

**The Long Range Plan – 2011-2016
Cathedral Church of St. Paul
2 Cherry Street
Burlington, Vermont**

Our Vision

An innovative city Cathedral, an inclusive Christian community – loving, exploring, and serving.

Our Mission

St. Paul's Cathedral is an outward, activist community of Christian faith. It is a place of sanctuary, healing, inclusion, challenge, and compassion. We strive to be a soul-inspiring, mind-stretching, heart-healing center of unconditional surrender to the freedom of God, a place of hope and hospitality.

Our Core Values

We believe that the way of Jesus is a way of life. We model our lives as witness to God's continuing work in the world. We take risks in living out the demands of the Gospel. We offer ourselves each day — time, talents, money — so that the Gospel will shine in the world. We celebrate the liberatory invitation of scripture in both tradition and lived experience. We commit to proclaiming a forward-looking and inquiring faith.

We believe that God's Church is an affirming and open faith community. We welcome all people; we hear and respect different voices. We strive to be a place where all people are loved and love to be. We care for each other in times of sickness and need. We commit to removing the physical and cultural barriers that limit access to Cathedral life.

We believe worship is the core of our life in community. We provide diverse opportunities for worship through liturgy and prayer. We seek to honor tradition while also inviting change and growth. We integrate art and music into the worship space. We embody Christian pilgrimage as we move among lectern, baptismal font and table. We commit to gathering around the altar and, sustained by the Eucharist, living the dismissal's demand to "go in peace to love and serve the Lord."

We believe that the practice of stewardship for sustainability of God's Creation is part of our responsibility as Christians. We intend to live into a deeper awareness of God's vision of justice and wholeness for all of creation, and to uphold God's sacred vision that moves us to practice sustainability as part of our global culture.

We believe that God calls us to commit to and work for social justice and service in the broader community. We initiate and support programs that address needs in the world around us. We commit to an activist Christian faith that challenges oppressive structures and advocates for just public policy.

We believe lifelong Christian formation transforms and sustains us on the journey. We value and support lay leadership, strong involvement, and interactive participation of our members. We commit to honoring questions over easy answers and to providing education programs for everyone.

We believe in our mission as the Cathedral Church of the Diocese of Vermont. We value our role as the seat of the Bishop. We serve the Diocese as a gathering place for the people, a model of innovation in liturgy and Christian formation, and a catalyst for new initiatives. We invite all Vermont Episcopalians to partner with the ministries of the Cathedral.

Introduction

The new Long Range Plan for the Cathedral Church of St. Paul is aspirational like its 2006 predecessor, and it reflects what we have learned as a congregation in the last few challenging years. It encourages greater focus on fewer activities within the broad directions laid out below, and offers a single priority for each cluster to begin working on this year. This greater focus allows more strategic use of our resources. The Plan proposes a consolidated cluster structure, and involves more individuals in the hard work of deciding where to focus our efforts as a congregation. In two words, this Plan aspires to *sustainability* and *emergence*.

Sustainability means that, as a congregation, we are called to take seriously the stewardship ethos that must encompass all that we do at St. Paul's. Specifically, this means the call to sustain all our resources responsibly: the fragile resources of the earth; the financial resources of the Cathedral; and the human resources of our staff, clergy, and lay leaders. Our challenge is to be more intentional and focused in a way that will make our chosen efforts effective. As we move forward, we will actively ask whether a given action or project uses our resources well by maintaining or adding life energy instead of exhausting or depleting it.

Emergence implies change, and recognizes it as a process of coming forth, not as an imposition. It is also a concept that is increasingly being used in the Episcopal Church and other Anglican churches. Phyllis Tickle uses the term in her book *The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing and Why* to describe the massive shift currently happening across western culture in all spheres of endeavor, including education, government, politics, technology, arts, and religion. It is this emergence that inspired the "Mission-Shaped Church Report," commissioned by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 2004. The report declared that *the church is "called upon to proclaim the Christian faith afresh in each generation."* In the report the Archbishop speaks of cultivating a "mixed economy" of church, where inherited, established and traditional forms of church can serve alongside, incubate and partner with new and "fresh expressions" of church, to enrich the way we practice our Christian faith and to broaden the church's appeal to the next, much less homogeneous, generation. This Plan aspires to bring us together as a congregation into the changes that we are called to embrace by a society in which, for instance, faith is no longer so much inherited as it is *chosen*. Our emerging society requires the church to be missional *at home*, to reach out to the many who are searching for spiritual meaning in their lives but were not raised with the conventions and traditions of families who define themselves as "churched." We need to

learn together as a congregation how best we can build that mission to serve that population at St. Paul's in the next few years.

