

It's All About God!

Growing God's Kingdom through Parish Growth and Renewal

The Journey of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 2001 to 2006

**Louis B. Hays
Rector
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
Madison, CT 06443**

Table of Contents

Acknowledgement and Dedication	4
Introduction	4
A Brief History of St. Andrew's and Its Setting	6
Coming to St. Andrew's	7
Where We Started	9
Where We Were Five Years Later	10
How We Got Here	10
Introduction	10
Getting Started	11
Changing Sunday Mornings	12
Changing the Decision-making Process	14
Deciding to Call a Full Time Assistant Rector	15
Building the Vision of St. Andrew's	17
Capital Campaign and Building Program	18
Stewardship – Changing the Culture of Giving	20
Becoming More Welcoming to Newcomers	22
Emphasizing the Importance of Children and Youth	24
Communications – Letting Our Light Shine, or Creating Buzz	25
Fellowship – Having a Great Time Together	26
Outreach – Taking Care of Others	27
Pastoral Care – Taking Care of Ourselves	28
Adult Formation	29
The St. Andrew's Preschool	30
The New Development – “Bottom-Up” Initiatives	31
Not Everything Works	33
What Does This Mean? – The Big Picture	33
It's All About God	34
It's Also About Faith	34
It's About Vision	35
It's About Strategy	36
It's About Worship	36
It's About Music	38
It's About People	39
It's About Children and Youth	40
It's About Stewardship (Money)	41
It's About Service to Others	41

It's About Fellowship	42
It's About Pastoral Care	43
It's About An Empowered Laity	44
It's About Staff	45
So Now What Do We Do?	45
Addressing the Fact That the 9:15 Service Is Full	46
Recruiting New Music Staff	47
Dealing with Our Inadequate Parking	47
Addressing Youth Ministry	48
Reinvigorating Our Commitment to Growth	48
Improving Our Incorporation of Newcomers	48
Stabilizing Our Finances	49
Long Range Planning	49
Conclusion	50
Appendix A – Average Attendance at St. Andrew's	51
Appendix B – Size Counts	52
Appendix C - A Vision for St. Andrew's	56
Appendix D – The 9:15 Service	58

Acknowledgement and Dedication

While pursuing my Master in Divinity degree at Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia from 1996 to 1999, I had the good fortune to study under and be mentored by the Rev. Howard Hanchey, then the Arthur Lee Kinsolving Professor of Pastoral Theology (now Emeritus). Howard was a tremendous source of knowledge, inspiration and pastoral care to many seminary students. One of Howard's favorite sayings was (and I hope still is) "it's all about God." He would say this to remind us why we were seeking ordination to the priesthood, why we were pursuing a seminary education, and what the focus of our ministry should be upon graduation and ordination. I have been guided throughout my priestly ministry by this simple yet compelling theme – "it's all about God." It's not about us, it's not about glory or power, and we're not in this alone and by ourselves. Everything we do is ultimately about God, and God is with us every step of the way. Thank you, Howard, for instilling in me a passion for mission, for growing God's Kingdom, and for remembering (most of the time) that it's all about God. Therefore, I dedicate this paper to the glory of God and in grateful thanksgiving for the ministry of Howard Hanchey.

Introduction

This paper is made possible through the generosity of the people of St. Andrew's Church in Madison, Connecticut, who granted me a three-month professional development leave (more commonly referred to as a sabbatical), in accordance with the policies of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut. During this time it has been my privilege to review and reflect on the work of the parish over the period of late May 2001 through the end of the 2006 school year.

During this five-year period, St. Andrew's was blessed with considerable growth in attendance, giving, outreach and other signs of growing the Kingdom of God. This didn't happen by accident. It happened through faith, prayer and many intentional acts of the people of the parish, both lay and ordained.

I have three primary goals in taking on this project: to help myself and the lay leaders of the parish understand and reflect more clearly on what has taken place over the past five years; to gain insights, God-willing, into what we need to do as a parish to enjoy further growth and

renewal; and to share information and ideas with clergy and laity of other congregations who are also interested in church growth and renewal.

There are several points I'd like to make about helping other parishes. First, there is no shortage of conferences and books designed to help parishes grow. Why in the world do we need this paper? I had the good fortune to participate in the Reinventing Church conference held annually at St. Bart's, a fabulously successful Episcopal church in New York City. As I listened to the rector explain all that he and his staff had accomplished in the way of growth and renewal, I couldn't help thinking, "I could do that too if I had 50 people on staff." This product is based on the experience of a parish of more modest size. If it's possible at St. Andrew's, it's possible at your parish too.¹

With respect to books available on church growth and renewal, there is a seemingly unlimited supply. The Alban Institute lists 37 titles in its bookstore under the subject of "Growth and Change." The [Congregational Resource Guide](#), a partnership of the [Alban Institute](#) and the [Indianapolis Center for Congregations](#), has a plethora of material available related to church growth and renewal.² So, why produce yet another product on this subject? Unlike most of the books I have read, this paper is based on real-life experience in one church, a church not unlike hundreds, maybe thousands of other churches, and is written by someone who lived every minute of what's described in the book. This is not to say that I don't recommend reading other books as well. There are many that are excellent. At the top of my list are the following (in alphabetical order):

Beyond the Collection Plate, by Michael Durall

The In-Between Church: Navigating Size Transitions in Congregations, by Alice Mann

One Size Doesn't Fit All, by Gary L. McIntosh

Raising the Roof: The Pastoral-to-Program Size Transition, by Alice Mann

Sizing Up Your Congregation, by Arlan Routhage

Written in the context of a more fundamentalist mega church but also worth reading is Rick Warren's *The Purpose Driven Church*. All of these titles are available through on-line

¹ I do highly recommend going to a Reinventing Church conference if you get the chance. Another program that should be good is the Great Church conference held at All Saints' Episcopal Church in Beverly Hills, California. I haven't attended this conference, but I have worshiped at All Saints' and they are a very successful, large parish

² Information about these two very important resources is available at www.alban.org.

sellers such as amazon.com, except for *Sizing Up Your Congregation*, which can be downloaded for free at www.ecusa.anglican.org/research.htm.³

Finally, this document covers both the conceptual, big-picture level and the detailed, nuts and bolts level. For anyone in another parish interested in using the ideas and experiences discussed in this paper, I recommend focusing more on the big picture rather than the details of exactly what we have done at St. Andrew's. The nuts and bolts that will work in your parish will depend on your unique circumstances: the history, culture and traditions of your parish; the demographics of your congregation and surrounding community; your budget and staffing situation; the gifts and skills of your clergy, staff and lay leaders; and many other considerations that make you who you are. The important thing is getting the theology and attitudes and general approach right; how you implement the concepts needs to be tailored to your local conditions.

A Brief History of St. Andrew's and Its Setting

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church was founded in 1960. The Bishop of Connecticut asked members of Christ Church in the neighboring town of Guilford to form a new congregation in Madison. The church building was constructed in 1962. Only four individuals have served as Rector during the parish's existence of approximately 45 years, suggesting relative stability. St. Andrew's has the advantage of less "baggage" in terms of history and physical plant issues than many older parishes. The church is located on the major north/south highway in Madison, giving it a certain advantage of visibility. On the other hand, the parish is located a couple of miles from the "downtown" area of Madison, which might be an even more advantageous location. The much older First Congregational Church of Madison had long ago taken the classic position on the town green.

Madison is a relatively affluent community on the Connecticut shoreline, located between New Haven and Old Saybrook. The population consists primarily of married couples, with many school-age children, and retirees. Although there are limited employment opportunities in Madison, people commute to Hartford, Wallingford, New Haven and many other surrounding places. Because of the area's good schools, low crime rate, attractive beaches and relatively good

³ At this site, click on "studying your congregation and community," and then on "congregational resources."

transportation system, many families coming to Southern Connecticut as a result of job transfers or new employment try to live in Madison. There is also a population of part time residents, snowbirds who spend the summer in Madison and residents of New York City who come for the weekend throughout the year.

There are Episcopal churches in every adjacent town (Clinton, Killingworth and Guilford), and in most outlying towns. However, except for Christ Church, Guilford these are very small parishes with part time or shared clergy. Approximately 75 percent of our members live in Madison, and about 25 percent in surrounding communities. For better or worse, a number of people from the other towns prefer to be in a parish with more programs, activities and children.

Coming to St. Andrew's

I came to the priesthood relatively late in life after having worked with Federal, state and local government in the area of health and social welfare. Graduating from Virginia Seminary in 1999, my goal was to become the rector of a parish within about two years of ordination. I was initially called as Assistant Rector of St. James' Parish in Lothian, Maryland, where I had a wonderful experience assisting the Rector to build a structure to support what was already a program parish in size but was operating more like a pastoral-size parish. This included adding a third, more contemporary style Sunday morning service and more Christian education for adults, experience that would prove invaluable at St. Andrew's.

After having been at St. James' for about 18 months, I began the search process in hopes of finding a call as rector of a parish. My first choice was to stay in the Diocese of Maryland where I had lived for many years and where I had gone through the Diocesan discernment and ordination process. If that proved to be impossible, my assumption was that I would stay within close proximity to Maryland, moving perhaps to one of the surrounding states or Dioceses. God apparently had other ideas. One evening I received a phone call from the chair of the search committee from a parish in Madison, Connecticut. Frankly, one of my early questions in the conversation was, "where is Madison, CT?"

After a series of lengthy phone conversations and in-person interviews, I received a call to serve as Rector of St. Andrew's, which I accepted with great joy and enthusiasm. I began my tenure as Rector on May 21, 2001.

I mentioned previously the apparent stability of St. Andrew's in terms of only having had four rectors over a period of 45 years. However, a more difficult part of this background is that four years separated the departure of the previous rector and my arrival. This happened for two reasons. First, the previous rector left suddenly and unexpectedly. One Sunday morning the rector was presiding; the next Sunday the senior warden was informing the congregation that, on advice of the Bishop, the rector had taken a disability retirement and would no longer be present in the parish. Because of the circumstances of the rector's departure and several difficult years prior to the departure, the Diocese required the parish to wait for a year before beginning the normal process for searching for a new rector. Then, once the search process began, the parish encountered difficulties in finding the right candidate. In one round the preferred candidate declined the offer; in another there was no preferred candidate. Thanks be to God, in the final round God brought the parish and me together.

So why would I change my plans about where I wanted to be and move to a very different part of the country to become rector of a somewhat troubled parish? In short, because I truly believed (and still do) that this was where God was calling me to be. I was very impressed by the strong lay leadership of the parish that had managed to hold the parish together during difficult times, later supported by an interim rector who was able to serve for most of the long interim period. I saw great potential in the parish for growth and renewal. I encountered a search committee and Vestry that seemed committed to growth and renewal. I was impressed by the following goal in the parish profile:

- To grow into a program size parish with a pastoral style
 - We need to discern what we as a parish want to be in the future
 - We need to maintain and improve our pastoral care for one another
 - We need to continue and develop new missions and ministry
 - We need to attract and keep new members in our parish family
 - We need to increase our interaction and visibility in the larger community.

While students of congregational development might detect a few problems with the language of this goal, overall it struck me as a genuine desire for growth and change. Even more importantly, I felt through my long conversations with the search committee that we were on a similar wavelength with respect to the need for change and growth in the parish. Unlike many parishes that claim they want to grow, St. Andrew's desire to grow seemed both genuine and

feasible. I felt that God had prepared me in my secular career, my seminary training and my experience at St. James' Parish to be the right person to lead St. Andrew's into growth and renewal. I also felt that I was called with something of a mandate for change and growth.

From the beginning I had a general vision of growth and renewal for St. Andrew's. I would spend most of the next five years working to develop, articulate and carry out a new vision for the parish with the help of the Holy Spirit and many dedicated and talented parishioners.

Where We Started

The first 20 years were ones of solid growth. The parish achieved attendance of 200 in 1971, 11 years after its founding in 1960, and hit an all-time high of 249 in 1979. Then St. Andrew's went through a period of gradual decline in attendance between 1980 and 2000. Attendance bottomed out in 2000, hitting 164, the lowest since 1968. See Appendix A for a listing of annual attendance from 1960 through 2005.

(In this paper, attendance data refers to "average Sunday attendance," sometimes abbreviated as ASA. This number is derived by adding up attendance at all regularly scheduled Sunday morning worship services (and Saturday or Sunday evening services, if any, available in lieu of Sunday morning services) and dividing by 52. This has come to be accepted as the "gold standard" in judging the size of a congregation, as opposed to the number of members or communicants or other congregational data. This is because parish membership lists are notoriously difficult to keep accurate. Someone who visits one Sunday and fills out a newcomer card may end up being counted, inaccurately, as a parishioner. What really counts in determining the size of a parish is who shows up on Sunday morning. For more information about size of churches and where St. Andrew's fits, see Appendix B at the end of this paper.)

Another important indicator of the health and growth of a parish is the level of annual pledging. In 2000, pledge income at St. Andrew's was \$185,509. As with attendance data, pledge information can also be confusing or misleading. There are at least three different types of pledge information in most parishes – the amount pledged, the amount of pledges budgeted as annual income in the parish operating budget, and the amount of pledge income actually received during the calendar year. I have attempted to use the amount of pledge income actually received.

In 2000 there were two Sunday morning services during the school year, at 8:30 and 10 a.m. During the summer there was one Sunday morning service, at 9 a.m., and one on Saturday at 5 p.m. During the school year, children had church school during part of the 10 a.m. hour and participated in part of the worship service. There was no adult education on Sunday morning, and little or none during the week.

