



**2024 Mid-Year Report of the**  
**VESTRY,**  
**STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM, &**  
**STEWARDSHIP GROUP**

**Presented to the Congregation**  
**AUGUST 11, 2024**

**ST. GABRIEL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
**414 Pine St., Titusville, FL**



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# Rector's Report

Dear St. Gabriel's Family,

I cannot begin to convey both how thankful I am to be your Rector, and how excited I am for our future. But I'll try...

As most of you know, earlier this year, the Vestry and others met to pray, discuss, and begin to plan for the strategic future of St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church. God has been answering our prayers for direction and we are excited to share some of these results with you today.

One of the reasons I said "Yes" to being your Rector is that I sensed that the Lord was present in a special way. I knew that with the amount of prayer dedicated to the search, God was up to something. Lo and behold, he called me and here we are today. I am even more convinced that God is present, active, and that he has an audacious plan for the future of St. Gabriel's Episcopal church.

We started in '22 building back our fellowship after being closed for so long. Then in '23 we began laying a foundation for growth. We started asking God for direction in terms of mission and vision and, eventually, he answered. From Creation, God has had a plan for his children. We are made in his image to reflect Him to the world. Today, we reflect a God that came to earth to redeem his children and all creation. And He has called St. Gabriel's to "*Bear the Redemptive Image of Christ to a Broken World.*"

Earlier this year, we began to ask God, "What do you want St. Gabriel's to be and do over the next five or ten years?" What do you want us to look like in terms of growth, ministries, discipleship, families, and even size. At first, it seemed his answers weren't quite what we were expecting. But they were exactly what we needed to hear. We need to continue building the foundation for growth.

We are hard at work building or fixing things like communication, curb appeal, Outreach, and so much more. By God's grace we are making headway and by this time next year, we hope to have a more concrete idea of a long-term strategy.

And believe me when I say, it's God that is doing the work. I said in a sermon recently, that we tend to make so much of the world about ourselves. In reality, God is the one at work and we are blessed to be witnesses of His work. It is no stretch to say, we have seen legitimate miracles over the last two years. From people saying "yes" to God... to him literally bringing healing during the service, God is at work.

God has raised up both leaders from within and sent us new people to take up the passion of God's work in this Church. We just had an incredibly successful VBS. People are coming to Sunday School and evening studies. And St. Gabriel's is growing. Our average attendance has risen this year. We are seeing more families in the 10:15 service.

This is where a strategic vision is coming from. It's a recognition that God is already working among us and guiding us into the future. And he is doing so through the passion and excitement of each one of you.

Please continue to pray for your church. Please support your church through your giving. Please remember the many ways you can give of your time and talent. And please pray for me and my family.

Thank you so much for your dedication to the Lord and to St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church.

With love, Fr. Rob

# **GOD'S MISSION FOR ST. GABRIEL'S**

## ***Bearing the redemptive image of Christ to a broken world.***

There is only one answer to the brokenness that exists in all our hearts. There is only one true hope on earth today. God sent his only Son to redeem the world and restore Creation to himself. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life... He is the answer.

As a people created in the "Image of God," WE are called to take the redemptive image of Christ into the world. It is our great privilege is to share the good news that hope is found in Jesus Christ.

The decisions that we make as a church... the plans that we set moving forward... the faith we exercise in His providing the time, talent, and treasure to follow this mission... must all align with God's mission for St. Gabriel's.

In our quest to know what he wants us to do and be, he has given us a mission.

# GOD'S VISION FOR ST. GABRIEL'S

We aspire to be a beacon of faith, community, and service, rooted in Christ and our Episcopal traditions, while embracing the future.

We envision:

## THRIVING CONGREGATION

- A vibrant, program-size church with growing attendance, fostering deep connections through small group ministries.
- A church that is multi-generational with vibrant programs for all ages from children and youth to both young and old adults.
- A diverse community united in worship, with services that inspire and welcome our expanding family of faith.

## EMPOWERED LEADERSHIP

- A Vestry focused on strategic oversight, guiding our parish with wisdom and foresight.
- A Rector who leads through empowerment, delegating authority to passionate ministry teams.
- Engaged laity bring their gifts to serve in various capacities, enriching our church life.

