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Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist

Aptos, California

Strategic Directions

2011 - 2021

Contents

1.0 Introduction: The Planning Process	3
2.0 Background	3
3.0 Who We Are	3
Our Mission Statement	
Our Statement of Values	
Our Vision for St. John's: 2011 - 2013	
4.0 Demographic Profile	4
5.0 Internal Assessment: current priorities discerned to reach our mission	5
6.0 Our Ongoing Parish Ministries	7
7.0 Our Parish Commitment	7
8.0 Our Strategic Directions for the Next 3-5 Years	8
9.0 Our Strategic Directions for the Next 10 Years	8
10.0 Roles in the Strategic Planning Process	9
11.0 Monitoring and Reviewing Our Strategic Directions	9

1.0 Introduction: The Strategic Planning Process.

This Strategic Directions document for St. John's is the culmination of a two-year planning process that included house meetings, a neighborhood walk, relational one-on-one meetings, and parish-wide dinners and meetings. Through this prayerful process the Strategic Planning Team, the Ministry Area Liaisons and Leaders, and the Vestry at St. John's met and wrestled with strategic issues these last two years to set the following Vision and Strategic Directions.

2.0 Background.

Earlier phases of *strategic planning* culminated in the move to the "new" church, our present campus. During and after the move Reverend Steve Ellis charged the Strategic Planning Team with the task of engaging in a holy conversation. This conversation has been full of stories, memories, hopes and visions. As an ongoing endeavor, it is an intentional and collaborative process that centered on several critical formational questions. Among those were: Who are we (as a congregation)? What has God called us to do or be? And, having discerned who we are through engagement with the parish as a whole: What goals/objectives are most appropriate for us to work on at this time? This process has identified many interim and longer-term goals while working to create tools and information necessary for doing this work and continuing our holy conversation. Ultimately, strategic planning is a bottom-up, ministry-based, parish-wide endeavor that seeks to balance the tension between how we have always done things and continuous renewal.

3.0 Who We Are.

3.1 Our Mission Statement.

The Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist welcomes all to worship God and to share Christ's love in the world. We are a parish family committed to provide liturgy, Bible Study, music, counseling, and Christian education for children, youth and adults, and to equip all our members for life and for service to others.

3.2 Our Statement of Values.

As a parish family we endeavor to live out the love of God and to watch and listen to what Jesus is calling us to do. We are called to walk with Jesus and share the love of Christ. We value all individuals as children of God and are committed to loving one another and service to others; living joyfully and welcoming others to our parish life; showing generosity, mercy, and compassion toward all; working for peace and social justice; practicing inclusion and civility in all our interactions; and engaging in open dialogue and honoring the differences in all people.

3.3 Our Vision for St. John's: 2011-2013.

God calls us to be a renewing oasis of healing and discovery in a harried world. We throw open the doors to *all* and invite parents, partners and children into our communion. We share the fountain of Jesus' love and adapt our lively worship to our evolving understanding of our ancient Christian tradition. To the sounds of laughing, singing, playing, crying, working and praying, we make St John's a center of reflection and learning for a life of service.

4.0 Demographic Profile.

[Please note: the demographic profile is slightly dated and as we receive more current demographic data the following trends will be updated and revised to reflect those changes.]

The following demographic picture and trends are based on the 2009 Diocesan data for the immediate geographic area around St. John's campus (i.e., Seacliff area: 1 mile radius).

- **Population and Household Trends:** In this study area children 18 years of age or younger are increasing as a percentage of the total population. Family households are growing as fast as the population suggesting the increase in households is from additional children and that the community is experiencing some growth in school age children. In addition, adults 55 years of age and older are also increasing as a percentage of the total population.

- **Racial-Ethnic Trends:** In this study area the following is the racial/ethnicity as a percentage of the population in 2009: 82% White (Non-Hispanic); 11% Hispanic/Latino; 3% Asian (Non-Hispanic) ; 3% Pacific Island/American Indian/Other (Non-Hispanic); and 1% Black/African American (Non-Hispanic). The following trends are noted: Hispanic/Latino population is projected to grow by 1.3% over the next 5 years; The Asian (Non-Hispanic) and Black/African American (Non-Hispanic) populations are projected to remain about the same over the next five years; and the White (Non-Hispanic) population is projected to decline by -1.4% over the next five years.
- **Economics:** In this study area the population is generally well educated (over 50% some college) and have relatively high incomes (50% over \$100K per annum). Charitable contributions of \$200 or more were well above the state average with the exception of religious contributions, which were somewhat lower than the state average.
- **Religious Practices:** In this study area the people were generally well above or somewhat above the state average in the following religious practices (i.e., importance of attending religious services; consider themselves a spiritual person; importance of their faith). They were somewhat below the state average for the following: enjoy watching religious TV Programs and identifying themselves as a Conservative Evangelical Christian.