Where We Were Five Years Later

Attendance grew steadily each year, hitting 244 in 2005, an increase of close to 50 percent over attendance in 2000 (literally, an increase of 48.7%). Giving increased to \$292,227 by 2005, over \$100,000 more than in 2000. Sunday morning is radically different, with services at 8, 9:15 and 11, with children participating in the entire 9:15 service. The 9:15 service is relatively contemporary and is quite accessible to newcomers and children. Christian education is available for both children and adults between the 9:15 and 11 a.m. services. Adult education opportunities are available during the week (usually Wednesday evenings) throughout the school year, and one program is usually held during July. There is more outreach, fellowship, and pastoral care, the youth groups have grown and more children and adults are involved in music and liturgy. Our weekday Preschool has doubled in size. Perhaps most significantly, we are operating more as a program parish with significantly increased involvement and leadership on the part of the laity. The parish is increasingly benefiting from bottom-up rather than top-down development of ministries and programs.

How We Got Here

Introduction

The short answer is, we got here through the grace of God. Over the past five years we have always tried to remember that it is all about God. We have repeatedly stepped out in faith, believing that God would be with us every step of the way. God hasn't let us down yet. The following sections describe the highlights of what we have done during the past five years that, with God's help, brought us to where we are today.

Getting Started

My first Sunday at St. Andrew's was the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend. In a sense, my ministry began as the ministry year was ending. Churches run on three calendars: the calendar year, which is usually the same as the budget year; the liturgical year, beginning with the First Sunday of Advent in late fall; and the school year, which is, in many ways, the most important of the three since it is the period of highest attendance and most intense activity. It's hard to get peoples' time and attention during the summer. However, I was able to use this first summer productively, setting the groundwork for much that would take place during the coming school year.

Three things stand out from that first summer. First, I held a series of "Getting to Know You" sessions with the parish. All except for one were held in parishioners' homes. This provided an opportunity for me to interact closely with about 100 parishioners outside of Sunday morning, to get to know more quickly an important segment of the congregation (those motivated to come to such a program during the middle of the summer), to hear concerns and hopes directly from parishioners, and to share my preliminary hopes and dreams for the parish. This also served as a way for a large number of parishioners to get to know me more quickly.

The second was that our faithful Vestry (the parish governing body, loosely analogous to a board of directors) met each month during the summer. This gave us the opportunity to begin thinking about and discussing potential changes in the parish. Important topics of conversation at these summer Vestry meetings included the following: my desire to schedule an off-site, overnight Vestry retreat, a first for St. Andrew's; the likely receipt of a bequest from a now-deceased parishioner and how it might be used; the need for air conditioning and handicapped access for the worship space (more about these two important issues later); plans for improving the annual stewardship campaign; and my desire to adopt Vestry norms and a consensus decision-making process.

Finally, I held a short evening program during July entitled "Spirituality in the Summer." This had several purposes: to raise the interest level in the topic of spirituality in a parish that seemed to lack a strong sense of spirituality; to re-introduce the concept of adult Christian education during the week and other than during Lent; to demonstrate that the church doesn't close for the summer (more about that issue later); and to get to know the parishioners who participated.

Changing Sunday Mornings

By the end of summer I decided it was time to address the issue of growth by moving toward adding another worship service on Sunday morning. The good news was that our 10 a.m. service was essentially full. The bad news was that growing the parish without being able to accommodate additional worshipers would be difficult if not impossible. Research indicates that when 80 percent of the desirable seating is taken, newcomers perceive the space as being full and are much less likely to return; even existing members may be less likely to attend. During the school year we were often violating the 80 percent rule. In addition, there was a long-festering disagreement among parishioners concerning children in worship services. Some parishioners felt that children were too noisy and should either be silent during worship or not present in worship. Others preferred to have children present in spite of the potential for occasional noise. Depending on how the Sunday morning schedule might be structured, it could be possible to allow parishioners who were bothered by the presence and/or noise of children to worship in a quieter, more adult-oriented service, and younger children to worship in a more child-friendly service.

I envisioned a scenario not unlike what I had helped establish at my previous parish: a new, more contemporary service held between the two existing services, with children in attendance for the entire service and church school for both children and adults following this service. The existing, more traditional 8:30 and 10 a.m. services would be moved earlier and later, respectively. Technically I could have made such a decision unilaterally under the Canons of the Episcopal Church. Of course I didn't use this theoretical authority. Such a change was far too drastic to take without careful study that would consider various options and potential obstacles, and that would build interest and support in the parish for whatever decisions would ultimately be made. Also, I knew that additional funding would be needed to support a major Sunday morning change, funding that could only be approved by the parish Vestry.

At the September, 2001 Vestry meeting we discussed and approved my proposal for the "Additional Service Task Force." I explained the rationale for an additional service, how Sunday morning might look under a potential scenario, likely issues that would need to be addressed, a process for conducting the study and getting input from relevant groups as well as the entire congregation, and a schedule for completing and implementing the study. The Task Force would be headed by a long-time and highly respected lay leader with a strong interest in congregational

development. There was also conversation about the likely need to have at least a part time assistant rector because of the additional service.

The Additional Service Task Force spent most of the school year exploring the many issues surrounding changing the Sunday morning schedule. The group completed its work and made its recommendations in May of 2002. The recommendations, approved by the Vestry in June, were as follows:

- Move the 8:30 a.m. service to 8 a.m. with no other changes
- Add a new service at 9:15 that would be more contemporary (particularly with respect to music) and more child-friendly, and that would end by 10 a.m.
- Provide Christian education for children, youth and adults starting shortly after 10 and ending by 10:50
- Move the 10 a.m. service to 11 a.m. with no other changes
- Provide coffee hour time after the 9:15 and 11 a.m. services
- Implement the changes at the start of the following school year and treat the year as a trial period; the Rector and Vestry would evaluate the results at the end of the school year and decide whether to make the changes permanent.

The Task Force did an excellent job of communicating with the various groups that would be affected by the potential changes, and with the entire congregation. Everyone in the parish would be affected by the change, because at the very least the times of both of the existing services were changing. There was the potential for a negative response from many people. Thanks be to God, that did not happen. The thoroughness of the Task Force, the decision to treat the changes as an experiment rather than a final decision, and the support of the lay leadership of the parish were likely all instrumental in preventing any significant opposition to the plan.

The Vestry also approved additional funding required to support the new service. The major increase was for the music program: a paid guitarist for the 9:15 service, a paid assistant for the music director, and a salary increase for the music director to reflect her additional responsibilities. We also leased a new, more sophisticated photocopier machine to simplify the production of the Sunday service bulletin and we increased our childcare budget in order to provide childcare from 9 a.m. to noon.

We spent the summer of 2002 planning for the new service and the related Sunday morning changes. We recruited more acolytes, lectors (lay people who read the scripture during

the service), ushers and greeters. Our Director of Music recruited a new choir to sing primarily at the 9:15 service, and hired a guitarist and an assistant music director. We worked on developing a compilation of contemporary music. We planned for a booklet that would have all of the liturgy and music within it. This accomplished two purposes: making the service more user friendly, particularly for children, newcomers and non-Episcopalians; and, dealing with the fact that we didn't have a hymnal with all of the music that we would need for the 9:15 service. We recruited a layperson to lead a Bible study program that would serve as one of the two Sunday morning Christian education programs, the other being clergy-led. We changed the way coffee hour would be handled. Previously a parishioner would be responsible for bringing everything – not only the food to be served but even the coffee to be brewed. Since there would now be two coffee hours each Sunday, we felt it would be easier to recruit coffee hour hosts if the parish provided coffee and food. We established a standing order of donuts and bagels to be picked up each Sunday morning and the parish began providing all of the coffee supplies. Finally, we developed a publicity campaign that included newspaper articles and paid advertising, and a sandwich board sign displaying the new service schedule, placed next to the street.

The new Sunday morning scheduled debuted on September 9, 2002. The new 9:15 service attracted 136 worshipers, making it the most popular service of the morning that Sunday, and every Sunday since (except for a few Sundays when a baptism at 11 drew people away from their preferred service). For more detailed information about the nature of the 9:15 service, see Appendix D.

Changing the Decision-making Process

Like most vestries, St. Andrew's Vestry made decisions by majority vote. This meant that the Vestry could approve a decision with a majority of one vote. This struck me as being entirely inconsistent with our theology that Christ is the head of the Church and that we are to be guided by the Holy Spirit in discerning Jesus' will for the parish. With 17 voting members at the time, in theory we could make a decision that 8 members of the Vestry thought was wrong. Even one person opposed to a proposed action or decision could mean that this was not where God was leading us. I was also familiar from my days in government leadership positions that there was a trend in secular bodies towards decision-making by consensus. The motivation behind that trend was not, of course, theological, but nonetheless transferable to the parish setting. Even though it may take longer to come to decisions through consensus, it is believed that such decisions can be

implemented faster and easier. This is because the leadership of the organization is in agreement with the decision and no one is trying, intentionally or subconsciously, to subvert the decision after the fact.

Our Vestry agreed to make decisions by consensus, rather than by majority vote. This means that one person can prevent a decision from being made. In our system of consensus, there are three options for each Vestry member. One can indicate “thumbs up,” which means that the individual fully agrees with and supports the decision. One can indicate “thumbs down,” which means that the individual believes the decision is wrong and can’t live with it. Or one can indicate “thumbs sideways,” which means that while it might not be that person’s first choice, he or she can live with the decision in good conscience and does not want to block it.

During my tenure as Rector, no one has ever voted “thumbs down.” Occasionally there will be a “thumbs sideways.” The best part of our consensus process is that in almost every difficult decision, the final action taken by the Vestry is different than what was originally proposed. As the proposal is discussed, ideas invariably surface to modify and improve the original proposal. This is not watering down proposals in order to get everyone on board; this is allowing the Holy Spirit to work through every member of the Vestry and producing a final decision that is usually much better than where we started. Every decision to grow St. Andrew’s over the past five years that required Vestry action has been made by consensus.

Deciding to Call a Full Time Assistant Rector

There are many theories about the relationship between adding staff and parish growth. Some would suggest that for every 100 people who attend, there should be one professional staff person, either lay or ordained. Furthermore, there is a theory that staff should be added ahead of growth. In other words, you should add another staff person on your way toward the additional 100, or else you might not get there. Finally, there is a theory that additional staff should pay for themselves through additional giving by additional members, but that it will take some period of time for each new position to become, in effect, self-sustaining.

Regardless of these theories, it was very clear that St. Andrew’s needed another clergy person in order for us to continue growing. At the very least it would be necessary to have someone sharing the load on Sunday mornings as we moved toward a three-service schedule. It simply wouldn’t be feasible for me to preach and celebrate the Eucharist at three services and

lead an adult program every Sunday morning plus lead an adult program during the week and still have the time and energy to lead and grow the parish.

A significant problem for many parishes in deciding to call a second ordained person is cost. Minimum salary levels are set by the Diocese; there must be a cash housing allowance unless there's a rectory available; there is a requirement in my Diocese for 60 percent reimbursement of clergy social security payments; health insurance is very expensive; and the parish must make pension contributions of 18 percent of compensation. Because of these cost considerations, we initially decided to try to call a newly ordained priest on a part time basis. Of course, most newly ordained clergy want to work full time, not part time. We were not successful in finding a part time person.

We were particularly fortunate to be the recipient of unexpected funds, at just the right time. Late in 2001 we learned that we would receive approximately \$160,000 from the estate of a long time parishioner. Later we would discover that the bequest was even higher. The Vestry decided to use these funds to cover most of the cost of calling a full time assistant rector for a two-year period, after which it was hoped that the cost could be absorbed within the regular operating budget as a result of increased giving. We also received a small but very helpful grant from the Diocese of Connecticut.⁴

Our new assistant rector, the Rev. Marilyn Anderson, arrived in July of 2002. After three years of flourishing ministry among us, Marilyn accepted a call to be the Rector of Christ Church, Redding, CT. The Rev. Benjamin Newland followed her in January of 2006.

We also increased the hours of our church school director and enlarged her job to the position of Director of Children's Ministry. As previously mentioned, we also expanded the music staff. We increased the sexton's hours to half time to handle the increased responsibilities caused by a more active parish. Although it can't be quantified or proven, there's no doubt in my mind that we could not have continued growing without this infusion of lay and ordained staff.

I would add one footnote to this discussion with respect to basing staffing decisions on attendance. Although we are trying to address this problem, attendance at St. Andrew's drops dramatically during the summer. This is particularly true for families with children. Attendance during the summer is down by about 100 in comparison to the school year. This has the effect of

⁴ Our Diocese has some funding available for congregational development purposes; perhaps your Diocese or synod or other regional authority does too.

decreasing average attendance for the year. Thus we really need to base our staffing decisions on school year attendance, not calendar year attendance. We have to be staffed to support and grow the congregation as it exists during the school year, not as it exists during the summer or the average of the two periods.

Building the Vision of St. Andrew's

By the end of 2001 we were doing a lot of foundational work in the parish. The Additional Service Task Force was at work, our Buildings and Grounds Committee was doing a needs assessment of our physical plant, and we had decided to call an assistant rector. At first the logical next step seemed to be to establish a long range planning group to look at where we were heading. Fortunately we realized that this was putting the cart before the horse. Before we could look at our needs for the future, we needed to decide what we wanted our future to look like. We needed to develop a Vision for our future that would guide our planning and decision-making process and keep us motivated.