## STEWARDSHIP OF OUR HERITAGE

- Continued preservation and utilization of our historic Sanctuary, honoring our past while welcoming future generations.
- Beautifully maintained grounds that reflect God's creation and invite peaceful reflection.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- A parish that extends beyond its walls, providing valuable resources to our local community and Diocese.
- Facilities that serve as a hub for both church and community activities, fostering relationships and support.
- A passion and desire to reach the neighborhood, city, and the world with the message of the Gospel.

## SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

- Well-maintained and adaptable facilities that support our current needs and future expansion.
- A forward-thinking approach to ministry that balances tradition with innovation.
- Budgeting that stretches our faith and extends the ministry of St. Gabriel's into our neighborhoods, city, and the world.

Through these aspirations, we seek to create a church home where all are welcome, faith is nurtured, and God's love is shared abundantly with the world around us.

Fr. Rob Griffith  
Strategic Planning Team Meeting  
June 19, 2024

# MID-YEAR STRATEGIC SUMMARY

St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church is undergoing strategic planning discernment and stewardship efforts to address challenges and build for the future.

Key points include:

1. In June, a strategic planning retreat identified that St. Gabriel's is in a transitional phase\*, with characteristics of both a pastoral-size\* and resource-size\* church.
2. The church leadership recognizes the need for change and growth, aiming to increase average Sunday attendance to 225+ and become a program-size\* parish.
3. New task teams have been established for communications, education, newcomer integration, staffing, and improving curb appeal.
4. There's a focus on supporting the rector, Fr. Rob, and his wife Christi, including potentially seeking additional clergy support.
5. Also in June, a focus group revealed communication issues, both internal and external, and a desire from parishioners to know how they can contribute their time and talents.
6. As of August 2024, the church is facing financial pressures, with a projected \$37,400 annual budget shortfall and aging facilities requiring maintenance.
7. The church is planning a 2024 stewardship campaign focused on New Testament giving of time, talent, and treasure as worship from the heart of love.
8. A potential capital campaign is being considered for debt repayment and building improvements, particularly related to youth ministry.
9. The church leadership is working on a long-range plan and vision for St. Gabriel's future, including possible campus expansions and increased community engagement.

\*See Appendix D for Church Types



# INVITATION

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, and sisters, in view of god's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God---this is your true and proper worship.  
(Romans 12:1)

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the son and of the holy spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.  
(Matthew 28:19,20)

To that end St. Gabriel's asks that each one of you who attend St. Gabriel's prayerfully consider being called to service within the St. Gabriel's family to new ministries recently organized:

Communications Task Team  
Education Task Team  
Newcomer Integration Task Team  
Staffing Assisting Fr. Rob Task Team  
Improving Curb Appeal Task Team  
Growth and Outreach (G.O.) Task Team

Further information regarding the function and purpose of these teams and other ministry opportunities is provided in Appendix B.

Prayer is essential for all of these ministry task teams, as well as for St. Gabriel's Mission, Vision, Church Family, and the role each of us is being called to play. Please join us, first and foremost, in prayer. Prayer is of utmost importance in accomplishing what God is calling St. Gabriel's to be and do in the world. Then our actions will be fruitful, and God will be glorified.

Carol Seidel  
June 2024

**Treasurer's Report  
by Richard Cota**

Overall, at mid-year 2024 our finances look like they are in good shape. At the end of June, operating income is ahead of planned by nearly \$30k. This is mainly due to early receipt of Pledges in the amount of \$35,670. We are thankful for the number of Pledgers donating 90% to 100% of their full pledge amount in the first 6 months. We know that these extra funds are already accounted for throughout the balance of the year and at the end of the year, they will no longer show as excess. Most Pledgers, at least two thirds, are on track with their pledge commitment. Your commitment to loving and worshipping God through your giving is greatly appreciated.

However, as of August, a third of Pledgers are behind their pledge commitments totaling \$3,485.16. If not caught up and ultimately fulfilled, at year-end this Pledge shortfall is estimated to be \$7,366.40. Plate offerings and Other income together are \$2,311.69 under our Plan through June with this expected to be under the plan by \$4,633.60 at year-end. If nothing changes, this shortfall combined with the projected shortfall in pledges is nearly \$12,000. On a positive note, our operating expenses are currently running below the plan by \$6,276.67. However, these savings are expected to drop through the end of the year.

