

The Church of the Redeemer

Strategic Plan

2019 to 2021

Resourcing for Mission

A. INTRODUCTION

The Church of the Redeemer is an urban, downtown worship community exploring what faith, discipleship and the gospel mean for us, both individually and as a community. With open minds and respect for the different places on the journey we find ourselves, we are followers of Jesus in the Anglican tradition, living with a deep awareness that we do not have all the answers.

This document expresses our vision as a community, articulates our values, culture and identity, and sets out the four strategic priorities that we intend to focus upon over the next three years. In this regard, this Strategic Plan identifies the most important issues we face, and establishes an appropriate framework for engaging in discussion about those issues. To this end, the Strategic Plan lays out the high-level steps needed to move us from where we currently stand towards a new vision for the Church. Our goal is to move the community closer towards that vision in a wise, effective and sustainable manner.

Once the strategy proposed by this document is approved by Vestry, an Implementation Plan with timelines and accountabilities will be developed that will identify the concrete steps we need to take in order to implement that strategy.

B. OUR VISION

We know that we are still growing into the fullness of our life in Christ, so we offer this vision of our community life at the Church of the Redeemer as a way to deepen our connections with one another and with Jesus:

We are a community of disciples of Jesus Christ striving to live out our commitment to him. We acknowledge that Jesus has neither hands nor feet to work in the world except our own. Therefore, we work to make God's kingdom of justice, peace, and love a reality, especially for those who are voiceless and marginalized. As we work for the Kingdom of God, we are given hope by God's word in the Scripture, strengthened in the Spirit by baptism, and nourished by the bread and wine of the Eucharist.

Seeking to emulate the authenticity of Jesus, we strive to practice his radical hospitality, welcoming and including all, believing that there is a place for everyone at God's table. To those who are seeking, we offer thoughtful, inspiring worship and a vision of God's ongoing story of creation and renewal. We deepen our discipleship as we explore together questions of faith, share our stories, and walk together.

C. OUR VALUES, CULTURE AND IDENTITY

Approximately 75 parishioners attended round-tables in November 2017, December 2017, and January 2018 to articulate what has been historically important to the community, what is fundamental to how we as members of the congregation live out our Christian faith, and how those values ought to form part of the future of Redeemer. We discerned that God is seen at work in many ways: The Common Table, our liturgy, our vulnerability, our ability to address difficult questions, our desire to be a place of diversity, and our willingness to embrace change. We also see God at work in the eagerness of parishioners to participate deeply at all levels, in how we care for one another, and in how we need not suspend critical thinking to be a member of the congregation.

There are a number of important beliefs and ideals that are shared by members. We consider it important to be scriptural in both our faith and our works. We emphasize discipleship - the need to act as the agent of Jesus - both to one another and to the outside world. We are compassionate and respectful. We value and celebrate the diversity of those who call Redeemer their spiritual home, irrespective of their background. We value the sense of community established by, and the sense of belonging that exists amongst, parishioners. All who attend Redeemer are encouraged to develop their individual and unique spiritual gifts, and to help the community do the work of God's Kingdom by sharing those gifts.

Members expect its leadership to be both accountable and transparent, and that it listen, prioritize, innovate, and allocate our valued resources in a prudent and effective manner. In this respect, we hold in very high regard the time, talent, and treasure that is contributed to the church.

Like any organization, the culture of Redeemer flows directly from its values. Historically, our narrative has been premised upon helping others in innovative ways, especially the marginalized and those who are unable to advocate for themselves. As a community, we value the spirit of inclusiveness and mutual growth that results from engaging with others with little or no regard to socio-economic status, ethnicity, or other potential barriers, and we work to keep that inclusive nature at the forefront of our ministry.

The Church of the Redeemer is a place where constant spiritual growth and formation is fostered, resourced, and expected by congregants. At times we struggle with the tendency to be satisfied with how we've always done things. That said, typically it goes against the grain for members to say "no" or "we can't take on that project right now". This stems largely from our history as a parish that went through a period of significant decline during the 1970s, resulting in disestablishment. After the church was re-established, there were few staff members to assist senior leaders and parishioners if something needed to be done. We did the work ourselves. As a result of this unique and remarkable history, there is a common, honestly-held expectation amongst parishioners that we can do anything – and perhaps *everything* – creatively and effectively.

As a community in transition, we recognize that we have been a Program-sized parish and are now a Resource-sized parish. In a Program-sized parish, where the average Sunday attendance totals between 150 to 350 parishioners, ministry largely happens through diverse programming that suits the interests or ages of its members, dependent on shared leadership, with each member actively engaging and taking part in ministry. Vibrancy is intrinsically tied to the faith development of its members. As members grow in their faith, the community grows and thrives. There is a shift to building up lay leaders who are able to mentor others in the faith. Power and authority resides in committees. Change gets driven by lay leaders, and the role of the clergy shifts to administration. Disagreements typically occur over resources and priorities.