At our first Vestry retreat, held in February of 2002, we focused on the issues of a pastoral size vs. program size parish, both in terms of the theories of Arlan Rothauge and Alice Mann, and how the inherent tensions between the two sizes had been lived out in the history of St. Andrew's. With the help of a facilitator, we explored how best to navigate the transition from pastoral to program at St. Andrew's, using Mann's theories from *The In-Between Church*. (One of the problems with the typology is that, for many people, "pastoral" sounds so much more appealing than "program." Our facilitator suggested an alternative: minister-focused instead of pastoral, and ministry-focused instead of program.)

The Vestry retreat was the genesis of our Vision Statement. By April of 2002, the Vestry had reviewed, edited and approved the Vision Statement as it appears in Appendix C. The Vision consists of three parts: first, an introductory preamble based on God, the Great Commandment, and the Great Commission; second, six bullet points that spell out the substance of the Vision; and last, a road map or list of activities designed to make the Vision a reality. The most tangible goal of the Vision is to double the size of the parish.

Vision statements should be challenging, but achievable. They should paint a picture of the future: where we want to be, not where we already are. This picture should represent a stretch from the present situation, but not such a leap as to appear totally implausible. Vision statements should be understandable, and preferably inspiring. They should make the reader want to be part

of the vision, and to want to help make it become a reality. Is our Vision perfect? Certainly not. But it has served us well and has helped to keep us focused on where we want to be.

It may be unusual to include what we label as “How will our vision become reality?” I felt it was desirable to put some specifics into the document to make it clearer to everyone how we could achieve the Vision. A vision without a plan is just a dream. Conversely, a plan without a vision is just busy work. There needs to be both: a vision of where the parish wants to be in the future, and a plan for how to carry out the vision and turn it from dream to reality with God’s help.

Capital Campaign and Building Program – Making St. Andrew’s Inviting and Accessible

With the new Vision in hand, we established a Long Range Planning Committee in early summer of 2002. The charter of the group was to determine changes to our physical plant that would support the goal of doubling the size of the congregation. With the approval of the Vestry, the committee contracted with an architectural firm to serve as its consultant.⁵ The committee was also charged with obtaining information about present and projected space usage and needs from the various staff and lay ministry leaders.

Needs identified during this phase included more classrooms for the church school and preschool, more office space, a better choir room, a new or expanded and refurbished parish hall for fellowship events, handicapped access to our worship and fellowship space, and air conditioning.

There were two significant problems with the St. Andrew’s church building. The first was lack of handicapped accessibility. The church building was constructed similar to a split-level home. From the street level entryway it was necessary to use stairs to go up to the worship space or down to the fellowship space. And there were no handicapped accessible bathrooms. Earlier in its history the parish had installed a chair lift mechanism that traveled from the ground-level classroom wing up to a hallway that in turn led to a side entrance to the worship space. By the 90s this was recognized as failing to meet more contemporary standards of accessibility, both because it was far removed from the main entrance to the church and it required transferring into and out of the chair lift; if there were a wheel chair involved, someone had to carry the chair manually up the flight of stairs. There was some work done to address this problem prior to my

⁵ Their fee was quite reasonable; it was probably a “loss leader” in hopes of eventually getting the more lucrative job of designing and overseeing the construction that would likely flow from the work of the committee. And in fact, the firm was later selected as the architect for the design and construction phase.

arrival, but no decisions were made due to lack of funding and lack of agreement as to the best solution.

The other problem was high temperature in the worship space, particularly during the warm weather months. The roof of the church building is somewhat like an A-frame. The two, dark, slanted roofs act as solar collectors. Even with ceiling fans, an exhaust fan and open windows, the worship space would be uncomfortably warm by mid-morning and unbearably hot by early afternoon from mid-spring to mid-fall. Adding the heat generated by a large crowd for an afternoon wedding or funeral during the summer resulted in a very unwelcoming and intolerable situation.

With the results of the Long Range Planning Committee in hand, we launched a capital campaign in late spring of 2003, receiving pledges of \$670,000 to be paid over a three-year period. We set up a building committee to choose an architect, settle on a design, oversee the bidding process for a contractor and work with the architect and contractor during the building phase. Due to rapidly rising building costs and unexpected building code issues, we were not able to do as much as originally planned by the time we chose the winning bid on the project. Nonetheless, we were able to accomplish the following results:

- A new narthex (foyer) that is twice as large as the previous space, and that provides an attractive and welcoming entry point to the parish and accommodates much more accessible access to the worship and fellowship spaces
- A commercial-grade elevator in the new narthex that goes up to the worship space and down to the fellowship space
- Air conditioning in the worship space, sacristy and choir room
- An enlarged and refurbished parish hall for fellowship and large meetings
- New and handicapped accessible restrooms
- A new emergency exit
- Additional space for worship as a result of the redesigned entryway and stairs

The new entryway is more visually appealing both from the inside and the outside. It is large enough that we occasionally hold coffee hour there rather than downstairs in the parish hall. Every Sunday people use the new elevator, either out of necessity or preference. Sunday morning summer attendance is up, most likely because of the air conditioning. The parish is now

fully accessible, both from the standpoint of comfort in the summer and for those who are either temporarily or permanently disabled.

Stewardship – Changing the Culture of Giving

One might ask, why talk about stewardship in a paper about church growth and renewal? Stewardship goes to the very heart of our faith and spiritual maturity. As Andrew Smith, Bishop of Connecticut, is fond of saying, money is a spiritual issue, and giving is a faith statement. The level of giving is an important indicator of the level of spirituality in a congregation. Generally speaking, generous givers tend to understand better the concept of grace, are more aware of God's generosity and want to respond in grateful thanksgiving. Perhaps they understand that God is all about love, abundance and giving and thus realize that, as creatures of God, we are called to participate in God's abundance. Increased giving suggests that we are making progress in renewal and spiritual development.

Does stewardship refer only to money? No, stewardship also includes the giving of time and talent, and the way in which we live our lives. How do we prioritize among God, family and work? How do we take care of our bodies, our communities and the earth? But too often focusing on the broader definition of stewardship can be an excuse for avoiding the subject of money. The bottom line is that money is extremely important: how we use our money (individually and corporately) speaks volumes about our faith, and money is the mother's milk of expanding God's Kingdom – simply stated, it takes a lot of money to spread the Gospel and do God's work in the world.

As with many parishes, stewardship was not a popular subject at St. Andrew's. The prevailing attitude seems to have been that polite people don't talk about money, particularly in the church, and that clergy should never talk about money, particularly from the pulpit. For someone who first heard his call to ordained ministry while preaching about stewardship, this was difficult for me to understand. For someone who knew that money was at the top of Jesus' list of preaching topics, second only to the Kingdom of God, this was not an acceptable attitude.

Although we made definite progress over the first several years, going from \$185,000 in pledge income in 2000 to over \$255,000 in 2003, we made a major step forward at our Vestry retreat held in early 2004. Our theme for the retreat was "Creating a Congregation of Generous People," inspired by the book by Michael Durall, *Creating Congregations of Generous People*. This retreat focused solely on the subject of financial giving. Each participant was asked to read

Durall's book prior to the retreat. Two parts of the retreat were particularly successful. In small groups we studied the story of the rich young man who goes away sad when Jesus asks him to give everything he has to the poor, followed by a discussion of why we give to the St. Andrew's and how we feel about our giving. The other part was a presentation about giving at St. Andrew's that we entitled "shock and awe." We presented data about giving nationally, regionally and locally. We presented data about income levels in the community, the parish and the Vestry. (We had asked each member of the Vestry to tell us, anonymously, their annual income. The results were very similar to census data information on income for our local area.) And we showed how much money the parish and the Vestry was actually giving – about one percent of their income.

The retreat had a profound effect on the Vestry. It proved to be a very spiritual experience for many. Some began to see their giving in a new light. Everyone agreed that it would be important to share the information and the experience with the congregation. One member of the Vestry felt moved to add stewardship to her ministry in the parish, and ultimately ended up leading our stewardship committee and recruiting more people than ever before to get involved. What had typically been, for the most part, a one-person effort has become a group effort. What had typically been seen as an unpleasant yet unavoidable task has become an exciting opportunity and challenge.

We have also put much more effort into educating newcomers about the importance of giving. At our annual "Life at St. Andrew's" program for newcomers, we spend a lot of time talking about giving. We have had good results with being direct and specific about giving with families who are new to the parish (but who are sufficiently interested in and involved to attend a program for newcomers). The average pledge of these newcomers is higher than the average pledge of "old-timers." This is critically important, because once a habit of low giving has been established, it's very difficult to change.

We've made good progress. \$100,000 more in annual giving for a parish of our size is nothing to sneeze at.⁶ More people are seeing the connection between giving and their faith, rather than giving to the budget. Yet we still have a long way to go. For example, the increase in the number of pledges hasn't matched our increase in attendance. This is due, in part, to the reality that each year some people who pledge move away or die or, occasionally, stop pledging.

⁶ We increased pledge income from \$185,000 in 2000 to \$292,000 in 2005.

Every year new pledges are required just to stay even. And there's almost always a lag time between the arrival of a newcomer and when that newcomer starts to pledge.

Becoming More Welcoming to Newcomers

Like many Episcopal churches, St. Andrew's was not particularly welcoming to visitors or newcomers. During my sabbatical I visited many parishes in several States and regions of the country. In only one was there an obvious effort to greet and welcome me as a newcomer or visitor. Without an effective effort to recognize, welcome and incorporate newcomers, it is unlikely that a parish will grow. Today people "church shop" when they move to a new community or come to a point in their lives when they want to start going to church, often out of desire to find a good church school for their children. If people aren't made to feel welcome, they aren't likely to return even if you've done everything else to position your parish for growth.

Initially we established a "Welcoming Commission" that was responsible for working with me to develop strategies for identifying, welcoming and incorporating newcomers. Here's the process we have used:

1. Perhaps the most difficult and critical part of the process is getting the newcomer's name, address and phone number. Although we have newcomer cards in the pews, it is rare that someone will fill one out and turn it in. Without that information, there can be no follow-up. We recruited greeters whose main job is to identify visitors and newcomers as they enter or leave church, welcome them and have them fill out a newcomer card. Sometimes I am the first to identify a newcomer, and then I will ask a greeter to talk with them. Depending on the circumstances, we introduce the newcomer (most often a family) to other parishioners of similar age and circumstances, get them connected with church school for the morning if relevant, and encourage them to come to coffee hour where they can meet more people.
2. On Monday I send a letter to the newcomer welcoming them to St. Andrew's and providing brief and basic information about the parish. If I have discovered that the family is coming from a different faith tradition, I try to address that issue. For example, I might point out that I grew up in the Presbyterian Church and that most of our parishioners have come to us from other traditions. I include a copy of our newsletter, give them our website address and invite them to call me if they have any questions. Perhaps most importantly, I invite them to return the following Sunday.

3. I email the information about the newcomer to the chair of the Welcoming Commission who writes a personal letter to them welcoming them to the parish.
4. Twice a year we hold a newcomers wine and cheese reception. We invite everyone who is new since the last reception, or anyone who was unable to come to the last reception. The receptions are held immediately prior to a major fellowship event as a way of encouraging the newcomer to attend an event that might otherwise seem intimidating to attend. The receptions are important ways of introducing newcomers to other parishioners, both newcomers and long-time members. I can usually predict which newcomers will “stick” and which ones won’t. Those who make connections with several other parishioners are much more likely to stay than those who don’t make friends in the parish.
5. Once a year we have a multi-week program called “Life at St. Andrew’s” designed to build community among newcomers and give them information about the parish and the Episcopal Church. This is a major opportunity to explain the privileges and responsibilities of membership, including financial stewardship, and to make sure that newcomers know about the many opportunities for ministry and fellowship. Because so many of our newcomers are not Episcopalians, we also teach about the basics of the Episcopal Church and how we are similar to yet different from other faith traditions.
6. Each year we invite all newcomers to participate in a new member liturgy on the Sunday of Pentecost. This involves inviting all newcomers who have agreed to participate to come forward during announcement time and join in a series of prayers and promises concerning being part of the Body of Christ at St. Andrew’s. It is always a thrilling sight to have the front of the church filled with newcomers who are committing themselves to membership.
7. Periodically I provide names and phone numbers to the various lay leaders and program heads who are looking for new participants in their ministries. This provides a fresh source of potential helpers and increases the chance that newer members will get connected with one of our many ministries.

The most dramatic change in welcoming newcomers at St. Andrew’s has been a shift from the clergy and greeters being the primary source of identifying and welcoming newcomers to the entire congregation doing the greeting. Now parishioners are much more likely to greet newcomers, introduce them to other parishioners and make them feel welcome. Parishioners regularly introduce newcomers to me, not just the other way around. Often conversations

between parishioners and newcomers reveal common friends and activities, helping the newcomers feel more connected faster. There is even a risk that we might occasionally overwhelm a newcomer with so many people connecting with them before, during and after the service. But if I had to choose between not being welcoming and being too welcoming, I'd choose the latter.

