

PRAYER



Prior to the visioning process parishioners were encouraged to pray for a positive experience and outcome.

Heavenly Father, through the Nicodemus Project, you have called us to examine ourselves, as your church, in order to determine our strengths and weaknesses. We thank and praise you for the strength and courage you gave to us to go through this process. Now, the time has come for us to discern Your Will for our church.

Give us each a steadfast heart which no unworthy thought can drag downward; an unconquered heart which no tribulation can wear out; an upright heart which no unworthy purpose can defeat. Grant us, O Lord, understanding to know you, diligence to seek you, wisdom to find you, and the faithfulness that may finally embrace You and Your will.

Our goal is to become a healthy, mission-focused, welcoming and growing parish. Help us to understand that it is not simply the beginning, but especially the continuing of the growth process, which you reveal to us, that will enable us to become the kind of church you want us to be, and bring from us to you, the true glory you look for in your church.

Look with love on our parish that is seeking to serve you faithfully in this city. Turn her outwards from self-interest; heal whatever divisions may be within her; strengthen her pursuit of truth and love. Deliver us from holding back the generous self-giving which you ask of us, in order to make our dream come true. We ask this through Him who, for the completion of your redemptive work in this world, laid down his life for us, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

Amen

An Action Plan for Ministry for Christ Church (Parish) Church Diocese of Fredericton, New Brunswick



*Over 200 years of continuous worship
and witness since 1785*

*Are we the individuals and the church
God expects us to be?*

How do we get there?

*This document is the result of a visioning
activity held October 22 and 23, 2010.*

Table of Contents

Introduction	Page 2
Background	Page 3
Visioning Weekend	Page 5
Our Action Plan for Change	Page 8
Champions of Change	Page 11
Prayer	Page 12

Introduction

This document is intended to reflect the discussion and decisions from the Parish Visioning Weekend held in October, 2010. It has been compiled by a small group of editors and approved by Vestry. Beginning with the background for, and a brief recap of the weekend, this document lays out our agreed-to vision and action plan for ministry at Christ Church (Parish) Church for the next three years. A copy of this plan will also be forwarded to the Archdeacon of Fredericton as requested by the Diocese.

First of all, we recognize that Christ Church (Parish) Church has a rich history, and there is much our congregation can celebrate:

- ✓ **St. Anne's Lodge, with safe, affordable housing for seniors**
- ✓ **Food & financial assistance for many who come to our doors**
- ✓ **The generous support of parishioners for outreach such as Loaves & Fishes, White Gift, the Corn Mill Project and to community support organizations**
- ✓ **Various groups within the parish, each with their own opportunity for fellowship and service to each other and the greater community**
- ✓ **Active and engaged youth and children**

However, we have – as have many other churches in our Diocese – experienced declining numbers and we must examine ourselves in order to determine how we can, with God's help, change this trend.

Champions of Change

Consensus was built among those who participated in the visioning weekend. Beyond that, however, it will require everyone, as individuals and within our parish groups, to be the driving force behind implementing these changes. Change is not easy but the alternative is not acceptable.

Our proposed timeframe to implement the five action items is **by December, 2012**. *More details will be provided in presentations on this plan to the congregation.*

In implementing these action items, we believe we will also progress in the other identified priority areas listed on page 6: shared leadership, attitude change and building Christian community. Along the way, we hope to also begin to address the outreach priority. Then we will better show God's love not only within but also outside our church community.

Be an active leader... be a quiet leader or be a supporting participant. Just Be.

*We pray for God's help to encourage and energize our congregation so we **will** become a Bible-focused church, we **will** see a change of attitude allowing for a shared ministry, we **will** acknowledge our role in community outreach, with the end result that we **will** have experienced transformational change and **become** ...a true Christian community.*





... There is much that is good about Christ Church (Parish) Church...



... only a sampling of the many good things about CC(P)C!



Background

The Diocesan *Nicodemus Project* was established out of recognition that the Church must take deliberate steps to reverse the slow and steady decline in our numbers over recent years. The goal of the Nicodemus Project is to facilitate change in the parishes across our diocese, helping us to allow God to guide and transform us into a stronger, healthier and growing church through spiritual, numerical and financial growth. **It calls us to:**

- ***Re-learn what it means to be Christian and Anglican***
- ***Prepare our clergy and lay readers for a different future***
- ***Help our struggling parishes***
- ***Evaluate the effectiveness of our governance, structures and processes***
- ***Make transformational change happen.***

Our parish has already begun to accept the priorities of the Nicodemus Project. At the 2010 AGM we agreed to return to meeting our Diocesan financial assessment and Vestry has authorized a loan to help support another parish. But transformational change requires much more. At the commencement of the Nicodemus Project, our church provided information to the congregation about the project to ensure everyone was aware and understood the direction.

◆ Vestry approved the formation of a Parish Self-Assessment & Strategic Planning Working Group. This group was open to the congregation, and met approximately bi-weekly from Nov 2009 thru to Feb 2010 for prayer, and to reflect on our parish in light of the “10 marks of a healthy parish” document. The group produced a report of parish strengths and weaknesses based on their discussions.

◆ Early in 2010, over a period of Sundays, the congregation viewed tapes of a workshop on stewardship given to clergy and laity in the fall of 2009 by Bishop Edward Salmon. Bishop Salmon described his experiences in rebuilding the Christian community in the Diocese of South Carolina.

- ◆ The Parish Self-Assessment Group developed a survey to provide another opportunity for congregational input/feedback. There was also the Natural Church Development survey, completed in May by a cross-section consisting of 30 members of our congregation. (see page 7)
- ◆ To provide an opportunity for parish discussion and further input into all of this information, a Parish Visioning Weekend was scheduled near the end of October 2010.