As a reminder, our 2024 Faith Budget Operating expenses were planned at \$27,000 over our projected income. As of this time, funds to cover these extra expenses have not materialized. If we make no changes, the current projected shortage at year end is now \$37,400. This additional shortage is due to an additional budgeted operating income shortfall of \$12,000 mainly the Pledge and Plate Income is projected to be about \$9,000 less than the plan. The remainder is due to less Other Income primarily Special Offerings. This income shortfall is partially offset by less projected expenses in the amount of \$1,600 at year end.

At the end of the 2023 year, we were confronted with the need for a complete Sanctuary Roof replacement. This has been completed at a total cost of \$72,305, but the effort to replace the "Triangle Windows" is still in the works. The remainder of the \$100,000 loan from the Diocese is being used for these windows. We received a \$26,100 Grant from the City of Titusville in March 2024 to assist in paying back the loan. So far, we have made 4 monthly (low interest) loan payments to the Diocese in the amount of \$474.21 each, and we are keeping the grant money as extra liquidity for any emergencies. As soon as we know the final total for both projects, we will let the congregation know how much we need to raise to pay off the loan.

**St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church**  
**Summary of 2024 Financials for the First 6 Months**

	2024 Budget Plan Jan-June	Delta to Plan	Jan-June 2024 Actuals	Explanation of Major Changes between 2024 Budget Plan & Actual for Jan thru June
Operating Income	\$ 183,041.89	\$ 29,873.15	\$ 212,915.04	
Pledge Income	\$ 136,753.84	\$ 32,184.84	\$ 168,938.68	Early receipt of pledges \$35,670 Less pledges behind \$3,485.16
Plate Income	\$ 31,793.05	\$ (830.15)	\$ 30,962.90	Less other offerings
Other Income	\$ 14,495.00	\$ (1,481.54)	\$ 13,013.46	More donations; for meals together; from Quilters; from Widows Group; from Sr. Center Dancers. Less donations: for Special Offerings
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 195,448.03</b>	<b>\$ (6,276.67)</b>	<b>\$ 189,171.36</b>	
Diocesan Pledge	\$ 15,740.58	\$ (0.04)	\$ 15,740.54	Assessment is 11%
Buildings and Grounds	\$ 41,673.25	\$ 828.34	\$ 42,501.59	Feb and March Electricity ran high
Payroll and Benefits	\$ 107,988.42	\$ (2,273.53)	\$ 105,714.89	Sexton, Bookkeeper, Nursery, Health/Dental Ins - under Administrative Assistant; Pension & Savings Plan - over
Ministry Expenses	\$ 17,565.24	\$ (4,147.79)	\$ 13,417.45	More expenses; for meals together; Less expenses for Christian Education, Music, Supply Clergy, Continuing Education, Business Meals; Transportation; Special Offering Expenses; Growth & Outreach Expenses
Administrative Expenses	\$ 12,480.54	\$ (683.65)	\$ 11,796.89	Office supplies/repairs; Advertising/Promotion; Tech- Security - Under. Dues/Subscriptions - Over (rate increases)
<b>Income Shortfall in Plan &amp; adj actuals</b>	<b>\$ (12,406.14)</b>			
<b>Income over expenses in Actuals</b>			<b>\$ 23,743.68</b>	Due to early Pledges, income exceeds expenses

**END-OF-YEAR Projected Shortage if nothing changes = \$27,000 in planned deficit (Faith Budget) plus a projected additional deficit of \$10,400 for a total projected shortage of \$37,400.**

**Total projected shortage in budgeted income is \$12,000 (of which \$9,000 are Pledges and Plate) offset by less expenses projected of \$1,600, equaling the \$10,400.**

**Theme**

For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. (Romans 12:1)

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales. (Acts 4: 31-34)

The 2024 Stewardship Campaign is based upon New Testament giving of time, talent, and treasure as worship from the heart of love.

In June, Fr. Rob shared a message with the church about how our giving is to be motivated by love. Paul, in 2 Corinthians, wanted to test the "earnestness of [their] love" (2 Cor 8.8) in responding to the financial needs of their sister churches in Jerusalem. Paul could have commanded them exactly what to give. Instead, he encourages them to give from the place of love.

Love is the greatest expectation of the Believer after "Repent and believe." If there is a "true north" that helps us find our way and answers how we should walk as believers, it's the law of love. This love was demonstrated to us by Christ himself "that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Cor 8.9).