Two classic books on the subject of new member ministry are *Welcome! Tools and Techniques for New Member Ministry*, by Andy Weeks,⁷ published by the Alban Institute in 1992 and *The Inviting Church*, by Roy Oswald and Speed Leas, published by the Alban Institute in 1987. An excellent new resource is *Beyond the First Visit: The Complete Guide to Connecting Guests to Your Church*, by Gary McIntosh, published by Baker Books in 2006.

Emphasizing the Importance of Children and Youth

Children play a large role in the growth of St. Andrew's. We're clearly helped by the demographics of the surrounding communities – there are lots of kids! But without a child-friendly approach and great activities, those children and their parents would go elsewhere. Having the child-friendly 9:15 service certainly helps. See Appendix D for more information about why that service is so appealing to children and their parents. Having a good church school program also helps. We are blessed with a loving Director of Children's Ministry who is able to recruit capable and loving church schoolteachers. We use an effective curriculum. I've actually seen small children cry upon learning there's no church school after attending a special service that wasn't on Sunday morning. Our Director of Children's Ministry also plans other fun events for the children in addition to Sunday mornings and church school. Children want to come to St. Andrew's. When they want to come, their parents come too.

Another significant area for attracting children is our music program. The majority of our 9:15 Spirit Choir consists of children and youth ranging in age from kindergarteners through high schoolers. Our weeklong summer choir camps are usually sold out with waiting lists. Because of the reputation of our music program, these camps attract many children and youth who are not parishioners. Each choir camp ends with a musical production that the young people work on during the week. Everyone is invited back in the fall to continue rehearsing for an even more professional production in the winter. Over the past several years several families have become parishioners as a result of the choir camps and the follow-up productions. Our

⁷ See his website at www.magnetic-church.com.

charismatic and talented Director of Music was particularly gifted at attracting young people and developing their musical abilities.⁸

We have also been developing our youth programs.⁹ We use the Episcopal curricula Rite 13 and Journey to Adulthood on Sunday mornings, and have lay-led youth groups for middle school and high school that usually meet every other week on Sunday afternoon or evening. Many of the youth participate in both our music programs and youth groups, resulting in nice synergy between the two activities. The challenge is to keep the young people involved as they continue through the high school years and face increasing demands on their time from jobs, sports, and dating. At some point in the future it would be very helpful to have a part time director of youth ministry whose primary job would be to attract and retain more youth in the parish.

Our Preschool is also playing a role in the growth of our parish. For more information about the Preschool, see the section that begins on page 23.

Communications – Letting Our Light Shine, or Creating Buzz

It's critical to get the word out in the local community that new and exciting things are happening. We have worked hard to get coverage in local newspapers, most of it for free but also with some paid advertising. We have chosen to concentrate on the two weekly papers that serve Madison and surrounding communities. Frankly, local papers are often looking for ways to fill their news and community events sections. We have come to make the most use of photographs with long captions that we can email to the papers, using their specifications for emailed photos. Usually these pictures are run with the captions as we have prepared them, sometimes in color. For bigger stories, such as housing a Katrina evacuee family or the dedication of our new worship space, we have invited coverage by the papers. This usually results in a fairly long article accompanied by one or more photos.

Each late summer and early fall we have used a series of paid advertising. Families who have moved into the area over the summer and/or those who are looking for a good church school for their children usually do their church shopping at the beginning of the school year. We want to make sure that St. Andrew's is on their list. We use the paper with the largest circulation

⁸ Sadly our Director of Music has moved to a position in another Connecticut parish as of the start of the 2006-2007 school year. She will be greatly missed. Her position is currently filled on an interim basis pending recruitment of a permanent music director.

⁹ Our definition of children includes those who are infants through elementary school; youth includes those who are in middle school and high school.

and that we believe appeals more to a younger population. By running ads for five weeks in a row we get a discount and can highlight a different aspect of our parish, such as our church school, being child-friendly, our music programs, and interesting programs for adults.

More and more people check out a parish on the internet before visiting. An attractive website is a must for any parish that wants to attract newcomers. However, the only thing worse than not having a website is having an out-of-date website. Nothing sends a worse message than looking at a parish website that clearly is out-of-date. Keeping parish websites current is a constant challenge; you have to remember to update as programs, staff and schedules change, and there has to be either a staff member or parish volunteer to maintain the site.¹⁰

Internal communications are also vital. With people living ever-busier lives, it becomes more and more challenging to get peoples' attention. We use a lot of redundancy – Sunday bulletin announcements, verbal announcements for the most important items, newsletter articles, parish-wide or targeted mailings of letters, flyers or postcards. We currently use email primarily for groups such as the Vestry and various committees, but as email becomes almost universal among all age groups, we hope to use email for communicating with most of the congregation.

Ultimately the best advertising for any parish is word of mouth. A growing church with many programs and activities tends to create a buzz in the community. Parishioners who are excited about what's going on at St. Andrew's talk about the parish with their friends and colleagues during the week. Word spreads through community groups and school connections. Increasing numbers of our newcomers tell us they have come because of what they have heard about the parish from people they know.

Fellowship – Having a Great Time Together

Fellowship is important under any circumstances. Whether at coffee hour or special events, parishioners need to have opportunities to mingle and enjoy each other's company. It's part of community, an underlying principle of Christianity. And it's just plain fun. As parishes grow, fellowship events play an important role in keeping people connected. One of the risks of getting bigger is losing the sense of intimacy that's inherently part of a small church. Fellowship plays a major role of maintaining intimacy and bringing people together who attend separate

¹⁰ Our website is www.standrewsmadison.org.

services. Great fellowship events can also help create the buzz in the community that I referred to in the discussion of communication.

We have several major fellowship events each year in addition to coffee hour after the 9:15 and 11 a.m. services. These include the Celebration Dinner, the 12th Night Party, the Spaghetti Supper and Auction, and the Parish Picnic. The Celebration Dinner started as a one-time dinner following my service of installation as rector of the parish. Everyone had such a great time that we decided to make it an annual event. There is a program with awards for adult and youth parishioners, music, recognition of newcomers and a closing slideshow highlighting the people and events we celebrate in the parish, which is always a moving experience. One rule of the dinner is no fundraising! The Spaghetti Supper and Auction is a fundraiser, but is also a great social opportunity. The Parish Picnic is held offsite on the Sunday following the close of church school. We begin with a service of Holy Eucharist. For the past two years we've held the Parish Picnic at the Madison town beach, making it a very public display of our worship and fellowship – again, part of the buzz.

Coffee hour is a good opportunity for newcomers to meet parishioners. Here's a word of caution, however. People tend to stand in small circles during coffee hour. Newcomers are looking at peoples' backs, and it's very hard (even for long-time members) to break into the circles once they have formed. Someone needs to shepherd the newcomers and be intentional about introducing them and breaking into the circles.

Outreach – Taking Care of Others

The mission of the Church in my view is to build up the Body of Christ, expand the Kingdom of God, do God's work in the world, and bring hope and God's love to the world. Outreach is about doing God's work in the world and bringing hope and love. It's about Jesus' words to his disciples in Matthew 25: "just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

Like many parishes, St. Andrew's has done more "checkbook" ministry than "hands-on" ministry. There's nothing wrong with checkbook ministry; it takes a lot of money to feed and care for the poor and needy in the community, the nation and the world. I was particularly proud of our parish for contributing over \$24,000 through Episcopal Relief and Development for tsunami relief during 2005. But hands-on ministry tends to be more spiritually rewarding, and can be a lot of fun to boot.

Without neglecting our important checkbook outreach ministries, we have added more and more hands-on ministries. Our parishioners founded a community wide-organization that builds a house every year for Habitat for Humanity. We support this ministry both financially and with substantial hands-on work. More recently the Madison Meals on Wheels program was threatened with termination. Our parish stepped in and led a community-wide effort to preserve Meals on Wheels, and we provide the drivers for one day a week. Parishioners substantially refurbished our former rectory so that it could house our Katrina evacuee family of five, and provided material and financial assistance for the family. Borrowing from the “Christmas in April” and “AmeriCares HomeFront” programs, we are periodically doing repairs and clean-ups of homes of people in the community who are unable to do so themselves, under the banner of “St. Andrew’s Cares.” Finally, members of our Outreach Committee set up and are running a thrift and consignment shop in Madison called Serendipity. Half of the income from Serendipity goes to our Outreach Fund; the other half supports all of the ministries of the parish.

Our outreach ministries provide great synergy. In addition to doing God’s work in the world, they provide opportunities for fun, fellowship and spiritual development. And they contribute to the buzz about St. Andrew’s.

Pastoral Care – Taking Care of Ourselves

We felt that pastoral care was so important to our growth that we spelled it out in our Vision Statement – “pastoral care for all ages and groups, with no one left out or forgotten.” We were already blessed with a tradition of lay pastoral care through a “parish visitor” program. In this pastoral care program individuals were teamed up with one homebound parishioner each. The parish visitor would visit this person on a regular basis until the person moved away or died. We decided to build on this program by expanding it along the lines of Stephen Ministry.¹¹ This would allow the clergy of the parish to assign trained caregivers to give on-going, one-on-one pastoral care in heavy-duty situations such as dealing with the death of a loved one or the diagnosis of a serious illness, after the clergy had provided the initial, short term pastoral care and felt the individual could benefit from ongoing care.

Because of the relatively high cost of the Stephen Ministry program, we decided to develop our own program, “St. Andrew’s Shepherds.” We developed a 10-week training

¹¹ See www.stephenministries.org for more information about this nationwide program for training lay pastoral caregivers and conducting and supervising lay pastoral care.

program using as our primary resource “Developing the Caring Community: A 10-Week Course in Pastoral Care Ministry for Laity.”¹² We also used two excellent books, *Christian Caregiving: A Way of Life*, by Kenneth C. Haugh (Augsberg Press, 1984) and *The Caring Church: A Guide for Lay Pastoral Care*, by Howard Stone (Fortress Press, 1991). My assistant and I came up with a list of about 50 parishioners who we thought had the gift of pastoral care. About 30 percent of this group accepted our invitation and were trained as St. Andrew’s Shepherds.

We have also expanded our program of lay eucharistic ministers, with a growing number of laity trained and licensed to take communion to parishioners who are homebound or hospitalized. Some of the people are served on a long-term basis because of the nature of their disability; others might be visited just a few times because of short-term disability.

We have expanded our “Loaves and Fishes” program through which we provide meals in times of pastoral emergencies, such as death or serious illness, and pastoral joys, particularly childbirth. Families are so appreciative of having a meal provided; the experience has a sacramental quality.

More and more informal pastoral care is taking place among the various groups and ministries of the parish. Group leaders and members look out for one another. This is really the ultimate in pastoral care – members looking after and taking care of one another. We also expect our staff to provide informal care to parishioners. Our parish administrator, director of music, director of children’s ministry and sexton/verger are all caring people who provide much of the frontline pastoral care in the parish. And of course my assistant and I provide a lot of formal and informal pastoral care. Every encounter in the hallway or on Sunday morning is an opportunity for pastoral care. But we cannot spend an unlimited amount of time outside of the building providing pastoral care.

Adult Formation

As previously mentioned, we have added adult education programs on Sunday mornings and during the week. On Sunday morning we usually have one lay-led and one clergy-led program. Topics related to spirituality are popular, and occasional series along the lines of “Everything I Always Wanted to Know about the Church But Was Afraid to Ask” are usually well attended. We face three major challenges with Sunday morning adult education. First is time. As a practical matter we have no more than 40 minutes from the time people get their

¹² This program can be downloaded from the Alban Institute website, www.alban.org, for free by members.

coffee and sit down until it's time to leave for the 11 a.m. service. The second is that when one program is clergy-led and the other is lay-led, people tend to choose the clergy-led program. Perhaps the greatest challenge is encouraging people to attend.

During the school year we have an adult program almost every week, usually on Wednesday, except during holiday periods. The most well attended series has been the Alpha program, which to date we have done twice. Unlike a Bible or book study that might draw between 10 and 15 parishioners, our Alpha programs have drawn between 40 and 60 parishioners. Alpha is challenging because it's very labor intensive, requiring a lot of people to handle food preparation, set-up, clean up, and leadership of the small groups. The content of Alpha material and tapes tends to be somewhat more theologically conservative than many Episcopal churches. We have addressed that problem by doing the talks ourselves with a combination of clergy and laity rather than using the tapes, but then this adds to the challenge of finding enough people to put on the program. As I am writing this we are also experimenting with the relatively new Via Media program.¹³

Our next challenge is to have a more systematic approach for moving people from being newcomers to members to disciples, and for encouraging long-time members to move toward discipleship.

The St. Andrew's Preschool

Before my arrival, St. Andrew's successfully made the transition from a nursery school operated on the premises by a private party to a parish-operated preschool. It consisted of a three-year old program and four-year old program, using one large classroom each day of the week. Several years ago we added a Pre-K program for four-year olds. This required us to use an additional classroom previously used only on Sunday mornings for church school and an occasional weekday meeting. The Preschool was starting to grow, but relatively few parishioners used the Preschool, and rarely did a Preschool family start attending church.