The Main Focus Points for this weekend were:

1. Where are we as Christ Church (Parish) Church and the Community of Fredericton?
2. What do we want to look like and be doing better or differently in five years?
3. Acting on our new priorities, develop an Action Plan for Change.

With leader Jim Morell (below left) individuals worked through the visioning process.



Spiritual Growth and Learning

3. We will emphasize the need for growth through Bible reading, study, and prayer.

Through individual sermons or a series on the basics of the faith we will motivate as well as raise the expectation of parishioners to participate in regular study and prayer. By identifying those with prayer gifts, we will attempt to reinstate the parish prayer chain and investigate a prayer and healing ministry. Encouragement and resources for grace at meals will be provided to parishioners. Other local Anglican or inter-denominational bible study sessions will be promoted.

4. We will implement an on-going weekly parish Bible study

Based on the Sunday readings and with application to everyday life, this regular meeting would form the base for an adult Christian education program ('Sunday School').

5. We will encourage the start-up of home groups meeting for fellowship, Bible learning and prayer

Beginning with leader training and a common study topic (e.g., introduction to the Bible), these groups could be offered at various times during the week. Intergenerational groups will be promoted.



Our Action Plan for Change

Under Jim Morell's excellent leadership we both articulated a vision – **priorities for what we will be doing better or differently in 2-3 years, and we started to form an action plan – how we will share the leadership and 'get there'**. Since the weekend, Vestry has augmented this initial plan by identifying leadership, resources and timelines.

The vision and action plan is as follows:



Rejuvenated Sunday Worship

1. **We will increase engagement in our 10:30 Sunday worship service through blended liturgy and music forms.**

A working group will be struck to consider ways to make this service more integrated and interactive, including considering the length of the service. The praise band will participate in the service according to their time availability, with cooperation between the organist, choir and band. We will proceed with the installation of a projector screen and updating our speaker system, and recruit more volunteers for the audio/visual ministry. We will strive to regularly start the service on time.

2. **We will improve our ministry to visitors and newcomers.**

A redefined welcome protocol will put a new emphasis on greeting before, during, after and between services.

*"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need."
(NIV) Acts 2:42, 45*

Visioning Weekend - (Oct 22 - 24, 2010)

An average of 48 parishioners attended the visioning weekend and made the commitment to help prepare the way for the development of a parish plan for ministry. With the help of Jim Morell, a trained volunteer Diocesan facilitator, we received an overview of what the **Nicodemus Project** is asking of us, what the **Bible** requires of us and what the **Book of Common Prayer** says about living a Christian life as Anglicans. We were also given an overview of our own statistics and the results of our **Natural Church Development** survey. The survey results revealed *our Parish scored well below what would be considered necessary for a "healthy" church.*

Armed with this information, we began in small groups of 5 or 6 people, where each was encouraged to express their feelings and thoughts on what we had just learned and of our own experiences and expectations as members of CC(P)C. In assessing our strengths and weaknesses, there were many strong, harsh and possibly hurtful comments expressed as we explored where we are in our spiritual life, attitudes and worship services. But, mindful of Bishop Salmon's direction to **"speak the truth, in love"**, we came away with a clearer picture of where our church is today.

In as much as this weekend was about identifying the negative aspects of our church, it has to be acknowledged there is much that is good about Christ Church (Parish) Church. And while it was agreed this should be respected and celebrated, our main objective was to move forward with ideas and programs to lead us to becoming more the Church God wants us to be.

*"The transformation of a church is always the result of the transformation of the individuals within it."
- Rev. Chuck Congram*

Rule of Life

Every Christian man or woman should from time to time frame for him/herself a **Rule of Life** in accordance with the precepts of the Gospel and the faith and order of the Church; wherein he/she may consider the following:

- The regularity of his/her attendance at public worship and especially at the Holy Communion.
- The practice of private prayer, Bible-reading, and self-discipline.
- Bringing the teaching and example of Christ into his/her everyday life.
- The boldness of his/her spoken witness to his/her faith in Christ.
- His/her personal service to the Church and the community.
- The offering of money according to his/her means for the support of the work of the Church at home and overseas.

**Book of Common Prayer
page 555**

From this initial discussion, six areas were identified as needing attention. These included:

- **Rejuvenated Sunday worship**
- **Shared leadership**
- **Outreach**
- **Changing our attitudes**
- **Spiritual growth and learning**
- **Building Christian community**

After further discussion in both small and large groups, there was consensus that we should focus on two of these areas: *spiritual growth and learning* and *rejuvenated Sunday worship*. We would seek to be a Bible-focused congregation and to find ways to respectfully interpret our traditional way of worship and music, making the Sunday service more meaningful to everyone, including our youth and newcomers. Finally, we detailed action items that would lead to improvement in these two areas. These are outlined in [Our Action Plan for Change](#). (see page 8)

To summarize the overall experience of those attending the “visioning weekend”, we could do no better than to quote the words of choir-member Mable Doak, who gave her impressions at the October 24th Sunday morning 10:30 AM service.

She said:

“... these were times of revelation, planning, arguing, consensus, mild disagreement, and finally a sense of agreement in looking five years ahead to what we want our church to be, based as much as we were able, on the clause in the Lord’s Prayer “Thy will be done on earth.” I pray that with God’s guidance and blessing, the work of Jim Morell and of the people, who will be turning words into action, will ensure us a vibrant Church, with full pews.”
- Mable Doak

Diocesan Mission Statement:

“To proclaim the Gospel for the making of disciples”



Diocesan Vision Statement:

“We are a diocese of healthy, mission-focused, welcoming and growing parishes”



Parishioners hard at work during the visioning process, October 2010.