5.0 Internal Assessment: current priorities discerned to reach our mission.

St. John's parishioners during a series of house meetings in 2010 identified areas of church life, which are very important to those who continue to come and support the church.

The four most mentioned areas were:

- **Beautiful and Engaging Worship** that opens people's minds and touches their hearts is foundational to the purpose and vitality of the parish. Through worship we are able to focus on the well

being of the people who come through our doors to be spiritually fed every day of the week and to send them forth into the world in peace to love and serve the Lord.

- **Family, Children and Youth** are a small part of the parish total today, vital to a healthy parish and represent an area in which we wish to grow in numbers. We plan on focusing energy in sharing our faith with those adults with children. We will develop worship and educational programs for families that help them live as successful and loving families with the tools they need to engage with and work through the challenges of growing up. We desire this to be a growing element of our parish and consider it vital to a healthy parish.
- **Adult Education** provides a safe place to learn, challenges those who want to learn more, and offers the chance for any of us to move deeper into our faith and tradition. Through study, prayer, discussion, and reflection we can live with more faith, love, and hope. Midlife turns some into seekers and this seeking helps us find the strengths and gifts within us.
- **Newcomers** add new life to the church and often come because they have needs that are much like ours. We desire to fine-tune our ability to welcome newcomers and integrate them into the life of the church if that is their wish. Every new person we welcome adds new life to the church and can change us in unexpected and transformative ways.

We believe that continuing to do well in all four of these areas as well as sustained attention to the possibility of developing new ministries and programs as the need is identified will provide a solid base and healthy future.

6.0 Our Ongoing Parish Ministries.

6.1 Caring Ministries and Senior Outreach is committed to ensuring that the needs of our parishioners are met and fully develop a ministry for visiting the lonely, sick, dying, and grieving.

6.2 Outreach is committed to continue outreach projects and endeavors that encourage wide parish involvement. St. John's Helpful Shop in Capitola is an excellent example of this work and we need to continue to engage with the community to know and understand its hurts, needs, and possible solutions.

6.3 Hospitality & Fellowship provides increased opportunities to share similar interests and experiences and draw an ever-wider circle of people into our parish family.

6.4 Stewardship is committed to prepare us to accept God's challenge to use the gifts that have been given to us to reach out and serve others.

6.5 Building & Grounds provides the care and oversight to maintain the building and grounds at St. John's.

7.0 Our Parish Commitment.

We are a welcoming church!

As a church we are committed to the concept that combines the universal Christian ministry of welcome and hospitality. We will make known to the local community that we are here for everyone... New-comers at St. John's will know that they have been welcomed when they walk into our sanctuary and find themselves appreciated, valued, included, and loved.

8.0 Our Strategic Directions for the Next 3 - 5 Years.

8.1 Increase parish involvement in worship and increase the opportunity for inspiration and participation by all age groups (with a special emphasis focused on adults with children).

8.2 Dedicate and provide additional resources for the family programs and services.

8.3 Install a play yard for children, a gathering place for parents.

8.4 Hire a curate/youth minister (in about 3 – 5 years, as funds become available and given the requirements and stipulations of the Mikkelsen Endowment).

8.5 Offer educational and cultural opportunities open to the parish and the wider community.

8.6 Expand the Newcomers Partner Program to become a welcoming ministry and to refine the partner program to actively link newcomers into the ongoing life and fabric of the church.

8.7 Plan for, design, and construct a columbarium.

8.8 By use of the *missio-engage* process and program invite newcomers to share our spiritual journey of faith.

9.0 Our Strategic Directions for the Next 10 Years and Beyond

9.1 Pay-off the mortgage for Phase 1 of our new church.

9.2 Finance and build Phase 2 of our planned education, nursery, music, and administration spaces for our new church, which will also allow an additional 40 seats in worship.

9.3 Finance and build Phase 3 of our planned 300-seat sanctuary for our new church.

10.0 Roles in the Strategic Planning Process.

10.1 Role of the Strategic Planning Team

The role of the Strategic Planning Team is one of supporting and providing informational resources and demographic information to the ministry areas and leaders in support of the Strategic Directions Process. The Team will act as a catalyst for holding the vision and working with the ministry area leaders and committees to make that vision a reality.

10.2 Role of the Ministry Area Liaisons and Leaders

The role of the ministry area liaisons and leaders (along with their teams and committees) is one of developing strategies and action plans for implementing the Vision and identified goals of the parish.

10.3 Role of the Vestry

The role of the Vestry is one of reviewing and endorsing the strategic directions for St. John's.

11.0 Monitoring and Reviewing Our Strategic Directions.

The strategic directions process is a continuous and dynamic one. The process will encourage active monitoring and it will anticipate changes and incorporate what we have learned into our ministry area plans on an annual and ongoing basis. The Strategic Planning Team will take the lead in monitoring and reviewing where we are with our strategic directions and identifying what mid-course adjustments are desirable.