

**Envision St. David's:
"An opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter
and do the rest"¹**

To the St. David's Parish Family,

In the latter part of 2005, the rector and vestry of St. David's resolved to establish the Envision Task Force to lead the parish through a process to discern what St. David's will look like in 25 years. More specifically, the commission of the task force included articulating core values, identifying needs of the congregation and the Austin community, and developing St. David's call to respond.

The response that we, as a community, established is challenging. With this in mind, we should take comfort in the words of the late Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero regarding the future:

"We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us. No statement says all that could be said. No prayer fully expresses our faith. No confession brings perfection; no pastoral visit brings wholeness. No program accomplishes the Church's mission. No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

"This is what we are about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

"We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest."

We are pleased to submit the enclosed strategic plan and assessment to the parish.

Peace,

Envision St. David's Task Force

Our Core Values

Core values are defined as an “organization's essential and enduring tenets” (from Build to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies, by Jim Collins, 1994). They help define who we are as a community. As St. David's meets the opportunities of the future, the vestry, ministries, programs, and guilds will use these core values as a guide for decision making.

The core values of St. David's are:

Faith: believing in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as articulated in the scripture and Baptismal Covenant and as lived out in prayer and worship

Learning: deepening our relationship with God through education, reflection, and application

Diversity: welcoming in the spirit of the New Covenant all people who are seeking God

Serving: doing Christ's work in the world by serving others

Tradition: honoring our Anglican heritage as well as our history of civic engagement in Austin since 1848

Participation: encouraging all parishioners to participate actively in our community of faith

Authenticity: striving for truth and openness in our relationships with one another

Our Strategic Direction

In defining a path for the future of St. David's, the Envision team identified six categories to encompass all we do as a church:

Worshiping

Caring

Educating

Serving

Growing

Operating

For each category, the team developed a strategic direction that includes a succinct statement of where we want to be in the future and a list of specific and tangible implications of that choice for the parish.

Worshiping

In Worshiping as a Community of Faith we will...

Inspire authentic awe in our community worship and continually expand effective delivery of Christ's message of grace and love.

What does this choice mean?

Celebrate with Music. *Quality music has been a hallmark of St. David's worship services and will continue to be.*

Worship and Pray Daily. *Spirituality is not limited to Sunday. It is lived. Community worship brings God's presence among us. We will foster engagement of daily worship through expansion our service offerings in time, location, structure, and delivery.*

Liturgy. *We will be a model of liturgical excellence and balanced innovation to foster our connection with each other, other churches across the globe, and to those who came before us.*

Message. *Sermons will engage the challenging issues of our times and foster the application of Christian principles to develop understanding and to lead more grace-filled lives.*

Worship Service. *Add a service that provides an engaging entry point for newer and younger parishioners.*

Caring

In Caring for Each Other we will...

Reflect the love of God by fostering relationships and supporting our parishioners throughout their lives.

What does this choice mean?

Create and Sustain Groups. *We will create the infrastructure to enable and support emerging and established groups. We will conduct annual focus groups with the parish to obtain feedback on how well we are meeting the needs of parishioners.*

Link Generations. *We will build opportunities for seniors, middle age, and youth to be in community with each other.*

Minister to Seniors. *We will care for and support our senior parishioners.*

Pastoral Care. *We will extend our capabilities to serve as a partner to those who are seeking to understand their spiritual lives, as an empathetic listener to those in distress, and as a comforter to those in times of loss.*

Educating

In Educating Adults, Youth, and Children we will...

Be a center for Christian formation, spiritual education, and personal development.

What does this choice mean?

Multi-level Educational Opportunities. *We will provide opportunities ranging from living Christ in our daily lives, to basic introduction to the Bible and Christianity, to advanced topics illuminated by national speakers.*

Develop Stewardship. *We will develop and grow our community with the expectation that those gifts given to each of us will become tools to express God's will in the world.*

Delivery Methods. *We will deploy various delivery methods for education such as large classes, small groups, parish-wide retreats, and use of the Internet.*

Serving

In Serving Others we will...

Have a culture of servanthood and provide transformational experiences for our parishioners and those we serve.

What does this choice mean?

Involvement. *All parishioners will be actively involved in direct ministry.*

Identify and Develop. *All of us are blessed with gifts. We will foster the identification and development of those talents.*

Reach. *Because of our abilities and resources, we have an obligation to serve many different communities.*

Growing

In Growing Our Church we will...

Be a vibrant community that serves the calling as the body of Christ for Austin residents.

What does this choice mean?

Inviting and Involving. *We have engaging programs that we will communicate to people. Our activities will provide opportunities to build connections with visitors.*

Downtown. *We will develop an understanding of the needs of the downtown community and build programs to engage individuals and families.*

2nd Church Home. *Our central location and diverse programs afford us opportunities to impact the spiritual lives of many people including those spending significant time downtown who may also have another church home.*

Operating

In Operating Our Church we will...

Express our stewardship of God's resources by continuing to improve how we plan, make decisions, and work.

What does this choice mean?

Manage Programs. *We will establish purposeful management practices to enhance coordination, communication, and effectiveness of the broad array of ministries, programs, and guilds.*

Communicate. *We will develop a culture of effective communication within St. David's and with our community.*

Develop Leadership. *We will build on the talents of our parishioners and our networks by establishing a leadership development program to grow leaders for St. David's, our diocese, and the community.*

Maintain Facilities. *We will assess the use of existing facilities and identify ways that our location and physical space can be used to serve the parish and to build connections with our community.*

Secure the Future. *We will continue to ensure that St. David's has a sound financial footing far into the future.*



Strategic Recommendations

The Strategic Direction presents a significant challenge for St. David's. The goals represent more activity than can be accomplished in a year. Thus, the Envision Task Force has outlined a manageable set of initiatives for Year 1 to enable St. David's to make solid progress in key areas and to start building capacity within the parish to support broader accomplishments.