The most recent Long Range Plan (LRP), written in 2006, was ambitious and inspiring, but was written on the threshold of a time of dramatically changing circumstances in our society, and also at St. Paul's itself. Therefore, it was less than sustainable as a vision for this church and its congregation. Since 2006, for instance, the Cathedral has made some very difficult decisions, chief among them the financially necessitated decision to cut a full-time clergy position in 2009. Both staff and lay leaders have felt the difficult impact of this and other reductions. At the same time, some new strengths and relationships have emerged.

Arising from a year of conversations, many of which included members and groups from the St. Paul's congregation as well as from the Diocesan office, this document is intended as a way forward, a plan that strives to be a map of emerging possibilities rather than a handbook or inventory of our ministries. Each cluster will find one major priority offered by the Plan as a starting point in its first year, but the task is theirs to select exact specifics within the overall direction laid out here. We strongly encourage focus and the pruning needed to create a vigorous structure in the future.

How We Organize Our Work

Our newest Core Value, a statement that affirms our desire to honor sustainability in all things, must fully inhabit our vision and implementation of our infrastructure at the Cathedral. Over the past two years the St. Paul's community has relied on several "clusters" to manage the work of ministry. The cluster model has worked well overall, and will continue to evolve as we plan more deliberately for successors for the current chairs. Under the new Plan, and in the interest of the responsible stewardship of our human resources, we will consolidate the clusters to provide a simpler, cleaner structure, relying on four broad clusters (rather than eight) to organize and manage most of our ministry activities: Community, Stewardship, Worship, and Formation. Specifically, the Worship and Formation clusters will not change significantly from their current configuration. Two others are newly-named: Stewardship, to include the current Jubilee cluster as well as the stewardship and finance committees; and Community, to include welcome, parish life and pastoral care.

The clusters will work in a more integrated way to organize and prioritize the work of the church. The Vestry will provide a critical leadership role on each of the clusters, and each cluster will have both a Chair and a Chair Elect at all times. We will build on a model of lay leadership that recognizes the roles we are given in our baptismal covenant, rather than relying on ordained clergy to define and direct our work. We need to exercise proper stewardship of lay resources, including leadership development and succession planning. In addition, we will approach issues of staffing with even more creativity than in the past, not only developing lay leadership wherever it could possibly be appropriate, but also by seeking opportunities such as internships, grants, and consultant engagements to supplement the existing staff. As in the past two years, we hope to have cluster work expand outwards as members recruit others for specific activities.

We recognize the importance of providing people with tangible, bounded tasks with a beginning and an end, given that people of all ages have finite time and energy – no

matter how committed or generous they may be. As mentioned above, each cluster has a single initial priority under the Plan, to start the first year's activities. We envision that the clusters will encourage and rely on increased lay participation through working together and helping each other. Members of each cluster will meet regularly throughout the year and, at a meeting in the spring, will decide where their focus should lie for the program year ahead, thus establishing priorities to determine how to expend resources, including time. Together, they will define what work needs to be done, and what work needs to be laid aside. Each cluster will submit its plan to the Vestry for approval, and to Sarah Gallagher, the Cathedral Administrator, for inclusion on a master calendar.

This consolidation of clusters will encourage increased collaboration within the cluster to assist us in reaching our priorities. For example, we anticipate that when one branch of a cluster is engaged in a significant effort, other branches will provide assistance and that all clusters will be sensitive to the importance of creating finite tasks.

I. Community Cluster

Priority Action: Develop an effective and engaging Web site to make it easy for people to participate in activities and programs.

Our Mission Statement affirms the Cathedral's call to offer hospitality to all. This mission is echoed in our sixth Core Value, which recognizes and celebrates the iconic role of the Cathedral in the Diocese of Vermont. St. Paul's is a symbol and model of possibilities for other congregations, especially in the area of innovation in music and liturgy.

The newly-named Community Cluster honors this Cathedral ministry in its dedication to welcome (of both new and current members of the parish and diocese) and to pastoral care. Community, in 2011, means opening up our understanding of our church to welcome and include the many people who are seeking places to nourish their spirits, and who may not find that place of solace and connection in traditional Sunday morning services. In an increasingly fragmented world, our sense of community also needs to extend to current parishioners. We will challenge and enrich how we understand ourselves as a vital, justice-seeking community, which acknowledges and cares for those in need.

