

DISCUSSION DRAFT

June 17, 2008



St. Peter's
Episcopal Church
4250 North Glebe Rd, Arlington, VA
The Rev. Dr. Craig A. Phillips, Rector

**“Called together in Christ,
transformed by God’s grace
sent out to serve.”**

VISION TASK FORCE REPORT

Background and Introduction

After its annual retreat in January, the Vestry acknowledged that St. Peter's growing congregation is a challenge and a gift that will require some new responses. The Vestry met again in February and decided to establish a Vision Task Force. The Vestry agreed that the task force would be composed of no more than 15 laypersons and should include members of the Vestry and persons drawn from the various sub-communities within St. Peter's congregation. The Vision Task Force was charged with looking forward 5-10 years and answering the question: “Who is God calling Saint Peter's to be/become?”

At the Vestry's request, Peter Mason agreed to serve as the chair of the Vision Task Force. The Chairman then selected the other members of the task force from a list of parishioners identified by the Vestry as being excellent candidates to serve on the committee. The members of the Vision Task Force are: Peter Mason (chair), Kathi Argiropoulos (Vestry), Suzanne Brannan (Vestry), Jamie Bugel, Margaret Cohea, Lyndell Core, Catharine Gibson (Vestry), Taffy Griffith, Nene Hervey, Barret Hildebrand, Ward LeHardy (Vestry), Lisa Lettau, Scott Radloff, Larry Suiters, and Glenna Winnie (Vestry). The Vestry also secured the services of Carroll Sheppard, a consultant who specializes in helping churches through the visioning process, to assist the task force in its work.

Following the recommendation of the Vestry and Carroll Sheppard, the Vision Task Force decided to conduct its work through face-to-face contact with the members of the congregation whenever possible, and to seek input from as many members of the congregation as possible on the question “who is God calling Saint Peter's to be/become?” After an organizational meeting on March 14, 2008, the task force hosted two pot-luck dinners at the church that were open to the entire congregation, for the purpose of introducing the members of the task force, providing an overview of how the task force planned to conduct its work, and soliciting input from the members of the congregation. The task force members subsequently gathered input through one-on-one conversations with members of the congregation, and through a wide-variety of church meetings and functions, including two adult forums, the parish weekend at Shrine Mont,

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the Ten Spot (youth group), Choir, Altar Guild, and other church commissions and committees. In addition, members of the task force attended services, meetings and other church functions in which they did not normally participate, in order to learn more about the St. Peter's community generally, and to make themselves available to members of the congregation to the greatest extent possible. Finally, in an effort to ensure that all were given an opportunity to provide input prior to the task force concluding its work, the task force created a "vision box" in the narthex for written submissions, an e-mail address for electronic submissions, and contacted by phone parishioners who members believed had not yet attended a task force function or otherwise provided their input.

In addition to its organizational meeting, the Vision Task Force met four times over a two-month period to share what we heard from the members of the congregation, identify opportunities for gathering additional input, and seek God's guidance for St. Peter's. The task force composed a "Prayer for Saint Peter's" for use at our meetings and other church functions (see below). On May 31, 2008, the Vision Task Force, with the assistance of Carroll Sheppard, spent the afternoon and evening preparing the attached draft Vision Statement. The Vision Statement is accompanied by an appendix which provides a visual and written description of who we believe we are as a congregation and helps put the Vision Statement into context. The appendix also discusses what we found to be the congregation's core values, which is a concept central to the Vision Statement. A preliminary draft of this report was submitted to the Vestry on Sunday, June 8, 2008, and a final draft will be presented at the Vestry meeting on June 17, 2008.

The Vision Task Force wishes to thank Carroll Sheppard for her invaluable assistance, and the congregation of St. Peter's for their input, prayers and support over the past two months. People feel passionate about St. Peter's, and this is part of what makes the church such a vibrant and exciting place. As our mission statement narrative explains: "At St. Peter's, we worship God with energy and joy, seek a deeper faith in Jesus Christ, minister to those in need, and reach out to welcome others into our community of faith. We enjoy music and laughter, and place a high value on Christian formation. Our youth are actively involved in all dimensions of our life together. We are a community of all ages, committed to using our gifts in the service of others and to the glory of God." As we look to the future, we wish to pause a moment and acknowledge the work of those who have laid such a strong foundation upon which to build.

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Prayer for Saint Peter's

Almighty God, we thank you for calling us together as a family in Christ to serve you and one another.

We praise you for blessing Saint Peter's so richly for the past forty-six years, and for the many ways your hand has worked among us to transform our lives and the lives of those around us.

As we look to the future, we humbly ask you to send your Holy Spirit to provide us with the wisdom and insight to discern your vision for this, your church.

Help us to listen to one another, to be patient with one another, and most of all to love one another, as Christ loves us.

Fill our hearts with hope and joy, and give us the courage to answer your call, so that we may live as God's people in this community of faith, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

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DRAFT VISION STATEMENT

We the people of St. Peter's believe that God is calling us to:

Strengthen our spiritual foundation so that people can deepen their knowledge of God and advance on their spiritual journey.

Preserve our congregation's core values and nurture all we have been given.

Welcome all who come to St. Peter's and to help them find a place in our community where they can grow in faith and serve God.

Be welcoming and creative in our programs for youth and children, recognizing that they are the future and lifeblood of the church.

Be more intentional stewards through a focused commitment of time, talent, and treasure.

Improve our internal communication functions in order to support the congregation's awareness of and participation in a wide range of programs and ministries.

Retain and nurture a strong, supportive and well-balanced clergy.

Discern how we can achieve our vision in our church home.