's best lines (12:2): Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern God's will and do what is good and acceptable and perfect. Eugene Peterson, in his paraphrase, puts it this way: Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what God wants from you, and quickly respond to it.

Enclosed is a summary of our strategic plan for growth and ministry; a road map for the next 5-7 years. The vestry and I want you to have this summary. The entire strategic plan is available on our website, but I hope this summary will be something that you'll return to regularly. Be assured that your leadership is already "working this plan," focusing, this year especially, on achieving objectives in Faith Formation and Parish Life & Evangelism.

You ought to see your words in this plan because the Strategic Planning Committee incorporated what you said in small groups and in written feedback. So did the vestry. At the same time, you will see words that are not yours, even objectives with which you disagree. This the nature of strategy. In fact, if there's universal agreement and endorsement of a strategic plan, according to most church development leaders, it's probably not strategic!

This plan represents nearly two years of faithful work by a committed group of leaders*, and another six months of consideration from the vestry. What you see also represents four parish-wide conversations, and feedback from several parishioners via email and in person. In other words, a lot of handprints are on this, and a great deal of investment. Thanks be to God.

I look forward to experiencing who we'll be when we fix our attention on God, be changed from the inside out, and recognize what God wants from us.

Faithfully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas Brew".

Rector

*Cherie Collin de Casaubon, chair; Erika Almquist, Marie Lee, John McConnell, Suzanne Owayda, Mary Street, Tim Sullivan, John Suhrbier

The Parish of the Epiphany

Strategic Plan: A Path for the Future



The premise of this plan is that growth of all kinds – from the size of the parish to the resources we have to fulfill our mission – is an outcome of deepening personal and communal spiritual engagement. By engaging all members of the congregation in worship, formation, and service that deepen our understanding of what it means to be a Christian, we will be stronger as individuals and as a parish, and better able to draw on diverse resources to spread Jesus’ message to the world.

These objectives flow from the mission of the Parish: “We are a welcoming Episcopal community, united in God, called to seek and serve Christ in all persons and to transform our world through love and generosity.” We aim to build a connected community that supports and cares for everyone’s spiritual and personal needs with humility, love, and concern.



Worship and Music

Traditional Worship

Emphasize regular worship services as strongly inspirational, reflective, uplifting, and challenging. Ensure that worship is more inclusive of parishioners of all ages, so that it remains the chief vehicle for spiritual growth. Enhance our worship by offering additional expressions and opportunities, while remaining rooted in our Anglican love of tradition, moving language, and beauty.

Non-traditional worship

Expand access to worship for those who find worship at traditional times or in traditional forms to be too difficult to attend or less meaningful. Incorporate other times, other days or other styles of worship – more contemporary or youth-oriented music and language, for example, or ones with less dependence on traditional forms of prayer or sacraments.



Christian Formation

Individual spiritual growth

Enhance and expand existing opportunities for parishioners to learn about and engage in deepening their relationship with Jesus Christ. Provide resources for prayer, instruction in prayer practices, and opportunities for individuals to build an active prayer practice and to share their experiences.

Corporate spiritual growth

Using the Bible as a primary resource, create a continuum of formation programs for children, youth, and adults that provides grounding in what it means to be a Christian within the context of the Episcopal Church. Continue the work of the Christian Formation Steering Team, and reinvigorate the adult formation program through a visioning process that respects past practice while planning for the future.

Learn how to evangelize

Teach more fully the meaning and methods that make evangelism a part of our spiritual lives, understanding that many of us feel discomfort with both the idea of personal evangelism and the undesirable taint the word has taken on for many Episcopalians in recent decades.



Parish Life & Evangelism

Actively reach out, locally and throughout our network.

Raise our commitment to, and profile in, our community – both within Winchester and in the greater suburban area. Using available means, including computer-based media, advertise the parish to people of all backgrounds and ages as a community of activity rooted in faith. We want to be known more widely as a place where all who love God will be welcomed.

Draw newcomers into the life of the parish

Increase the ways in which we welcome new people into the parish by expanding the work of the Welcoming Committee to make all of us instruments of friendship to visitors. In welcoming we can grow, both in numbers and in spirit.

Enhance participation and spiritual leadership

Enfranchise many more parishioners to participate in the ongoing work of the parish. Launch an effort to recruit volunteers for committees and other service groups. Re-envision the role of the vestry and wardens in providing governance and spiritual leadership to the parish. Consider how clergy, wardens, members of the vestry, and other church leaders might reorganize to effect this plan and take a more active and visible role in modeling how to grow spiritually.

Care for our home

Raise our sense of responsibility for the physical environment. Reduce our buildings' use of natural resources, and identify ways for parishioners to make positive impacts on the state of our planet. Eliminate physical barriers by implementing the new Accessibility Master Plan. This will enable us to more fully advance our missions to serve others, to gather people to Christ, and to deepen connections with our greater community.

Prepare for our future

Continue efforts to secure Epiphany's financial footing by growing the endowment, introducing a planned giving program, developing a five-year financial plan, and increasing annual giving. This will ensure Epiphany's ability to carry out its mission in the future.



Pastoral Care

Care for one another

Formalize and systematize opportunities for parishioners to care for one another through visitation, prayer, transportation, meal and chore services, focusing particularly on those less able to care for themselves.



Mission and Outreach

Transform and empower lives

Commit to dismantling the structures that keep people poor, marginalized, and unheard. Undertake mission and outreach efforts in the world that have the potential to be transformative. Strengthen our relationships with, and our knowledge of, the full diversity of our local, national, and global neighbors so that we become better connected to the world around us and more effective in serving others.



Expand participation

Create opportunities for deeper involvement from more parishioners. Inspire members of all ages and abilities to get involved in our current programs --- we need to increase the number of people actively serving in our Mission and Outreach programs.

Deepen the connection of mission and outreach with spiritual development

Integrate faith with service to those in need. Identify the direct connections between the outreach we do and the development of our lives as Christians. Continue to partner, wherever possible, with other parishes and diocesan programs.