In a Resource-sized parish, the average Sunday attendance is more than 350 parishioners. There exist multiple staff roles and ministries (musicians, clergy with specific ministry areas, and lay program staff). Considerable effort goes into making Sunday worship a rich experience, followed up by opportunities to serve and support mission and ministry. This sized parish is distinguished from the Program-sized parish by its complexity and diversity.

Until recently, we staffed for ministry as if a Program-sized parish. Recent additions to our staff have moved us towards staffing the Redeemer as a Resource-sized parish. At present, the intense level of activity of pastoral and administrative teams, senior leaders, and members attempting to meet our expectations means there is a high risk of exhaustion and burnout. This is an issue that must be addressed as we move forward. It is not good stewardship, honest, respectful, or sustainable for the church to operate like a Program-sized parish, and pretend that parishioners can fulfill the same roles that they have historically served. Nor is it a good model of being 'faith-full' followers of Jesus to do so.

The cultural shifts and modifications to how we govern ourselves identified below will contribute towards resolving this issue. It will also be necessary for priests, pastoral associates, and senior lay leadership to act as role models to reinforce a revised expectation amongst parishioners that staff and volunteers not be expected to work at more than full capacity. Consistently working beyond capacity precludes individuals from sharing their gifts wisely and securely, scares future leaders away, and will hinder the church from maintaining its current programming. Simply put, if we continue to work our clergy, staff, senior leaders, and volunteers beyond their capacity, we will inhibit ourselves from being able to discern the direction Jesus desires us to take.

D. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

There are four strategic priorities that the Church of the Redeemer will focus upon over the next three years to realize the vision discerned by the community. These priorities will drive the governance, planning, and future decision-making by the clergy, staff and senior lay leadership of the church, including decisions regarding staffing and programming. The priorities, which to some degree overlap each other, are outlined below.

(A) GOVERNANCE, CAPACITY BUILDING, AND MANAGEMENT

This Strategic Plan focuses on a renewed approach to governance at Redeemer. This is an important issue. Three Scripture passages in particular have informed our thinking about governance and how we lead. In Mark 9:10-18 we note two things: that Jesus and his followers take time away to energize and prepare themselves for their on-going ministry, and that they offer a model for leadership. As we read about the miracle of feeding the five thousand, the disciples are invited to create smaller groups to serve. It will be important for our community to continue to take time to pause and listen; not to always be doing. As well, it will be essential that we equip the community to serve one another as disciples of Jesus.

Likewise, from the Old Testament passage in Exodus 18:13-26, we see how effective leaders take wise counsel. Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, provides Moses with advice regarding the need for him to delegate authority, perhaps a sign that his personal life was suffering. This, too, is a reminder to the pastoral team and the lay leadership of the community that serving the church should be a shared responsibility.

In the third passage from Scripture (Acts 6.1-6), we see how the disciples chose seven deacons and further distributed their received authority. It is recorded how they recognized and addressed the leadership issue and retained the primary focus of their community on discipleship.

The two-board model that we have used since re-establishment almost 40 years ago has been effective and has served the purpose for which it was adopted. However, the two boards must govern effectively and it will be critical for the parish to modify the current governance structure to reflect the growth in the parish and the ministry within the community that we are called to share. In conjunction with our pastoral and administrative team, senior leadership of the Church of the Redeemer must align on things such as:

- (a) overseeing the operations of the church;
- (b) ensuring that decisions made are consistent with the Vision articulated above, and the Strategic Plan adopted by the parish; and
- (c) the changing nature of being a community that follows Jesus, and what it means in the early 2020s to be a disciple, to disciple one another, and to make disciples.

Essentially, both boards must join the pastoral team and lay staff, and continually ask themselves “why?” and “how are?” questions. Why are we doing what we do? Is what we are doing consistent with living out the gospel message faithfully, and with being a follower of Jesus? How is any given ministry consistent with wise discipleship and stewardship? How are we living out where God is calling us in this moment? How does this project or ministry help us help one another to grow as disciples, and mutually disciple one another? As noted earlier, we do not have the answers to every question. However, we must ensure that, as a community, we are asking and discussing the right questions.