In 2005 the Preschool Director informed me prior to the end of the school year that she would not be returning the following year. This unfortunate news turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Our Director of Children's Ministry agreed to also become the Preschool Director, providing a degree of synergy and cooperation between the parish and the Preschool that hadn't

¹³ Information about Alpha is available at www.alpha.org, and about Via Media at www.everyvoice.net/viamedia.

previously existed. Over the past year there have been two significant developments. Because our Director of Children's Ministry/Preschool Director is popular in the parish and well known in the community, we have had more children from the parish attending the Preschool, and more families from the Preschool attending church. And due to the creativity and vision of the dual Director, we have added two new programs: a two-year old program and a morning child care service that is available to parents on an as-needed basis. All but one of our classrooms is now used both by the Preschool during the week and the church school on Sunday mornings, including our nursery. We even removed one of the permanent walls between two classrooms and replaced it with a folding partition, allowing us to increase the enrollment of our Pre-K class and giving us more flexibility with our space. We have also air conditioned each of our classrooms with relatively inexpensive wall units, allowing the space to be used comfortably during the summer months for Preschool camps, vacation bible school and other activities.

The Preschool has doubled in size over the past two years. It provides a small but helpful amount of income to the parish in excess of costs of the Preschool. It is now providing more of a ministry to parishioners and is more of an entryway for newcomers to the parish. And it helps build the buzz in the community for St. Andrew's because of its reputation and popularity.

The New Development – “Bottom-Up” Initiatives

Over the past year there has been a very significant development in the growth of the parish. I see evidence of more and more initiatives coming directly from parishioners rather than from the Vestry and me. It's safe to say that in the first several years, almost all of our changes were “top down.” The Vestry and I developed the initiatives and then sold them to the congregation. There was not a lot of “bottom up” activity where other groups or individuals developed new programs or activities on their own. This is changing, and it's a healthy trend that will assure further growth and renewal in the parish.

The first example was following Hurricane Katrina. Several parishioners approached me, saying, “we have to do something” to help the evacuees. Ultimately a group of parishioners got together and substantially refurbished our former rectory and furnished it for a family of two adults and three children. Some but not all of these parishioners were involved because of their participation in our Outreach Commission. Parishioners, with little clergy or staff involvement and minimal involvement of the Vestry, did all of the organizing and planning for housing, welcoming and later working with our evacuee family. A significant side benefit is that many of

the parishioners who got involved with the evacuee family project also got involved with the Outreach Commission, increasing the size and energy of the group.

The experience of several parishioners with the evacuee project led to another major step for the parish, the development of our new thrift and consignment shop, Serendipity. These individuals found vacant retail space in the community, negotiated the lease (with the approval of the Vestry), refinished the space, implemented a software program for inventory and sales, collected the merchandise and launched the store, now open five days a week. Although under the auspices of the parish, except for monthly reports to the Vestry, coordination with the church treasurer and assistance with publicity, there is very little involvement on the part of the clergy, staff or Vestry. Not only is this activity providing funding for the mission and ministries of the parish, it is a visible presence for St. Andrew's in the community that extends well beyond the church property. Again, it's part of the buzz in the community.

Finally, a parishioner began experiencing what she discerned as a call from God to engage in ministry in Uganda to help children. She researched mission opportunities in Uganda, arranged to participate in a trip to Uganda with another parish that already has a mission relationship in the country and is working to publicize and finance this new ministry. Her call to Uganda has huge potential for attracting community support and involvement and to give our parish a unique opportunity for more hands-on ministry in a third world country. And it's contributing to the buzz in the community about St. Andrew's.

The benefit of more "bottom up" ministry is that it taps in more fully to the potential of the entire congregation. All parishioners have gifts from God and calls to ministry. Limiting ministry to those areas that the clergy, staff or lay leadership develop severely limits opportunities for growth and tries to constrain the power of the Holy Spirit, who wants to work through all people. Fortunately, God has big ideas and is using many people and entities in the parish to expand the Kingdom and do Christ's work in the world. A potential downside is that sometimes "bottom up" ministry can feel threatening to established groups within a parish. It may seem foreign to a parish accustomed to a more bureaucratic way of doing business. It may trigger a "not invented here" syndrome, meaning that a group that is responsible for a certain area may tend to discredit ideas that come from outside the group. Good communications with existing groups that might see themselves as having jurisdiction over a new ministry is essential.

Ultimately unleashing the power of the entire congregation and thus allowing the unfettered work of the Holy Spirit is worth some short-term discomfort.

Not Everything Works – The Year-round Saturday Service

In August of 2004, recognizing that the 9:15 service was full under the 80 percent rule, the Vestry agreed to experiment with making the Saturday 5 p.m. summer service a year-round service. In part we wanted to attract newcomers, but primarily we wanted to reach our own parishioners with increasingly difficult schedules and encourage more frequent attendance by having an alternative to Sunday morning. Given that the Saturday service was popular during the summer, it seemed logical that it could remain popular during the school year. The experiment seemed promising during the 2004-2005 school year, and therefore it was continued in the fall of 2005. Unfortunately, by the end of calendar year 2005 it was clear that the service was declining in attendance rather than growing. The service was, of course, causing extra work for the altar guild and the clergy, and also cost an additional \$4000 a year in order to have a musician. Consequently we ended the service at the end of the calendar year and have returned to the previous practice of having a Saturday service only during the summer months.

In retrospect I believe our biggest mistake was in failing to promote the 5 p.m. service in the community as being a new and convenient worship opportunity. We assumed that because the service was popular in the summer, it would continue to be popular during the school year. Thus it would free up room on Sunday morning, particularly at 9 a.m., and promote the growth of the parish by allowing the 9 a.m. service to accommodate more newcomers. Our primary marketing of the service was within the parish, and over time, it proved not to be popular. Ironically, it has also become apparent that the summer Saturday service is not as popular as it once was. Since the air conditioning of the worship space, attendance on Sunday morning during the summer has grown while attendance at our outdoor Saturday service has declined.

What Does This Mean? – The Big Picture

Now that we've seen what has happened at St. Andrew's over the past five years, what does this mean, particularly for another parish that is looking for ideas about how to grow and

renew itself. Perhaps some of the specific things we have done will be helpful, but as I suggested in the introduction, the general principles we have followed are probably more important. This section of the paper discusses the concepts that undergird the various programs and activities outlined in the previous section.

It's All About God

From the beginning we have tried to put and keep God at the center of all that we do at St. Andrew's. It's probably more accurate to say that God is at the center of all that we do; our task is to remember, acknowledge and be thankful for this theological reality. Thus we have tried to remember that God is always with us and that we are not in this journey alone. It's not all up to us; we have God's help, who wants to use St. Andrew's to grow the Kingdom and make more disciples. We are instruments that God uses to do God's work in the world. We are not a club or a civic or non-profit organization; we are part of God's Kingdom and the body of Christ. We try to have faith that God will be with us at every step and that God wants us to take risks in spreading the Gospel.

However, as flawed humans, we have a tendency to forget that we are different than secular organizations. It's easy to start thinking that it's entirely up to us to grow and renew a parish. It's easy to think that we are doing this for ourselves, rather than for others and for the glory of God. We don't always remember that we are God's instruments for building the Kingdom and expanding God's work in the world. This problem is definitely not limited to the laity. I have to keep reminding myself of these theological realities. So it's essential that I frequently remind myself and the congregation that it's all about God.

It's Also About Faith

Faith is the other side of the coin of being all about God. It's fine to recognize that God's in the middle of everything we do. The question is do we believe that God will actually do something for us, with us, and through us? In other words, it's not enough to *say* that it's all about God. We also have to *act* that it's all about God. Do the actions of the clergy, lay leadership and ultimately the entire congregation match the words we use?

The phrase we like to use at St. Andrew's is "stepping out in faith." We have to pray, plan, consider and decide, but most importantly we have to act; we have to step out in faith. Thanks be to God, we have done this repeatedly, particularly related to parish finances. We have chosen to spend a bequest as an investment in growth rather than in locking it up in our

endowment. (Fortunately the parish has chosen to be fairly flexible with its endowment of about \$670,000. We have a formula that allows about 4 percent of the endowment to be treated as income to the parish budget each year, and the congregation has allowed using additional funds from the growth of the endowment to make up for budget shortfalls.) We have chosen to accept budgets that are in deficit rather than cutting back on staff. We are acting out of faith that this is what God wants us to do. We are acting on our faith that we worship a God of abundance, not a God of scarcity.

It's About Vision

God, faith and vision go hand in hand. To paraphrase one well-known translation of Proverbs, “with out vision the people will perish.” God has a vision for every parish. Our job is to discern faithfully and prayerfully what that vision is, and do all we can (with God’s help) to communicate, explain and most importantly carry out that vision.

Vision is critically important for the leadership of a parish to develop and articulate. Vision is essential to growth and renewal. Without vision, activities will be scattered and unfocused. If you don’t know where you’re going, it’s hard to know how to get there. As I explained earlier, vision is about the future; where you want the parish to be at some point in the future. This is in contrast to “mission,” which is more about what the parish is doing now. Perhaps a mission statement could be described as what a parish is doing in order to achieve its vision.

There is the potential for confusion over semantics. People use such terms as vision, mission and purpose statements to mean a variety of different things. For me the starting point is discerning where God is leading the parish, which is what I call our Vision statement, spelled out in Appendix C. For several years we didn’t bother to develop a new mission statement. Theoretically there was a parish mission statement, but it was too long and tried to cover too much. This is a common problem of mission statements. We focused instead on the tasks we needed to carry out in order to achieve our vision. Only after we had experience with our new programs and activities and the chance to reflect on them did we try to capture what we are doing in a new mission statement, as follows: “To deepen faith and transform the world as Christ calls us through joyful worship, music, study and service.” Even this statement is a little long, but not so long that I can’t commit it to memory.

I recommend focusing on vision and then the strategy for achieving the vision. If you want to have a mission statement, fine. But so often churches spend inordinate amounts of time developing mission statements that are so long as to be essentially meaningless and are almost immediately put aside and forgotten. Keep things short and simple. One of my favorite sets of vision and mission statements comes from All Saints' Episcopal Church in Beverly Hills. Here's what you'll find on their website home page: "Our Vision is **A world transformed by Jesus.** Our Mission Statement is **To become disciples who make disciples through Christ.**"

In addition to having an overall vision, it's also important for leaders to be visionary. This means being able to see beyond the moment, to be able to avoid as much as possible being distracted by nay sayers, to stay focused on the prize, to see the big picture and not get bogged down in petty problems. But it also means being able to admit when you're wrong and need to change course. To use a secular metaphor, it means being able to see the forest, not just the trees.

It's About Strategy

Let me hasten to add that it's also important to see the details – the trees too, not just the forest – and make sure that the details get carried out. Details without a vision are just busywork, but a vision without details is just a pipedream. However, it's not typical for any one individual to be both a visionary and a detail person. It's likely that some members of the clergy and lay leadership team in a parish will be more detail-oriented than others; others may be big-picture oriented. Only experience will show who are the big picture people and who is more the nuts and bolts type. Occasionally someone will be good at both.

After being God-centered, faithful and having a vision for where you are going, strategy for achieving the vision becomes the most important challenge. Most of this paper deals with strategies for growth and renewal, including most of the rest of this section. I would only add the necessity of continuing to evaluate your strategies on an on-going basis, and making mid-course corrections as necessary or ending a particular activity or program, and adding new strategies and programs as God gives them to you. Oh yes, one more thing – remember that it's all about God, faith and vision!

It's About Worship

If Sunday morning worship doesn't work well, the parish will not grow. If people don't feel connected to, inspired by, and experience an encounter with the Holy through worship, they probably won't come back, no matter how effective your program is for welcoming newcomers.

There has to be a quality to the worship that hooks people in and makes them want to come back. It could be a sense of joy and celebration; it could be a sense of mystery and drama; it might be great preaching; it might be great music, or some combination of all of these. Personally I believe music is critical to this goal of hooking people in, but more about music in the next section.

I believe that everything starts on Sunday morning. For me it's the best day of the week. We should be nourished, uplifted and sent out into the world refreshed and recommitted to doing God's work in the world. If not, it will be hard for the church to be vital the rest of the week.

There's no one best way of achieving these goals. Personally I lean toward the joyful celebration side, as expressed through music and attitude of the leaders of the service. What works really well in your church? Or what isn't working well? It's probably easier to add a new service that's different than it is to radically change an existing service.

Regardless of the style of worship, I believe the attitude and demeanor of the service leader are crucial. This begins the moment the first person enters the worship space before the service begins, continues until the last person has left, and extends through coffee hour. Frankly, my experience has been that many Episcopal clergy, particularly men, come off as stuffed shirts who are somewhat cold, distant and like to be on a pedestal. One of my pet peeves, probably because of my more protestant and non-Catholic background as a former Presbyterian, is the use of the title "Father." I find the use of this title to be a barrier between priest and parishioner. I also find the use of the title to be archaic and a bit sexist. Although newcomers with a Roman Catholic background may be comfortable with calling the priest "Father," newcomers from protestant, non-Episcopal backgrounds will probably be uncomfortable with this title. And then of course there's the whole question of what to call a priest who happens to be a woman. When newcomers ask me what they should call me, I always ask them to call me by my name, which is Lou.

So I strongly believe that the clergy person should be friendly and accessible, not remote and aloof. Smiling and shaking hands and even hugging (people you already know and who you know like a hug) are ways of breaking down the barrier between the ordained and the laity. Beyond that, Episcopalians in particular need to remember that most newcomers are not Episcopalians and aren't familiar with the liturgy and with the archaic language that Episcopalians like to use. To elaborate, I always announce the page number of every hymn and

the page number of every new step in the liturgy. For example, at our 9:15 service, after welcoming the people I say something like “please stand for our opening hymn, which is found on page 16 of the blue notebook found in the pew rack in front of you.” After the opening hymn I will say something like “the service continues with the opening acclamation found on page 1 of the blue notebook.” There’s nothing more off-putting to newcomers than not knowing what they should be doing. This includes directions about standing, sitting and kneeling. I believe that even most long-time Episcopalians appreciate having these simple directions so they don’t have to go searching through the bulletin to find the page or hymn number.