Which leads to our worship. Worship is an expression of love. And love happens within the context of a relationship. God loves us. He reveals his love to us. And we respond to that love by loving him back with our songs, with our prayers and with the way we live our lives.

After being asked which is the "greatest" commandment, Jesus responded with the command to love. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment" (Matt 22.37-38). For Jesus, love and worship go hand in hand. And loving and worshipping him with our lives includes what we do with our time, talent, and yes, our treasure.

Finally, the campaign theme and focus is St. Gabriel's Mission statement: Bearing the Redemptive Image of Christ to a Broken world. In response to our love for Christ, we give back to him that we, as a congregation, might increase his kingdom so many more might show him love.

A curriculum is being designed to explain how these Scriptural ideas come together to guide us to give out of love and worship to fulfill the mission of the church.

## **, 2024 Stewardship Calendar**

**APRIL 23---**Finalize 2024 Plan and present to Vestry for comment. Incorporate comments as appropriate.

**JUNE 1---**Focus Group of invited Parishioners with pre-determined questions regarding their views on stewardship at St. Gabriel's. Coffee, juice, and rolls/ donuts will be served.

**AUGUST 11--** Semi-annual Congregational Meeting.

The Stewardship Task Team will host a luncheon of chicken Caesar dinner salad, dessert, and drinks after the 10:15 Worship Service August 11. During this time, a Treasury Report for the first 6 months of the year will be provided; an update on Strategic Planning will be presented; new initiatives in Youth Ministry will be discussed; and, the Stewardship Plan and Calendar for 2024 will be presented. Each presentation will not exceed 5 minutes and handouts will be available.

### **AUGUST**

- Place 2024 Stewardship Plan on St. Gabriel's website.
- Prepare 2024 Pledge Card to reflect stewardship of time, talent, and treasure as worship from a heart of love.
- Prepare a letter to be individually sent to all Parishioners by mail, e-mail or other available methods, including a generic letter on the internet regarding stewardship of time, talent, and treasurer as worship from the heart of love using a theme of "Bearing the Redemptive Image of Christ to a broken World". Letter signed by Rector, Senior Warden and Stewardship Chair.
- Prepare a video less than one-hour presentation to be shown to all available St. Gabriel's Groups at the Groups' ordinary time as well as placed on the St. Gabriel's web site. Presentation will include an introduction by Fr. Rob and a discussion of St. Gabriel's Mission as well as a survey of stewardship in the New Testament by Heather Rowton.

### **SEPTEMBER**

- Place Fr. Rob's June 30 Sermon, "Give out of Love" on the St. Gabriel's website beginning at 31:00.
- Mail the Stewardship Letter and Pledge card.
- In each Sunday Bulletin through September and October prominently publish in the Bulletin a one sentence statement of "gratitude" connected to St. Gabriel's without attribution.
- Provide video presentation to as many St. Gabriel's Groups as possible in September and October.
- Place video presentation and transcription on St. Gabriel's web site.

### **END OF 2024 CAMPAIGN---To Be Determined**

**MID-NOVEMBER---**consult with the Rector and the Vestry regarding the propriety of having a Capital Campaign early in 2025 to provide for Capital Expenses, including payment in full of the Diocese loan.

**DECEMBER 10 (Time to be determined) ---**Tentative meeting to consider 2025 Capital Campaign.

**Communication Task Team**

*Leaders: Alex Nutting, Drew Barber, Katie Morrison*

**Function and Purpose:**

The **Communications Team** at St. Gabriel's will be dedicated to fostering effective communication within the church community, enhancing our presence in the wider community, and ensuring clear, consistent communication between church leadership and ministry teams. The team will play a crucial role in supporting the church's mission of "Bearing the redemptive image of Christ to a broken world" by effectively utilizing various communication channels to engage, inform, and inspire our congregation and the broader community. Responsibilities will include managing the weekly/monthly church newsletter by gathering content from ministry leaders, clergy, and church members. They will also coordinate internal announcements, working closely with ministry teams and leadership to gather and disseminate information about church activities and initiatives. Maintaining an up-to-date announcements page on the church website will be crucial, ensuring all events are accurately listed and easily accessible to members. In addition to internal communication, the team will be responsible for managing the church's social media presence. This will involve developing and scheduling posts across various platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, etc. The goal will be to create engaging content that promotes church events, sermons, and community activities, while also fostering a sense of community among followers. The team will also focus on helping to promote church events and services to the wider community. Collaboration with church leadership will be vital in developing and implementing a comprehensive communications strategy. The team will regularly review and assess communication efforts, making improvements as needed to ensure effectiveness. Providing training and support for ministry teams on effective communication practices will help to maintain a high standard of internal communication. Staying informed on the latest communication trends and technologies, and integrating them into the church's communication efforts, will ensure that St. Gabriel's remains at the forefront of effective communication within the church community and beyond.

