

## **Strategic Planning Retreat June 7-8 Report to the Congregation**

The Strategic Planning Committee, led by Brent Hippert, and the Vestry agreed to hold a Retreat to prepare for the creation of a ten-year strategic plan for St. Gabriel's and the campus. After interviews with two experienced Episcopal priest facilitators, we engaged the Rev. Canon Ellis Brust to help us prepare for and facilitate the event. The event began on Friday evening with a social gathering and kick-off presentation by Cn. Brust. The Retreat ran from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm on Saturday. Using a combination of PowerPoint slides, clips from the movie "Moneyball," and group and table discussions, Cn. Brust led us through the following key areas.

### **The Importance of a Growth versus Goal Orientation**

It is important to discover the Four "Hs" (Hope, Hurt, Hindrances and Helps) of everyone who walks into our parish life. This includes Individual Discipleship journeys (what is our personal discipleship effort, what do we need to give up to grow, what are our sacred cows?), our Common Life (what are the essences of St. Gabriel's?), and the importance of Unity (do our ministries "play well" for the team, or are they more individually gratifying? Do we know which fires we pour water versus kerosene on? Will we be unified as we evolve our culture?) We also discussed the Four Ms of leadership: Model, Mentor, Monitor, Multiply – and how critical they are for Fr. Rob, with an eye to helping him focus on the most important thing (and not everything).

### **"Normal has been blown to smithereens:" Key Inflection Points**

Church attendance in general has been declining continuously but has seen several major inflection points (The Great Dechurching, 9/11, the financial crisis of 2008/2009, and Covid) that have had a more significant impact. St. Gabriel's membership and attendance shows the same pattern, as does our giving, which has barely kept pace with inflation for decades. Improving attendance and giving will require changing our culture, but we should expect pushback and resistance. Tithing was not discussed in detail, but we agreed it is important for all to grow in this spiritual discipline and to educate our church family on connecting tithing to God's great blessings.

### **The Care and Feeding of Clergy**

The group, Fr. Rob, and Christi, discussed how best to work together and love the Griffiths. Later in the discussion we touched on systems we can put in place to support Fr. Rob and Christi, some of which are included in the Action Items.

### **Titusville Walk Around and The MVP (Mission, Vision, Purpose/Provision/People/Participation) and "So What?"**

Fr. Ellis shared results of his walk/drive around Titusville. No one to whom he spoke knew where we were or what we are about. We had to agree that we are somewhat invisible to our community and discussed ways of partnering to the benefit of both St. G's and Titusville.

## **What is God's Plan for St. Gabriel's?**

We discussed our vision statement: *Bearing the Redemptive Image of Christ to a Broken World*. Is it truly embedded in what we are doing? Do we make decisions in light of it? Do our people really know what it is. Do people even know it?

We developed a list of action items for the next 3-12 and 12-24 months to pursue our goal and created Task Teams to complete these action items.

- Communications – Alex Nutting, Fr. Rob
- Education - Heather Rowton
- Newcomers – Jean Hippert
- Staffing – Marie Hunsaker
- Facilities/Curb Appeal – Ron Rowton

The “Retreat 20” and Task Teams continue to meet regularly and look forward to welcoming more members of St Gabriel’s onto our teams.