Announcement time is another opportunity for confusion. Words like vestry, narthex, sacristy and undercroft mean nothing to most people, including a lot of Episcopalians. If you announce that members of the vestry will meet interested parishioners in the undercroft to discuss stewardship, many people wouldn’t have a clue as to who is meeting, where the meeting is to be held, and what the subject is. If you hear yourself say “narthex,” you can follow up with another word such as foyer or entryway that might be more self-explanatory.

A final word about worship has to do with making the liturgy accessible. The language of Rite I has its roots in the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England, first produced in 1549. One of the reasons for developing the original prayer book was to have the liturgy in a language that everyone could readily understand, as opposed to the Latin rites that preceded it. If you grew up with the 1928 Prayer Book, you may love Rite I. However, it’s written in a language that’s largely inaccessible to those who aren’t already familiar with it. An Episcopal service that hopes to attract newcomers should use either Rite II or one of the trial liturgies from *Enriching Our Worship*, unless there is something so unique and dramatic about the service that it will attract newcomers in spite of the frequently archaic language of Rite I.

It’s About Music

As I stated in the previous section, music is critical to the success of worship services, particularly the “main” service or services. Music can also help in attracting people into the parish indirectly, particularly through music programs for children. The challenge is finding a style or styles of music in which your parish can be of particularly high quality, and even better if your parish can provide a niche that’s appealing but not readily available elsewhere.

At St. Andrew’s we have been more successful in attracting people with high quality contemporary music than with traditional, more classically oriented music. The evidence for this

is that our 9:15 service is full, whereas attendance at our 11 a.m. service is relatively low. In my opinion there are two reasons for this, and they are somewhat interrelated. First is that for better or worse, classical music is not as popular as contemporary music. Nationally there are fewer and fewer radio stations playing classical music. Simply stated, I believe there are fewer and fewer people in most communities who can be attracted by classical music. Conversely, there are more and more people, including children, who can be attracted by more contemporary music. Second, those people who do prefer classical music want it to be played and sung with the highest quality. In many communities there are large churches that have the financial resources to offer very high quality classical music, with magnificent organs, full time music staff and paid choir members or section leaders. It's very difficult for smaller parishes to compete musically with these churches.¹⁴

Regardless of the type of music your parish uses, attracting children through music can help grow your parish. For example, we run two to three choir camps each summer, each one-week long that attract many non-parishioners. Each choir camp results in a musical production performed on Friday evening of choir camp week, in our worship space. We invite everyone back in the fall to continuing rehearsing the musical production (for example, we have done *Godspell* and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*) and then perform it with costumes, props and band in the winter. We will often use selections from the productions as anthems at our 9:15 service. All of this has the effect of bringing a number of the non-parishioner kids and their families into the parish as members over time. We were also blessed with a talented and charismatic music director who had a special gift for working with and attracting children.

It's About People

It's about people and it's about relationships with and among people. Pretty much everything we do to grow and renew a church involves people. It's where everything intersects. We invite and welcome people into the congregation. A warm smile and a firm handshake work

¹⁴ Some at St. Andrew's would argue that the reason the 11 a.m. service is not well attended is that it's too late in the morning. I'm skeptical that this is a significant reason. 11 a.m. is a very common hour for services to begin throughout the United States. Parishioners who have come to St. Andrew's since the service was moved from 10 to 11 don't seem to feel that it is too late. And our efforts to publicize the classical music orientation of the 11 a.m. service have yielded little in the way of lasting results. Nonetheless, we are considering the possibility of moving the service to 10:30, although that will cause other complications, particularly with Christian education for children and adults.

wonders. We connect people to other people. We connect people to God. We design worship to increase the connection between people, God and each other. We plan fellowship events to connect people with each other and the parish. We plan adult programs to connect people to their faith, their God and each other. We help people in need, inside and outside the parish. We try to build disciples so that more people can help more people and bring more people to God.

We do all of this because of what Jesus asks us to do for and with people. Jesus asks us to make disciples of all people. Jesus asks us to love our neighbor as ourselves. We follow Jesus' example of bringing good news to the people. And we follow the promises we make in our baptismal covenant: to continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship; to seek and serve Christ in all people; and to respect the dignity of every human being.¹⁵

There was a time when I felt that people interrupted my work, particularly during the week when I was trying to work in my office. Now I realize more and more that the people are my work, and that much of the work I do in my office interrupts my work with the people. The most important work of the week is my interaction with people, in and out of the parish. Growing and renewing a parish is about establishing connections and relationships with people, taking the time to listen and to be present to people, and bringing a sense of the presence and love of God into their lives.

It's About Children and Youth

There's an old saying – "children are the future of the church." I disagree with this completely. Children *are* the church – right now. Their role will of course evolve and change as they grow into adulthood. But excluding children and youth from the worship services and life of the parish eliminates a significant portion of the body of Christ and is, in a word, sinful. Children and youth enrich our worship and our life together in the parish. From infancy through high school, they offer innocence, enthusiasm, energy, talent, new ideas and fresh perspectives. They are visible evidence of new life and the creative power of a loving God. They also bring parents, siblings, grandparents and aunts and uncles. Good church school programs, music, youth programs and youth groups and accessible worship are key to attracting and retaining children, youth and their parents. Church provides a safe place for young people in an increasingly dangerous and difficult world. Church provides a place for young people to express themselves and learn about their faith and themselves. Good experiences for young people in church

¹⁵ The Baptismal Covenant begins on page 304 of the Book of Common Prayer.

increase the likelihood they will stay in the Church and raise their own children in the Church. Bad experiences for young people in church are likely to produce the opposite results.

It's About Stewardship (Money)

Time and talent are important, but churches run on money. Staff, music, outreach and maintaining high quality buildings and grounds all cost a lot of money. And all of these are critically important to bringing more people to the joys of knowing God and living a more spiritual and holy life. I would venture that it's impossible to grow and renew a parish without spending more money.

Teaching parishioners to be more generous with their money and less consumed by their possessions is one of the greatest spiritual gifts we can offer to people. Increasing the generosity of the congregation will contribute directly to the growth and renewal of the parish. So there's synergy involved in stewardship and parish growth and renewal.

Clergy and the lay leadership must set the example for giving and talking about giving. If no one complains about the clergy talking and preaching about giving, they're probably not talking and preaching enough on the subject. It's essential for clergy to tithe and to let their congregation know that they tithe. It's also essential to be explicit with newcomers about giving, both the joy of giving and the responsibility of giving. It's usually easier to invite newcomers into higher giving than long-time members, particularly if your parish has a poor history of stewardship education and emphasis.

I highly recommend that clergy and their lay leadership read and study together Michael Durall's *Creating Congregations of Generous People*.

It's About Service to Others

We live in a consumer society. People want to have their needs met; people expect to be served. However, this sentiment is exactly opposite to what it means to be disciples and followers of Jesus. Jesus said, I "came not to be served, but to serve." Jesus said, I have come "to bring good news to the poor, . . . release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Jesus wants his followers, you and me, to be like him and to continue his work in the world. The most powerful call to serve is found in Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats. He tells us, "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,

I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.”¹⁶

Most Episcopalians perform outreach through checkbook ministry. As I mentioned earlier in this paper, checkbook ministry is necessary because outreach costs lots of money. However, hands-on outreach ministry is usually more fulfilling and satisfying. It also adds the dimension of fellowship and being more connected with people. And it brings an opportunity to connect with the holy, to live out our baptismal covenant of seeking and serving Christ in all people. During the summer of 2006 members of our youth group took a mission trip to Maine along with several adult chaperones. On the Sunday of their return, many of the youth and adults spoke about their experiences as part of the 9:15 service. It was evident that this had been a life-changing experience for our parishioners, young and old alike. A common theme was that they had received more than they had given, through the incredible response of gratitude from the people they were helping.

The challenge is finding and promoting a variety of outreach opportunities that will appeal to a broad range of interests and increase the likelihood of getting more people involved. Testimonials from those who are involved in outreach are a great way of getting more parishioners to give it a try.

It's About Fellowship

Is your parish having enough fun? Are too many events seen as work or as fundraising events? Great fellowship events such as dinners or picnics give people more opportunity to connect with the church and each other. When people are happy, they come to church more often and tend to be more generous with their giving of time, talent and treasure. If you don't already have one, consider adding an annual celebratory dinner, perhaps to celebrate the anniversary of the parish or your patron saint or the arrival of a new pastor. If you have too many potluck suppers, try a catered dinner. If you don't do potlucks, try one. And try to get more people involved in chairing fellowship events. It's easy for someone to get burned out if that person is responsible for all fellowship events. Having great fellowship events can go a long way to elevating the mood and celebratory tone of a parish.

¹⁶ The first quote is from Mark 10:45. The second quote is from Luke 4:18-19. The final quote is from Matthew 25:35-36

It's About Pastoral Care

Pastoral care becomes increasingly important and increasingly difficult as a parish grows. Fear of diminution of pastoral care can be an obstacle to growth. So can the attitudes of the clergy person. If the clergy person insists on doing all of the pastoral care, not only will he or she not have time and energy to lead the parish into growth, the pastor is robbing the laity of the opportunity to exercise their own gifts for pastoral care. If the laity isn't allowed to do pastoral care, why should it be expected to step up to the plate and help the parish become a program size parish with lay-led programs?

Pastoral care is a make-or-break issue for successfully growing a parish. Not enough pastoral care will leave people unhappy and uncared for. It's bad for the parish and it's not Christian. Too much pastoral care from the clergy is not healthy for the parish. It will detract from the growth and renewal of the parish and deprive gifted laypeople of the opportunity of exercising their ministry of pastoral care.

There can't be enough lay pastoral care. Programs such as Stephen Ministry or a homegrown version are great, and provide care that otherwise would be done by the clergy or not at all. Pastoral visitors, lay eucharistic ministers, prayer chains, prayer shawl ministries, meal ministries and many more give the opportunity for parishioners to engage in active ministry and keep parishioners in need well loved and cared for. These lay ministries can provide vital information to the clergy and let the clergy know if and when it's necessary to get personally involved.

There can be too much clergy pastoral care. The trick is finding the right balance. At the time of death, clergy presence is essential. One or more hospital visits in the event of serious illness is essential. Clergy presence in times of real crisis or emergency is critically important. If it's not an emergency or if the clergy person has been involved during the crisis phase and the emergency has ended, it's probably something for a layperson to handle. In non-emergency situations, a phone call and/or a note will be helpful and appreciated, but much less time consuming. Of course, the pastor must always be sensitive and ready to step in when necessary.

Clergy have an important choice to make. We can either spend our time doing ministry, or we can spend our time equipping others to do ministry. Of course, it's not an either/or decision. Sometimes we have to do the ministry ourselves. Some things can't be delegated. But equipping others to do ministry will result in a lot more ministry for a lot more people.

It's About an Empowered Laity

Recently I read a book on congregational development that made it sound as though the church is all about the pastor who leads it.¹⁷ This is exactly backwards. The church is all about the people. The people are the church, and the church is the people. Of course there needs to be effective leadership from the pastor, but there must be equally effective leadership and “followership”¹⁸ from the people.

Not only is the church about the laity, it's about a laity that feels empowered to do ministry. Most of the ministry should and can be done by the laity, not the clergy. It's both about math and theology. Simply stated, there are far more lay people in the parish than there are clergy. If it's all about the clergy, than only one or two or maybe in the largest churches several clergy will be doing God's work. And if it's primarily about the clergy, then we deprive the people from exercising the ministry for which they were empowered and commissioned at their baptism. We prevent them from carrying out their part of the body of Christ and using the specific gifts and talents God has given them. Also, if the church is built primarily on the personality and ideas of the pastor, there is a high risk that when that person ultimately leaves the church will decline substantially.

In order for the laity to be empowered fully, they must feel valued and trusted. Clergy must encourage, support, value and publicly recognize lay leadership and involvement. Clergy should allow parishioners to do ministry. They should allow them to make mistakes. They should allow them to grow. Clergy should be able to let go of feeling the need to be directive and in charge. I'm reminded of the old saying about letting a thousand flowers bloom. When clergy no longer try to run everything a parish can really blossom.

Some parishioners are uniquely valuable and effective leaders and ministers. These are the people who routinely go above and beyond the call of duty; through their faith and hard work they move mountains. They tend to be the glue that keeps a parish together and the people who inspire others to get involved too. These priceless servants deserve special recognition, both privately and publicly. Each year we recognize two or three people who have demonstrated outstanding ministry over a long period of time with what we call the “Saints of St. Andrew's” award.

¹⁷ *Go Big: Lead Your Church to Explosive Growth* by Bill Easum and Bil Cornelius (Abingdon Press, 2006).

¹⁸ In order to have leaders, there must also be followers. To have effective ministries, some people must lead and some must do. Of course effective leaders usually participate in the “doing,” not just the leading of a ministry.

It's About Staff

Last, but certainly not least, are the parish staff. Without their skill, dedication and loving service the parish would quickly come to a grinding halt. Sure, they could be replaced; no one is irreplaceable. But it would be difficult and in the meantime things would not run nearly as smoothly. It's a sad fact of life that church salaries tend to lag behind those paid in the private sector and even by secular non-profit organizations. Parish staff make a sacrifice to stay in the employ of the church; it's usually a true labor of love.