**Education Task Team**

*Leader: Heather Rowton, Member: Charlie Hunsaker*

**Function and Purpose:**

The **Education Team** at St. Gabriel's embodies a commitment to nurturing spiritual growth and deepening knowledge within our community. Comprising dedicated individuals passionate about imparting wisdom and fostering understanding, the team's purpose is multifaceted. They endeavor to develop engaging and enriching programs that cater to all ages, from children to adults, ensuring each member of our congregation finds meaningful opportunities for learning and personal growth. By offering thoughtfully curated classes and study groups rooted in scripture and relevant teachings, they aim to empower individuals to deepen their faith, cultivate spiritual maturity, and apply timeless principles to their daily lives. Through their efforts, the education team seeks to strengthen the bonds of fellowship and equip our community with the tools necessary to navigate life's challenges with grace and faith. Specific opportunities to consider include a coordinator for small group studies and Diocesan education materials, and an Alpha small group study coordinator. If you have a heart for teaching and education, please consider reaching out to Heather Rowton for more information. Fr. Rob will approve all education materials.

### ***Newcomer Welcome and Onboarding Task Team***

Leaders: Jean Hippert, Tracy Bailey, Polly Polk , Carolyn Van Heusen

#### Function and Purpose:

The **Newcomer Welcome and Onboarding Team** has a mission to create a warm and inclusive environment for newcomers and help them integrate into our church family. The goal is to ensure that every newcomer feels valued, heard, understood, and supported. The first step to accomplish this goal will be to organize Newcomer Dinners with the Rector/Wife and Leadership to welcome new members to our family.

The task team will begin with a review of resources available to accomplish this mission, including the development of a Newcomers Packet and a query of our congregational members special interest, passions, and skill sets. This will assist the pairing of newcomers with current members for introductions and conversations. The team will routinely review and recommend new welcoming programs as well as work to establish best practices and standards for each. First up, will be our new "Gabriels Greeters" which will be designed to welcome our guests at their first step onto our campus, in the parking lot, and assist to guide them throughout.

Next, the team will identify discipleship practices and programs within the church (e.g., prayer ministry, youth ministry, Bible studies, etc.) along with volunteers from each group to connect with the newcomers for orientation information to facilitate participation, answer questions and provide guidance.

In addition, the task team will assist in the development of materials and tools to offer learning opportunities to experience the unique culture and history of St. Gabriels. Through engagement in discipleship practices, we expect that newcomers will proudly become part of St. Gabriels story.

Welcoming newcomers is an ongoing process, and with the support from all of our brothers and sisters, the task team will play a vital role in making St. Gabriels a loving and supportive community for all.

### ***Staffing Task Team***

Leaders: Marie Hunsaker, Katie Morrison

#### Function and Purpose:

This **Staffing Team** will work with Fr. Rob to identify tasks that parishioners can accomplish without much involvement of Fr. Rob, particularly on his days off. Additionally, this team may work to identify the need for additional volunteer or paid staff from time to time as well as explore possibilities for additional clergy, such as Deacons. The team will seek members as specific talents are identified.

**Improving Curb Appeal Task Team**  
*Leaders: Ron Rowton, Mary Mulligan*

Function and Purpose:

The **Improving Curb Appeal Team** is dedicated to enhancing the church's curb appeal to create a welcoming environment for our members and new guests. Elements of this transformation include the removal of the playground mulch area, cleaning up around the tree in the main parking lot, and pruning back shrubs to pressure wash the parking lot and areas throughout the campus. We will be replacing parking stops throughout the parking areas, repainting parking stops, curbs, and eventually re-stripping the lot. The team is also addressing the rood runoff on the west side of the Parish Hall, sprinkler system, and repurposing the "labyrinth" area in collaboration with an Eagle Scout project. Check out the new fencing for the Memorial Garden. Coming in the fall, the team is planning to re-mulch all of the beds. Through collaborative efforts and a commitment to excellence, the church's exterior will radiate the love of Christ, drawing all who pass by to come and experience St. Gabriel's. The team is seeking volunteers who would like to participate in this important aspect of our church ministry. Contact Ron Rowton for more info!