Communication in a twenty-first century faith community, so central to the way we define ourselves both in and outside of the church building, needs to be multi-faceted. The Community Cluster's initial task is to focus on expanding the St. Paul's Web site as a way of improving communications. The most immediate intention of this task is to make it easy for new and long-term parishioners alike to "plug in" to activities and programs. But in fact an expanded and enhanced Web presence will signal the beginning of a kind of paradigm shift for the Cathedral, both in its function as a parish church and as Cathedral. With more and more people seeking spiritual guidance (as opposed to simply information) on the internet, a fully reconceived Web presence for the Cathedral, in which, for instance, sermons and music were eventually available online, could provide both solace and welcome for people living in the Diocese of Vermont and beyond. We recommend that the Cluster explore potential grant sources to fund an internship to provide leadership and assistance with the development and implementation of a new comprehensive Web site for St. Paul's which is inviting, user-friendly and interactive.

We will be open to learning about other ways that present and future technology could be used to build relationships within and beyond the Cathedral. At the same time, we will continue to have printed material available.

We believe that a ministry of care and support for all of St. Paul's parishioners binds us together and strengthens us as a Christian community of faith. It is essential to have a dedicated and skilled group of lay volunteers who visit those who are in need for whatever reason – perhaps because they are hospitalized, in nursing or rehabilitation homes, or are homebound temporarily or long-term, or grieving. Our clergy will nurture and expand the Eucharistic visitors to include a broad cross-section of parishioners. We will implement more ways to support parishioners who have difficulty getting to church with rides and check-in calls during the week.

In partnership with the Cathedral Chapter (a group that includes the Bishop, the Dean, several diocesan leaders, and a parish representative), the Cathedral will continue to work to make sure that all members of the Diocese feel welcome to visit the Cathedral, and to participate in and lead events.

II. Stewardship Cluster

Priority Action: Identify and create a new congregation-wide social justice ministry focused on service and connected to an existing community effort that many parishioners can participate in.

In this vision of the Cathedral, Stewardship is far more than an annual pledge campaign. Stewardship is the careful and thoughtful – the *sustainable* – nurturing of those things entrusted to our care. At St. Paul's, the mission and ministries of Jubilee Social Justice, financial stewardship, earth care and sustainable resources form a logical and dynamic group with an emphasis on caring for our community (including our staff), our earth, and our church building in responsible and life-giving ways that generate vitality and do not exhaust our energy, monetary resources, or the earth community. Our financial practices and vision will result in a balanced budget that builds a foundation for increased ministry and social justice spending in the next decade.

Earth care principles will inform all of our ministries and increase our awareness of our interdependence with and responsibility for all God-given resources. We are, after all, a Christian community living in covenant with God and in relationship with the wider community of Burlington, the Diocese, and the Champlain Valley. We intend to live into a deeper awareness of God's justice and wholeness for all of creation, and to uphold God's sacred vision that moves us to practice sustainability as part of our global community.

In recognition of this fuller understanding of Christian stewardship at St. Paul's, an understanding that we believe is nourished by the power and possibilities inherent in a service ministry shared by all the members of the congregation, we propose that over the next year the Stewardship cluster explore a congregation-wide service ministry associated with Cathedral Square's new Support and Services at Home (SASH) program. As its name implies, Cathedral Square is a social justice ministry associated from its very beginnings with St. Paul's. In its mission to provide safe and affordable housing for seniors, Cathedral Square is developing SASH, a care partnership that will assist seniors to age in their own homes. Volunteer engagement from the community is a core element

of the SASH model as there will be a number of needs and gaps in service identified with SASH participants that would be best met through community volunteers. A congregation-wide volunteer program at St. Paul's – a unified ministry that will need our efforts, not our funds – could function as a kind of "SASH service corps" that will assist in meeting specific needs identified by the SASH staff at various Cathedral Square Corporation sites, including our neighbors across from the Cathedral itself.

Whether it is in association with Cathedral Square or another group, we imagine a focused service ministry that will be immediately apparent to anyone walking in the door at St. Paul's and that will harness the justice-doing energy of the entire congregation and invigorate the community with the power of a unified mission. It will make available a variety of well-defined, well-organized opportunities for service such that anyone, regardless of their situation, can become involved. We envision maintaining our commitment to the Joint Urban Ministries Project (JUMP) as well as to Vermont Interfaith Action (VIA); nor do we discourage people from being involved in these and other long-standing ministries (the Salvation Army suppers, for instance) that feed our Christian purpose and our sense of ourselves as a community. Taken as a whole, our stewardship ministry will continue to educate parishioners about stewardship of time, talents, and money as a year-round ministry that defines who we are as Christians and as a community.