Along with the clergy, staff are the public face of the parish. Parish administrators and secretaries in particular set the tone for the parish during the week by the way they answer the phone and greet people who come to the office. Long time parish secretaries and/or administrators often know more about what's really going on with parishioners than clergy, especially clergy who are relatively new to the parish. They are incredibly valuable to the parish and its clergy; or if they are not good people persons, they could be very damaging.

Directors of Christian Education or Children's Ministry and church musicians play similar roles for their constituencies of children, parents and singers. Some parishes, including St. Andrew's, are blessed with a staff person who serves as verger, coordinating and overseeing the many lay assistants in the worship services and assuring the smooth flow of the liturgy. All staff members serve as an extension of the clergy, performing critically important functions that the clergy have neither the time nor likely the skills to do. All parish staff need to be empowered and allowed to grow and make occasional mistakes. Otherwise they will not achieve their full potential. They also need to be recognized and thanked, both privately and publicly, for their contributions to the parish.

So Now What Do We Do?

If you're not involved at St. Andrew's, you might want to stop reading now. This section describes some of my thoughts about what we could do at St. Andrew's to continue our growth and renewal, and avoid backsliding. These ideas are unique to our situation at St. Andrew's, so they may not be of any benefit to any other parish. Continue reading if you wish, but you have been forewarned.

There are both short and long term actions that would help St. Andrew's continue on its path of growth and renewal. Some of the proposals that follow are specific; some are general. Some require funding that isn't currently available. All of these ideas need further work and reflection. This section of this paper will ultimately be written by the people of St. Andrew's in the weeks, months and years following my return from sabbatical. Working through the people of the parish the Holy Spirit will guide us to further growth and renewal.

Addressing the Fact That the 9:15 Service Is Full

Virtually all of our growth has occurred at the 9:15 service. We now violate the 80 percent rule on most Sundays during the school year. If additional growth of any significance is to take place, it will have to be outside of the current 9:15 service. One solution used by some churches with this problem is to set up a concurrent, parallel service at the same time, usually with one service in the worship space and another in the fellowship space. Given the extent to which sound travels between our worship space and our fellowship space, this does not seem to be a viable alternative for us, unless it would be possible to create a noise barrier between the two spaces. There is no other space on our campus that could house a service.

Thus it seems necessary either to try to grow one of our other services or to add a new service. It seems unlikely that the 8 a.m. service is a good candidate for significant growth. It's probably too early in the morning for many people, and the nature of the service probably doesn't appeal to a large number of people. Changing the nature of the service to make it more appealing to more people would likely cause substantial distress among the current members of that congregation.

The 11 a.m. service is a more likely candidate for growth. In terms of seating capacity, we could add about 100 people on most Sundays before reaching the 80 percent barrier. The problem, of course, is that as currently constructed and at its current time the service is not attracting large numbers of people. Previous attempts at advertising the service and building it through occasional special music have not been successful. There is a group that has been working on the question of what to do about the 11 a.m. service while I have been on sabbatical. I await with hope and expectation the recommendations of the work group.

The other option is to start a new service at a different time, such as Sunday afternoon or evening, and possibly with a different style than our current services. One option would be to have a Taize service, using simple but compelling contemplative music and prayer.¹⁹ Because of the additional costs and staff burden that would be associated with adding a fourth service, this option seems to be a longer term idea, with first priority given to altering in some way the current 11 a.m. service, including the possibility of changing its time to 10:30.

Recruiting New Music Staff

With June Hale's unexpected departure we need to move quickly to decide on our needs (consistent with the recommendations of the work group mentioned above) and begin recruiting. We need to cover at least the following skills: someone comfortable with and knowledgeable in both classical and contemporary idioms; a pianist for 9:15 and an organist for 11 and special occasions; a choral director; someone skilled at working with children; someone who can lead musical drama; and someone to lead the summer choir camps. This could be one, two or even three individuals. Music has been critical to our past growth; it's also critical to our continued growth.

Dealing with Our Inadequate Parking

We have a shortage of convenient and visible parking. Some specialists in church growth believe that the 80 percent rule also applies to parking. On Sunday morning the closest and most visible spaces fill up first. The back parking lot, behind the memorial garden, is largely hidden from view. I sometimes hear long-time parishioners say, "I never have trouble finding a place to park on Sunday morning." That's because they know where to find parking and are willing to make the relatively long walk from the back parking lot to the church. We have no idea of how many potential parishioners we have lost when first time visitors can't find an obvious place to park and end up leaving.

We have a proposed parking lot that has been designed and has been approved by the Town of Madison. It would hold about 40 cars in close proximity to the main entrance to the church. The cost of the parking lot would vary substantially based on whether and when we would pave the lot as opposed to keeping it covered with gravel.

¹⁹ More information about Taize worship may be found at www.taize.fr/en_rubrique12.html.

I believe this is a high priority item for the continued growth of the parish. Unfortunately, it will probably be necessary to fund its cost through another capital campaign, so this is probably a longer term option. In the short term signage could help newcomers find parking.

Addressing Youth Ministry

I believe we need a part time director of youth ministry. This position would be analogous to our Director of Children's Ministry, but for the youth of the parish.²⁰ This person would be responsible for overseeing and expanding our existing youth programs and developing new ones. This would be in addition to, not in lieu of, lay people working with youth. This person would be responsible for recruiting, training and working with laity who have the gifts and interests required for youth ministry. He or she would be expected to attract more youth to the parish and keep more youth in the parish as they age through the grades. He or she would minister to the youth and their parents and would lead youth in their ministries. A goal would be to have as many youth in the parish as we have children. This could best be achieved by a part time lay person who has the special talents and passion for youth ministry. By recruiting and retaining more youth and their parents we would continue to grow the parish. The challenge would be to find the funds to hire such a staff person.

Reinvigorating Our Commitment to Growth

Many of the current lay leaders of the parish may take our current situation for granted. Many were not here when we were a smaller parish and when we were committing ourselves to growth. They are part of the growth. It may be time to recommit and reeducate ourselves about growth. After operating under our Vision Statement for over four years, it may be time either to revise it or recommit to it. This is obviously a fairly general proposal that would not have immediate results but may be essential to continued growth and renewal in the coming years.

Improving Our Incorporation of Newcomers

We have been using essentially the same approach to welcoming and incorporating newcomers for several years. It's outlined starting on page 21 of this paper. We should re-examine and reinvigorate that process with a goal to improving our retention rate. We should consider integrating our approach to incorporation with our adult education activities to try to do a better job of moving newcomers (and existing members) from visitors to members to active

²⁰ Recall that our definition of youth is middle school and high school; our definition of children is infant through elementary school.

participants in ministry. We should also consider establishing an intentional program of small groups as a way of connecting newcomers to more people and also to have a more intimate setting in which current parishioners can interact with others. This would require recruiting and training small group leaders and then publicizing the availability of small groups and recruiting members.

We should also be more intentional about encouraging members to invite friends and relatives to attend services or special events at St. Andrew's. The most successful way of attracting newcomers is through a personal invitation. Most of these activities could be done without additional funding but will require more lay involvement.

Stabilizing Our Finances

We are facing a major budget challenge. Several income items are below budget, particularly loose offering (cash or checks not associated with a pledge) and fundraisers. Expenses are increasing as a result of rising utility and insurance costs and cost of living increases. Pledge income is not sufficient to bridge the gap between higher costs and lower than expected income from other sources. Although we won't know the actual size of the deficit until the results are in from the stewardship campaign, the potential gap for 2007 is not sustainable and cannot be met simply by "trimming the budget." Absent significant additional income, we would be forced to reduce staffing. That would seriously jeopardize the growth we have been enjoying.

As the old joke goes, "we have all the money we need to address this issue . . . the problem is that it's in our pockets." A one percent increase in giving – that's one percent of our income, not one percent of what we currently give – would wipe out our deficit and probably leave enough surplus to hire a part time youth minister. A one-half percent increase in giving would probably just about wipe out the deficit.

We have to address this issue if we are to continue growing and not decline.

Long Range Planning

It may be time to convene a planning group to consider our future needs. For example, what should we do with the rectory when the Jackson family leaves? Should we consider further expansion of the Preschool? What deferred maintenance needs do we have? What about the parking lot? What do we need in the way of improvements or changes to our campus to position us for further growth? We also need to address the question of how to deal with our debt from

the previous capital campaign. Should it be paid off through another capital campaign that could also raise money for other purposes? It is probably wise to do a planning exercise about every five years.

Conclusion

We are so blessed at St. Andrew's. It is such a privilege to be part of this wonderful faith community. It's so alive. I thought of us when I visited another parish and saw the slogan "open, vital, committed." With so many parishes struggling to keep their doors open, we are so fortunate to be able to deal with growing pains rather than with survival. I thank God every day for the privilege of serving as Rector of St. Andrew's. And I also am so thankful for our dedicated and talented staff. They have played a big part in the many success stories of St. Andrew's. Thanks to each of them:

Barbara Gibbons, Parish Administrator

Leah Ann Portley, Director of Children's Ministry and Preschool Director

David Mikus, Sexton and Verger

June Hale, former Director of Music

I am also eternally grateful for the ministry of Marilyn Anderson during her time at St. Andrew's. Many thanks also to Ben Newland, particularly for his dedicated service during my sabbatical.

If any reader would like to discuss this paper or raise any questions or issues, please feel to contact me by phone at 203-245-2584 or email me at Lou@standrewsmadison.org.

Preparing this paper has been a sacred experience. I pray that it will be helpful to all who read it. May God bless you abundantly.

Appendix A – Average Attendance at St. Andrew’s

Year	Average Total Sunday Attendance
1960	71
1961	83
1962	121
1963	149
1964	147
1965	141
1966	140
1967	145
1968	161
1969	182
1970	191
1971	200
1972	183
1973	181
1974	187
1975	191
1976	199
1977	216
1978	220
1979	249
1980	217
1981	200
1982	189
1983	224
1984	224
1985	221
1986	212
1987	212
1988	186
1989	189
1990	182
1991	190
1992	190
1993	173
1994	176
1995	173
1996	178
1997	174
1998	181
1999	169
2000	164
2001	184
2002	206
2003	228
2004	232
2005	244

Appendix B – Size Counts

The characteristics of a church typically vary by the size of the congregation. Using average Sunday attendance as the measure, probably the most commonly used typology of size comes to us from Arlan Rothauge's classic book, *Sizing Up a Congregation for New Member Ministry*. His categories are as follows:

0-50	Family Size Parish
50-150	Pastoral Size Parish
150-350	Program Size Parish
350+	Corporate Size Parish (now sometimes referred to as Resource Size Parish)

Family Size parishes are obviously very small. A part time clergy person who functions more as chaplain than leader usually serves them. Leadership resides in the small number of families who comprise the congregation, typically with a small number of matriarchs and patriarchs who make the decisions in the parish. Clergy often come and go in rapid succession; the congregation stays.

Pastoral Size parishes are obviously larger, but still relatively small. The parish tends to revolve around the pastor, who knows and has a personal relationship with virtually every member of the parish. Very little happens in the parish without the direct involvement and participation of the pastor.

Program Size parishes have usually have enough money, parishioners and staff to have more programs, such as adult education and outreach. However, these parishes are heavily dependent upon laity for most programs because there isn't enough money to operate the programs exclusively through paid staff. The pastor no longer knows everyone, and tends to have closest ties to those parishioners in leadership positions rather than with all parishioners. Parishioners also aren't able to know everyone, and maintaining a sense of intimacy and connectedness becomes more challenging, as does pastoral care. The parish tends to revolve around the programs, not the pastor.

Corporate or Resource Size parishes are more staff-driven. There are usually at least two clergy persons on staff in addition to the rector or senior pastor, and, in some larger parishes, dozens of paid staff who plan and lead much of the ministry of the parish. The parish tends to revolve around the staff. While I'm sure that even the largest parishes struggle with getting

enough parishioner involvement to help with their programs, from the viewpoint of a program size parish this category appears to enjoy many advantages.

There are other ways of categorizing churches. In her book, *Raising the Roof: The Pastoral-to-Program Size Transition*, Alice Mann updates the Arlan Rothauge typology as follows:

0-50	Family Size Parish (no change)
51-150	Pastoral Size Parish (only change is to increase 50 to 51)
151-400	Program Size Parish (increases the threshold from 150 to 151, and increases the upper limit from 350 to 400)
151-250	Within Program Size, she creates a sub-set of Transitional Size
401-1000	Corporate Size Parish (puts a cap on this size to recognize the rise of mega churches)
1000+	Super, Mega and Meta Size Parishes (new categories)

The last categorization I'll mention is from Gary L. McIntosh's book, *One Size Doesn't Fit All*. He uses a simpler typology, as follows:

15-200	Small Church	(80% of all churches)
201-400	Medium Church	(10% of all churches)
401+	Large Church	(10% of all churches)

So, where does St. Andrew's fit into this picture, historically and currently? First, St. Andrew's has never been a Family Size parish. In 1960, the year of its founding, attendance was 71. However, the parish undoubtedly had some characteristics of a Family Size parish during its first few years. The founding families likely played influential roles at St. Andrew's for a number of years. One of our founding members is still an active parishioner. Based solely on attendance, St. Andrew's was only a Pastoral Size Parish for its first eight years, becoming a Program Size Parish in 1968 with attendance of 161. However, for much of its history St. Andrew's would remain more pastoral than program in terms of its style and activities.