At this time in the life of our community we believe that the best governance model is one that moves both boards from a norm where senior leaders of the boards do the work, to one where those same individuals ensure through oversight that the work is properly carried out. To move to such a model means that senior leaders will continue to engage in ministry as volunteers and perform their full roles as members of their respective boards. However, in this structure much of the “hands on” work currently performed by senior leaders will be performed by others. As the leadership of the parish has identified the ways we need to resource for ministry and put in place staff to support the on-going and emerging ministry in our community, it has been identified that operational support is needed to allow the pastoral and administrative leadership team and lay leaders to carry out the ministry identified in the three other priority areas. In this respect, we believe that it is essential that the community properly fund and hire a Director of Operations with primary responsibility for carrying out or delegating many of the tasks currently directed and undertaken by clergy and senior lay leaders, including matters such as communications, IT, finance, human resources, and volunteer management.

In this model, the Incumbent and the senior lay leadership will remain responsible for meeting regularly to establish policy and to reflect on ministry priorities and to ensure that those are being implemented by staff. The day-to-day implementation of policy would be accomplished by a Director of Operations. This would allow our pastoral leadership team to focus upon what they are called to do: guide and encourage the nurture of faith-filled disciples who are engaged in the community around us. These changes will also relieve volunteers from what has become an overwhelming workload.

Attached to this document as Appendix A is a proposed organization chart and board governance model which is currently under discussion. It remains a work in progress. As currently structured, the model provides that a Director of Operations is primarily responsible for developing procedures to fulfill the policies and directions made by the Management Board. Pastoral staff would support the Advisory Board and its ministry teams. Over the course of time, it is anticipated that the Director of Operations would support both boards in the work that they do. The role of the Director of Operations will be fully developed in the Implementation Plan that is created once the parish endorses this Strategic Plan.

(B) *ENGAGEMENT*

Engagement is the second strategic priority to be focused upon over the next three years. It is vital to the sustainability of the mission of the Church of the Redeemer that parishioners who are and have been actively engaged in its life remain so through an invigorated focus on discipleship, living out the gospel message and baptismal covenant, and authentic faith. By being reminded of what it means to follow Jesus, by inviting others to become disciples, and by bearing witness to God’s life-giving activity in their own lives and the lives of others who are just discovering what a life of faith can mean, a fully engaged disciple becomes more than a mere worker or doer. Full engagement comes from being in a place where one’s personal vision aligns with the way that the Redeemer community lives out its vision. It becomes a way of life.

As indicated earlier, it is necessary for the Church of the Redeemer to alter its culture regarding how its leaders lead. It is important that parishioners recognize the need to do so, and become more involved at a grassroots level with the day-to-day mission of the church. Furthermore, involvement must not stop at 'doing' the work of the church. It must be expanded to include ongoing faith formation, seeking the Kingdom together, discipleship, listening and fellowship.

There is another important aspect of engagement. It is critical that we focus upon integrating into our community those who feel that they belong, but not in the traditional "Sunday morning" kind of way. We want all to continue to be fully connected and 'at home' in the parish, and to accept the invitation to become even more engaged, if possible. There are many different doorways through which individuals may become involved. We must ensure that those doorways remain open, that we open new doors, warmly welcome individuals coming through those points of entry, and that all are provided with many opportunities to become more deeply engaged in the church community. The rich musical tradition of the Church of the Redeemer is critical to the engagement of many parishioners, in their faith formation, and is an example of the many doorways into life at the corner of Bloor Street and Avenue Road. Leadership will ensure that our musical tradition is aligned with engagement strategy and faith formation.

The Church of the Redeemer includes an aging congregation. This is something that we need to recognize. As we age, some in our community may no longer be able or desire to be as involved as they have been in the past. In accepting that some will step aside from active leadership, we have the opportunity to mentor and welcome in new leaders. By engaging younger parishioners in leadership, the community will be encouraged to recognize how a revitalized governance structure will support a deepened involvement by those under the age of 40. Many of this generation, because of where they are in their working and personal lives, and the heavy workload expected of those who serve on the church boards and committees, decline invitations to accept senior leadership positions here. We believe that individuals in this demographic will be more inclined to participate, and to take on significant leadership roles, should the more effective governance, listening, engagement and discipleship model referred to in this Plan be adopted by Vestry and the community. Younger leaders will emerge when engagement is seen to be aligned with community partners, discipleship, works, faith formation, and fellowship as a whole. In conjunction with the other changes proposed by this Strategic Plan, younger leadership will help attract a younger demographic to become parishioners.

It is evident that it will be critical for the parish to focus upon lay leadership formation and training over the next three years. We ought not to be placing individuals into key leadership roles without training, support, and guidance. The current leadership must invest the necessary time, financial resources, and spiritual direction to properly mentor new lay leaders. This will include the development of full, up-to-date reference materials for parish leaders.