III. Worship Cluster

Priority Action: Explore different forms of weekend service and expand lay-led opportunities.

Worship is the heart of our community. At St. Paul's there is a deep connection to traditional Eucharistic worship, and this plan honors and maintains those traditions, while acknowledging that emergence, as we are defining it in this plan, asks us to experiment with alternative forms and times of worship even as we continue to worship at traditional Sunday morning services. Such innovation might appeal both to current Episcopalians and to people from outside our parish community, people who are seeking spiritually meaningful experiences outside the framework of traditional religious services. To this end, we recommend that the Dean appoint an Ad Hoc Committee on Liturgy with the charge of designing alternative weekend services that would be offered at times other than Sunday morning. Building, for instance, on the widely acknowledged strength of our music program and the success of the quarterly Taizé services we currently offer, we might explore the possibility of offering more frequent evening meditative services that could be led by lay members of the Diocese. Another possibility worth exploring might be a Sunday evening "Dinner Church" (perhaps also lay-led), an innovative model of worship that has been welcomed as an emergent service at several Episcopal/Anglican churches both in the U.S. and abroad.

We recommend that an alternative service or services be in place as a pilot project for Lent 2012, with planning for more extensive use of such services later in 2012. We recognize as well the value of creativity at our more traditional services, and we therefore encourage the continued ways in which creativity can enrich and honor the richness of our existing liturgical practices.

IV. Formation Cluster

Priority Action: Create an integrated and comprehensive lifelong formation program.

Our fifth Core Value affirms our belief that lifelong Christian formation transforms and sustains us on our individual and collective journeys into lives of faith. We have a commitment to nurture the “inquiring and discerning hearts” that the priest prays for at our baptisms. In its role as Cathedral, St. Paul’s can be a model and a resource in the Diocese with regard to Christian formation; indeed, the vital role the Cathedral has had in the development of Christian Meditation, a priority of the 2006 LRP, is already testament to this.

This Plan aims to create over time an integrated and comprehensive formation program, with a variety of content and delivery formats to appeal to a broad range of participants of all ages. We will work toward a model where all the steps fit together and reinforce each other, where adults, children, and youth are on parallel tracks. In time, we hope to develop a model that other churches in the Diocese might want to emulate. It is our belief that the Formation Cluster, which will remain as it is in the Cluster reorganization, is prepared to imagine and implement the sort of evolving program that gives voice and exploratory space to the “fresh ideas” that emergent Church practices encourage.

The program for adults will include the many healthy programs we currently run – Episcopal Church 101, the Christian Initiation Process, Education For Ministry – and it will solidify Cathedral University, the Sunday afternoon series offerings that began in the spring of 2010. Because transformation comes only through meaningful conversation in which everyone participates, we will also create a parish-wide “common read” in both the fall and the spring, and organize various book groups. Ideally, we hope to make it easy for anyone to participate in adult formation, regardless of where they are on their faith journey.

Church School will continue to offer programs for children and youth, and, when possible, mirror the education for adults. Notably, we will revive the program leading to youth Confirmation that has for several years been dormant, to culminate in the Confirmation of high school age youth at the Easter Vigil. We will review the use of our space for Church School, and consider ways to create more permanent classroom settings. We will also create a widening role and point of contact for parents and other interested adults in our program, with the goal of providing more ways for them to be involved in the Church School education of our children. Succession planning will be incorporated in order to spread the work of teaching more broadly.

Closing

As parishioners of all ages and circumstances have given input about St. Paul’s future, we have affirmed the central commitments and joys of our life together. We have much to celebrate as we look ahead. During the last five years, both despite and because of the challenges we have faced, growth and new life have emerged: a successful capital campaign; a new governance model that reveals the tremendous strength we have in lay leadership; a new way to do fund-raising that is both effective and respectful of congregational resources; and many new and enriched relationships, with God and with one another.

As you have read, this Plan is about the sustenance of:

- our traditions even while we are called to change,
- our spirit of inquiry as we move forward together, and especially
- our relationships with one another,

while we emerge fully into the twenty-first century as a robust and thriving faith community, a community of prayer, fellowship, and justice.

At Pentecost, those who were gathered and who witnessed the evidence of the living Christ asked their brother Peter, “What should we do?” This Plan seeks to embrace the possibilities of that question – with God’s help.

Approved by the Cathedral Vestry
August 3, 2011