It's also interesting to note that St. Andrew's has never broken out of Alice Mann's Transitional Size parish category. And, historically, it hasn't been able to sustain its growth. As I mentioned, technically we became a Program Size parish in 1968 with attendance of 161. We almost climbed beyond the Transitional Size in 1979 with 249. But by 2000 we had gone back to 164, about the same place we had been in 1968. This suggests that we will have to be very

intentional and faithful about maintaining our health and vitality as a parish, or we will risk having history repeat itself.

As of the end of 2005, St. Andrew's is a Program Size Parish using Arlan Rothauge's classification, a Program Size Parish at the high end of Alice Mann's Transitional Size subcategory, and a Medium Church using Gary L. McIntosh's classification. Using the national data included in McIntosh's book (published in 1999), St. Andrew's is close to being in the top 10 percent of all churches based on size, in that 90 percent of all churches have attendance of 250 or less. According to his data, 50 percent of all churches have attendance of 100 or less. Data for the Episcopal Church is even more dismaying. According to a report on 2004 attendance issued by the research office of the Episcopal Church, 50 percent of all Episcopal churches had attendance of 75 or less. I suspect that few parishioners consider St. Andrew's to be a large church. The sad fact is that in comparison to many Episcopal churches, we are.

Finally, why is it so difficult to make the transition from pastoral size to program size, and to continue to grow beyond the 250 mark? This, of course, could be the subject of an entire book. In a sense, this is the primary subject of both of Alice Mann's books referenced in this paper. What follows is my brief response to these questions.

In a sense it's easier to be either a pastoral or corporate size parish. In the pastoral size parish people can rely on the pastor to do much of the hands-on work of ministry and leadership. Expectations for programming are somewhat limited. In a corporate size parish people can rely on the large staff to do much of the work and provide much of the leadership. Expectations for programming are high, but usually the staff can deliver high-quality programs. In a program size parish the people have to do much of the hands-on ministry and provide much of the leadership as well. The role of the pastor shifts from doer to recruiter, enabler and mentor. There's usually more staff than in a pastoral size parish, but not enough to do everything. Giving of money, time and talent on the part of the congregation may not match their expectations for programs and ministries. The pastor and senior lay leadership may not have the necessary skills to recruit, train and mentor greater numbers of lay leaders and to increase the financial generosity of the parish. In the Episcopal Church many clergy (perhaps most) have been trained more in a pastoral care model than a leadership model, and may not be comfortable with or knowledgeable about the skills necessary to lead a larger church.

Why is it difficult to continue to grow beyond the 250 level? Perhaps the parish isn't really committed to growth. Perhaps people miss the seemingly more intimate feel of a smaller congregation where allegedly everyone knows everyone else. Perhaps there is something to what Malcolm Gladwell refers to in his book *The Tipping Point* as "the magic number of one hundred fifty." According to Gladwell, there is strong evidence that 150 represents an optimum number for group activity and perhaps churches operate best with sub-groups (or services) not exceeding 150. Perhaps the church won't easily accommodate more than 250 people in worship services at times that people want to attend. For example, St. Andrew's has been struggling with its 11 a.m. service. Even though most large churches in the country have well-attended services at 11, 11:15 or even 11:30, many people at St. Andrew's claim that 11 is just too late in the morning. This may be due to the fact that up until several years ago, the latest service was at 10 a.m. (We're looking at the Sunday morning schedule to see if we could change the time to 10:30.) Perhaps the budget, staff and level of lay involvement won't support enough programs and activities to attract more than 250 attendees on a regular basis.

On the one hand, I'm thankful that St. Andrew's is in a position to struggle with breaking through the 250 barrier, if that's an accurate term. I'd much rather be at this point in our development than, say, trying to move from the low 100s to the high 100s. But God isn't calling us to maintain the Kingdom, and certainly not to shrink the Kingdom. God is calling us to grow the Kingdom by bringing more people to the Lord and to do more of God's work in the world. Thus the challenge of St. Andrew's is to overcome, with God's help, whatever obstacles there are to further growth and renewal.

Appendix C - A Vision for St. Andrew's

God has blessed us richly with a caring and loving parish community, a beautiful worship space and with the resources to carry out the ministry of revealing God's love to all. God is continuing to bless us by bringing more and more people to St. Andrew's. We are called by the Gospel to continue to expand the Kingdom of God. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) calls us to make disciples of all people. The Great Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40) calls us to love God and our neighbor.

What is our vision? Within five years or less, we envision:

- More and more people growing in their journey with God and becoming disciples of Christ, with the number of people worshipping at St. Andrew's doubling
- people being drawn by God to joyful worship and caring parishioners and staff
- fellowship, Christian education, spiritual development and outreach activities throughout the week for young and old
- pastoral care for all ages and groups, with no one left out or forgotten
- the people of St. Andrew's welcoming all who walk through her doors and bringing them into the life of our parish community
- St. Andrew's as a leader in the shoreline community and beyond, revealing God's love to all.

How will our vision become reality? We believe that God will continue to bless us with more people and resources. In order to assure that all of our members, new and old alike, are incorporated into the community, cared for and given opportunities for ministry, we will, with God's help, do the following:

- Continue to enhance our ministry of welcoming newcomers and incorporating them into the life of the parish.
- Develop more programs – such as Christian education, support groups, fellowship activities, and small group ministries – for all segments of the congregation to assure that the sense of community inherently found in a smaller church is maintained in our larger church, and that pastoral care needs continue to be met as we grow.
- Invite more parishioners into positions of lay leadership and, with training and support, use more of the laity to lead programs, activities and ministries.

- Expand and enhance our Pre-School to serve the educational and spiritual needs of families in the community more fully.
- Provide the necessary infrastructure to support our vision, including sufficient staff, space, parking, additional worship services and accessibility for those with special needs.
- Develop the financial resources necessary to operate as a larger church and to finance our infrastructure needs, by continuing to enhance our annual stewardship program of time, talent and treasure, by undertaking a capital campaign to address our space and accessibility issues, and by promoting planned giving.
- Charge the various Commissions and Committees of the parish, together with the parish staff, to develop the additional programs, activities and ministries necessary to address the needs of all segments of the congregation and the broader community.
- Establish a Planning Committee to assess our infrastructure needs and develop a plan to be financed by the capital campaign.
- Communicate, explain and build support for the vision with the entire congregation.

Appendix D – The 9:15 Service

The 9:15 service is designed to meet many needs: to appeal to families with young children; to be more contemporary in liturgy and music than most traditional Episcopal services; to be accessible to newcomers and non-Episcopalians; to be short enough to fit into a tight Sunday morning schedule; and, above all, to have a feeling of joy, energy and excitement.

As it turns out, all of these factors working together have made the 9:15 the most popular Sunday morning service at St. Andrew's. Somewhat to our surprise, many older people, retired and empty nesters or childless, prefer to attend the 9:15 service. This is actually something of a problem, because some people have switched to 9:15 from the 8 and 11 a.m. services, contributing to a drop in attendance at those services and allowing less room for newcomers at 9:15.

One or more guitars, a keyboard and usually percussion on a drum set provide music for the service. There is a large "Spirit Choir," often consisting of around 30 voices or more. Children from early elementary age through high school compose about 75 percent of the choir. Music is one of the keys to this service. It is usually upbeat, singable and fun. Finding music that is both appropriate for the tone of the service and theologically sound has been a challenge. Our primary sources have been the hymnals *Come Celebrate, Renew!*, *Wonder, Love and Praise*, *Lift Every Voice and Sing II* and the music sung and performed by Episcopal musician Fran McKendree.²¹ We use a few hymns from the traditional Episcopal hymnal.

We use a lot of music in this service. Usually there's an opening hymn, a song of praise, a presentation hymn, one or more communion hymns and a closing hymn. We often sing a spirited hymn called "The South African Creed" in place of saying the Apostles' or Nicene Creed. We sing one of several contemporary versions of the *Sanctus* (Holy, Holy, Holy) during the Eucharistic prayer, and we often sing the Lord's Prayer. We have a musical version of the responses to one of the Prayers of the People. And of course the choir sings an anthem at the

²¹ (*Come Celebrate, Wonder, Love and Praise* and *Lift Every Voice and Sing II* are supplemental hymnals of the Episcopal Church. *Renew!* is published by Hope Publishing. Fran McKendree is a gifted guitarist, singer and worship leader who is available to consult with parishes, lead worship services, and conduct workshops and concerts. His music is very appealing to teenagers as well as children and adults. More information about Fran can be found at www.franmckendree.com.)

offertory. I put a lot of time and energy into choosing the right songs for the right places in the service with the right theology for the scripture readings of the day and/or the season of the year.

All of our music is printed in a three ring binder that's in the pews (along with the liturgy; more about that later). In order to produce this music legally, we subscribe to three different copyright services – CCLI, LicenSing, and OneLicense.net. The cost of these services varies depending on the size of the congregation; our licenses cost in the range of \$200 annually for each.

The length of the service is critical both because of our tight morning schedule and to keep the attention of the young children. Our goal is to complete the service in 45 minutes; occasionally we run a little late. We keep the service short (for comparison sake, our more traditional service at 11 lasts for about one hour) by making several adjustments. We eliminate one of the readings, either the Old Testament reading or the Epistle. We don't sing a sequence hymn prior to the reading of the Gospel. We usually use the Apostles' Creed, which is shorter than the Nicene Creed. We use one of the shorter forms of the Prayers of the People. We normally only use the Confession of Sin during Advent and Lent. We try to keep the sermon short – about five minutes. We distribute communion at stations, two in the front of the church and one in the back. This is much faster than having everyone receive at the altar rail. And we almost never sing all of the verses of our hymns, except during the distribution of communion when the length of the hymn doesn't add to the length of the service.

Our liturgy booklet contains everything we need for most Sunday mornings. It does not have the Baptismal liturgy, because we seldom do baptisms at 9:15 because of time constraints. It includes the various opening acclamations, the text of the *Gloria*, references to the Collect of the Day, Lessons and Sermon, the words of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, Forms III, IV and VI of the Prayers of the People, several concluding collects, the Confession of Sin and absolution, followed by the text of five Eucharistic Prayers – A, B and C from the Book of Common Prayer and 2 and 3 from *Enriching Our Worship* (trial liturgy), the traditional and contemporary versions of the Lord's Prayer, three fraction anthems (one from the Prayer Book and two from *Enriching Our Worship*), and three Post Communion prayers (the first one in the Prayer Book, and two from *Enriching Our Worship*.) This fits on 14 double-sided 8½ by 11 pages with relatively large print, and is followed by 81 pages of hymns. Because we use a ring binder, we can add to the book relatively easily.

Having the ring binder also avoids the juggling act usually found in Episcopal services. Instead of having to keep track of where we are in the Prayer Book and the Hymnal and having to switch back and forth between the two, everything is in one place. This is very helpful for children and newcomers. The vast majority of our newcomers are not Episcopalians and thus are not familiar with the Prayer Book. I also announce all page numbers as we go through the liturgy.

A final highlight of the 9:15 sermon is the children's sermon. This is something of a misnomer, because we attempt to offer messages at this service that appeal to all ages. I invite all of the children to come forward to sit at the front of the church facing the congregation. Simply having the children come up and go back allows them to burn off some energy. Having the front of the church filled with 40 or 50 children is an inspiring sight for the adults. I allow the children to self-select. Some are so young that their mother or father comes up too; others are teenagers who sing in the choir. Preaching to an age mixture of three-year olds to high schoolers, plus their parents and other adults, is very challenging yet very rewarding. I do dialogical sermons, usually basing my sermon around questions that I ask the kids. I've learned the hard way that the youngest children are very literal and aren't able to see the bigger issue that my question is pointing toward. I try to structure my children's sermon so that the younger children can answer the simpler and more literal questions, the older kids the more sophisticated and metaphorical questions, and also have a subliminal or direct message for the adults. Sometimes I turn around and ask the adults a question. I move around so I'm close to the child who is speaking, and repeat the response so everyone can hear. I often stand sideways so I can easily look either at the children or at the congregation, or speak to either group. Often at the end I'll give a one-minute summary to the congregation of the adult sermon that I'm preaching at the other services.

A few people complain that they would like to hear more "adult sermons." My general attitude about this is that adult sermons are available at two other services each Sunday. Many people say that they enjoy the children's sermons, some acknowledging that they get more out of them than the adult sermons. On occasion we feel the need to preach a full-blown adult sermon at 9:15 (such as the Sunday when we kick-off the fall stewardship campaign). On those days our Director of Children's Ministry takes the children out of the church before the scripture readings begin and does a separate children's sermon with them, bringing them back into the church at the exchange of the peace.

So what makes this service so successful? Why is it almost always full? There are four major reasons: the music (parents often report that their children are singing the music on the way home and during the week), the length of the service, the children's sermon, and a high tolerance for noise. When there are 175 people filling a space that is not carpeted, and perhaps 50 are children, there's bound to be a certain level of background noise. At any given moment, a parent is likely to be speaking to a child or a young child is speaking or dropping a toy. Personally I would much rather have some noise in a church full of children than quiet in a church without children. Parents appreciate the fact that they can have their children with them in worship and not have to be too worried by a little noise from their kids.