**Growth and Outreach (G.O.) Task Team**

*Leaders: Pam Satek, Jean Hippert, Marie Hunsaker*

Function and Purpose:

St. Gabriel's **Growth & Outreach Team** or G.O., Committee began in November 2023 and grew out of a desire to reach out into the "world" to bring newcomers to the knowledge of Jesus Christ through this church. The group consists of members from the congregation, the Vestry, and Hospitality. While brainstorming ideas, we also recognized that there were elements of parish life that needed to be established before we could meet the needs of the "world". For example: our youth, our nursery, our Sunday School, our families with children, and wheelchair accessible transportation. Meeting these needs would create the basis of inviting the "world" to St. Gabriel's. We prioritized the identified needs and budgeted them in our 2024 Faith Budget. The results? We now have a nursery staffed with an employee and volunteers.

Our Vacation Bible School hosted children pre-K to 12 years old and was held in the evenings July 29 – August 3. Volunteer ministers stepped up to help with Simple Suppers and all the many pieces of our Faith Journey program. We closed the VBS on August 3 by joining the 5:30 pm service, followed with an Ice Cream Social.

Labor Day weekend will kick off the start of Sunday School with a splash house and potluck picnic for all the "kids" in the parish. Classes will begin September 8. Our youth currently meet monthly with volunteer youth leaders. Every third Friday Family Fellowship has held a raucous evening over a meal and games. Families of all ages are invited and welcome. The transportation needs remain. Perhaps you have ideas? We invite and welcome teens and adults who also want every person to know Jesus Christ. Bring your energy and ideas and let's work together toward making Jesus known in all the world as in Matthew 28:19: "Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations..."



## ***Other Opportunities to Serve***

**In addition, there are many, many other teams, groups, ministries, and individuals providing their time and talent. All of them will need more support as St. Gabriel's expands its outreach.**

**Children and Youth:** Nurturing our young people in the faith is critical to the future of our church, and critical to providing young families with the resources they need in their church. We need people to support Youth Ministry, teach Sunday School, and assist in the nursery from time to time are essential to the ministry and growth of St. Gabriel's.

**The Stewardship Committee** could benefit from parishioners interested in learning and participating in St. Gabriel's stewardship and finance.

**Hospitality** provided by Michael and Carolyn Van Heusen, are vital ministries for fellowship and unity at St. Gabriel's. Carolyn and Michael always appreciate the help they receive. Group dinners, simple suppers, and coffee angels all play a part in strengthening our community bonds as well as our bodies.

**Lay Eucharistic Visitors** is a truly vital ministry, keeping home-bound members connected and nourished with the body and blood of Christ in their time of greatest need.

**Ushers** welcome everyone to worship and help guide newcomers to help them find their place in the sanctuary and in the order of service.

The **Altar Guild** and the **Flower Guild** work behind the scene to ensure the beauty and the sacredness of worship. These ministries are critical to our worship services every weekend.

**Technical Help.** Our livestream of the 10:15 service is a lifeline to so many people of our congregation who are sick or homebound. In addition, many parishioners would appreciate assistance as they attempt to master computers, smart phones, and the internet to access the St. Gabriel's website.

There are so many more... **Daughters of The King, Foyer Groups, Living in The Presence Small Groups, Music Ministry** and **choir**... These and so many more opportunities exist to serve the Lord and each other at St. Gabriel's:

**INITIAL PLANNING**

At the April 23, 2024 Vestry meeting, on invitation of Fr. Rob and the Sr. Warden, Brent Hippert proposed a long range strategic planning process for St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church. Having been part of an Anglican church plan that today is over 400 people, Brent and Jean Hippert have experience in seeing a church grow from a seed to a ministry impacting the world around them. A Stewardship Plan and Calendar for 2024 was presented to the Vestry which included a Focus Group in late May. The Planning proposal and the Stewardship Plan and Calendar were accepted by the Vestry.