Finally, we note that increased engagement in the life of the church has been facilitated by recent investments made in communications technology and by the adoption of an effective communications strategy. It is important for the church to be nimble with respect to how we

communicate with parishioners, particularly as the culture of the church shifts over time. It is also critical that our church effectively reach out to the broader community, especially by way of social media. We anticipate hiring a part-time Communications Coordinator to manage all aspects of this outreach. To do so will be a significant positive development towards the successful implementation of our engagement strategy.

(C) LISTENING

The third strategic priority over the next three years is a renewed focus upon growing our capacity for effective listening. It will be essential to our long-term success for the pastoral team and senior lay leadership to carefully and continually listen to the community – both inside and outside the church – in order to assess the missional effectiveness and relative priorities of the various ministries engaged in by the church. In listening to those who have already come through our doors, we seek to help those whose hunger brought them through those doors in the first place. As ways to live out their deep gladness and be formed as followers of Jesus are found, they and our community as a whole will grow. In listening to the community around us, we attempt to discern both their gladness and their hunger, and how we can encourage all to engage in the building of the Kingdom of God.

Through careful and continual evaluation of how the resources of the community devoted to ministry are being used, the pastoral team and senior lay leadership will assist the boards, groups and committees of the parish in assessing current ministries we are engaged in and to listen to where God is calling us to hold on, to let go, and explore new opportunities to serve God as followers of Jesus, determining when it is appropriate to make additions to, and deletions from those ministries. Those decisions will be influenced by what parishioners consider responsive to the call to ministry we share, the financial and human resources that are available to support ministry, and will be clear and transparent.

Part of the careful listening that the pastoral team and senior lay leadership – indeed even the whole community – will need to bear in mind is the need to pause. To rest from the work of ministry, as modelled by Jesus and his followers in the passage from Mark that we have found helpful, is an essential part of this work. If we are to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the world; if we are to practice the radical hospitality and inclusion of all at the table that is part of being an authentic follower of Jesus, we will need to ensure that time for listening is an intentional part of the work of the leadership team. We will rely on our Incumbent to call us to times of prayerful listening and reflection.

(D) DISCIPLESHIP AND MISSIONAL TRAINING

Over the next three years, it will be a strategic priority to engage in a renewed focus on Christian formation and discipleship. Individuals become part of our community with different experiences and needs. They come through our doors at varying ages and stages of life and faith: newborns carried in the arms of their parent, those celebrating their first day of school and those preparing for graduation, young adults who are settling into career and relationships, those

preparing for retirement. Some come seeking baptism for their baby or answers to the hard questions that parenthood is opening up, some come looking to feed an emptiness that they have not been able to satisfy, some are returning to a place that they wandered away from and now seek to reconnect with. Many come with questions that bubble up with emerging faith, with the youthful exuberance of the youngest amongst us and the wisdom of the ones who have experienced much over the years. In coming through our doors, they join in seeking to be shaped and formed as disciples of Jesus.

Our programming must meet the needs of all no matter where they are along their faith journey, or where they are in living out their baptismal covenant. Parishioners joining together in faith, no matter where they are on that path, will generate the ongoing spiritual growth and formation that remains a core value of the Church of the Redeemer. Connecting formation and discipleship with the baptismal covenant will lay down solid roots from which our programming will grow.

Recognizing that God is active in the lives of others is the essence of being missional. Discipleship will be seen increasingly as following Jesus and making disciples of others who may not see all that God is doing in their lives. Sharing how God is active in one's life because of a relationship with Jesus, and helping others to see God at work in their lives is the mission we seek to accept, as we follow Jesus.

The addition of our Assistant Curate for Children and Families, our Pastoral Associate for Youth and Young Adults and our Scholar in Residence will help grow the spiritual vitality of the community by bringing fellowship, formation, and discipleship together as a life-long experience. It is anticipated that this strategic priority will be put into effect by the pastoral leadership team and senior leadership working hand-in-hand with lay leadership of particular ministries at Redeemer, including Learning@Redeemer and Getting Connected.

E. What's Next?

The strategic priorities identified in this document will take their shape through an Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan will be developed and made operational during 2019. Some aspects of what the Strategic Planning Committee believes ought to be included within the Implementation Plan have been discussed in this document in order to facilitate an understanding amongst parishioners of the basis upon which we identified the strategic priorities over the next three years.

It is anticipated by the Strategic Planning Committee that an Implementation Committee will be struck in order to develop "ground rules" around how the strategic priorities identified by this document will be brought to life. There will almost certainly be some overlap between the membership of the Strategic Planning and Implementation committees in order to ensure that there is continuity of thought and approach.

We note here that some decisions that affect the strategic priorities outlined in this document will take longer to implement, may need to be phased in sequence, over time, and will require considerable engagement amongst members of the parish. In the meantime, the pastoral leadership team and senior leaders encourage all parishioners to provide them with input regarding the future direction of the Church of the Redeemer.

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