Saturday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024 was selected to host a leadership retreat. A cap on the number of attendees had to be determined in order to ensure the success of the meeting. Attendees would include the Vestry and about a dozen other members of St. Gabriel's who satisfied pre-determined criteria of being "stakeholders" in the future of the Church. Criteria included length and engagement of service at St. Gabriel's, as well as those who have previously made a financial commitment to the church. These criteria essentially match the criteria for being members of the Vestry.

After interviewing potential facilitators, The Rev. Canon Ellis E. Brust of St. Andrews, Ft. Pierce, Florida (Permanent Canon of the Episcopal Diocese of Florida), was chosen to facilitate a Vestry Retreat. To prepare for the event, Fr. Rob, Carol Seidel and Jean and Brent Hippert met a number of times with Rev. Ellis. It was determined that the Retreat would encompass three meetings, to which all Vestry members and additional attendees were invited.

Wednesday evening, June 5: A screening of an interview with Bishop Justin Holcomb and the authors of *The Great Dechurching* (Jim Davis and Michael Graham). This was followed by a discussion of the interview and trends we see at St. Gabriel's.

Friday evening, June 7: A social hour with a presentation by Rev. Ellis on Church types, followed by a group discussion of the current characteristics of St. Gabriel's.

Saturday, June 8: The Strategic Planning Retreat ran from 8:30 to 3:00.

NOTE: *A summary of the information gleaned from this retreat can be found on our website under the Resources menu titled "Strategic Vision."*

**STEWARDSHIP FOCUS GROUP**

On June 1st, the Stewardship Committee led a Focus Group asking both general and specific questions on the topic of giving. The focus Group was phenomenally successful with robust participation. While the questions tended to be oriented toward stewardship, the responses tended toward more generic comments regarding St. Gabriel's. Some participants expressed unfamiliarity with St. Gabriel's Mission statement, and little knowledge of a New Testament theology of stewardship.

**LEADERSHIP RETREAT**

The Strategic Planning Discernment Retreat and subsequent meetings have provided a means whereby God has given St. Gabriel's a vision for our future as a worshipping community. As we work towards this vision, we expect that adjustments and refinements will be required, but with something

to aim for, we can define tasks and see progress, thereby putting ourselves in the best position for God to fulfill His mission in and through us to redeem His creation.

## **CHURCH TYPE DEFINITIONS**

Family: <75 ASA\* Typically led by a Patriarch/Matriarch. Rector is there as Celebrant only.

PASTORAL: 76-140 ASA Leadership and ministry is centered on the Rector.

TRANSITIONAL: 141-224 ASA. Rector is stretched; new groups forming along with leadership.

PROGRAM: 225-800 ASA. Leadership centered on ministry leaders. Rector is delegator and gives strategy.

RESOURCE: 800 ASA. Rector is CEO/manager/Strategizer. Staff governance; many groups

\*Note: ASA = Average Sunday Attendance. In the case of St. Gabriel's, this is the average of all our weekend services, Saturday and Sunday.

### **A Long-range Vision for St. Gabriel's 2034 and Beyond**

We envision a vibrant, program-size church with growing attendance, fostering deep connections through small group ministries. It is a church that is multi-generational with vibrant programs for all ages from children and youth to both young and old adults. And we wish to foster a diverse community united in worship, with services that inspire and welcome our expanding family of faith.

#### Governance:

- The Rector delegates and leads through empowerment
- The Vestry focuses on strategic oversight
- Task Teams and committees have some independent responsibilities

#### Laitiy:

- Many small group activities providing fellowship, education, Bible study, spiritual growth, health and well-ness
- Many opportunities to bring gifts of service to St. Gabriel's, the Diocese and the greater community of North Brevard

#### Resources:

- Raising as called new clergy
- Welcoming clergy interns and other ministers
- Representing on community service organizations and boards
- Providing support, as needed, for first responders
- Providing spiritual support for those in need

#### Campus:

- Historic Sanctuary well preserved and regularly used
- Parish Hall is two stories; multiple rooms on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor
- Church worship center capable of seating 300-350
- Land & buildings are repurposed to advance Mission

#### Size

- 250-400 ASA as the Lord Provides