The initiatives can be placed into two groups.

Programmatic initiatives involve addressing a specific program or area. The initiatives in this category include:

- Service to Others
- Pastoral Care
- Entry Point Service
- 2nd Church Home

Enabling initiatives focus on establishing the skills, capabilities, and processes within St. David's that are essential to supporting the broader goals suggested by this report. The following initiatives fall into this category:

- Lay Leadership Development
- Communications Improvement
- Small Group Capacity
- Strategic Planning Committee and Function

Service to Others

Objectives

- To be called, nurtured, and empowered as a parish to care significantly about the poor and vulnerable
- Improve our awareness of the shared responsibility we have for one another and the connection between faith and social justice
- Improve our ability to connect the spiritual gifts of parishioners to the needs within and outside St. David's

Actions

- Explore and educate on the connection between social justice and service to others
- Assess existing processes within St. David's for spiritual gifts discernment and needs identification
- Review models of skills assessment within religious and secular settings
- Develop models of gifts/skills assessment and discernment and present to Rector, Vestry, and service-oriented committees
- Develop implementation approach and schedule that includes timeline, activities, communication plan, and coordination responsibilities
- Assess skills inventory module of existing church software package
- Develop mechanism and process to match skills with identified needs

Resources

- Staff Resources: Staff involvement is expected during assessment of existing practices, review of models for gifts/skills assessment and discernment processes, and education of the parish.
- Laity Resources:
 - Initiative Lead: One person to plan and guide activities. Knowledge and experience with human resource planning and/or career planning would be very valuable to this position.
 - Initiative Team Members: One to two people to support activities
 - Committees and Groups of St. David's: Participation is needed to review models and for the discerning and matching processes

Pastoral Care

Objectives

- Continue and strengthen our focus on pastoral care
- Improve coordination of existing pastoral care activities
- Establish a broader base of knowledgeable, experienced, and passionate parishioners to serve the expected growth of pastoral care needs within St. David's

Actions

- Collaborate with existing pastoral care leadership and ministries to share information from the Envision St. David's process
- Identify short-term improvement actions and required resources
- Assess options for creating a response to our pastoral care needs that may include successful strategies from Stephen Ministry, James Ministry, Community of Hope, etc.
- Identify and recruit resources for pastoral care response
- Develop an approach to understanding and assessing the long-term perspective on the pastoral care needs generated by the retiring baby boomer generation
- Develop a more detailed vision for the pastoral care program
- Develop a detailed resource plan to serve long-term needs of the parish

Resources

- Staff Resources: Moderate staff involvement is needed to help identify short-term improvements and create a response to the current pastoral care needs. Staff will also participate in the assessment of the long-term perspective of pastoral care needs at St. David's. A clergy staff member is needed to co-lead the initiative.
- Laity Resources:
 - Initiative Co-Lead: One person to plan and guide activities over the first six to nine months of the initiative
 - Initiative Team Members: Two people to support assessment activities and to develop reports identify short- and long-term needs and parish resources
 - Committees and Groups of St. David's: Moderate participation in the development and implementation of responses to pastoral care needs

Entry Point Service

Objectives

- Develop a high energy, interactive, “entry point” service that will attract the growing downtown, residential population who are in their 20’s and 30’s and who are largely not Episcopalians.
- Provide participants with the opportunity to learn about St. David’s, join our activities and eventually become active members of the parish.

Actions

- Clergy will study and assess the possible structure, liturgy and timeline for a new high energy, less formal, interactive service.
- Clergy will make a recommendation on all aspects of the service, indicating the required resources.
- Clergy will establish a start date for the beginning of the service and coordinate with the Communications committee to begin preparing the messages for both our parish and the community.
- The Christian Formation Commission, Café Divine and the Clergy will coordinate an accompanying meal followed by small group activities such as Christian education, book groups, social justice and outreach groups or fellowship in the coffee house.
- Videotape services and special Christian education sessions and provide podcasts on St. David’s website.

Resources

St. David’s needs both a **coordinator for lay leadership** and a **priest** who is most interested in ministering to this age group at this type of interactive contemporary service in order to ensure success of the “entry point” service.

Second Church Home

Objectives

- Establish St. David's as a seven day community that engages spiritual lives on a daily basis
- Expand awareness of St. David's throughout Central Texas.
- Attract more people to St. David's to experience who we are and what we do.
- Increase the number of people who are actively involved in St. David's either as members or as individuals who consider us to have a special significance in their lives and who think of us as their Second Church Home.

Actions

- Develop a coordinated advertising/promotional campaign built on the Second Church home theme. Some ideas on this theme are presented below:
 - Second car? Second home? What not a Second Church Home in Downtown Austin? Come and experience St. David's Episcopal Church.
 - Live, Work, or Play Downtown? Make St. David's your Second Church Home.
 - A weekday church? Yes! St. David's Episcopal Church in Downtown Austin.
 - Consider us your Second Church Home for **weekdays** in Downtown Austin. St. David's Episcopal Church.
 - Coming to 6th Street for release from life's pressures? Look a block north to St. David's Episcopal Church at 7th and San Jacinto.
 - Ever hear of a weekday church with a light touch? Check out Wi-Fi and coffee at St. David's Episcopal Church, Downtown.
- Target segments of the downtown market for special initiatives designed to attract new people to St. David's:
 - People who work in offices, businesses, and organizations located downtown.
 - People who live downtown in condos and apartments with emphasis on young singles, young couples, and empty nesters.
- Expand the array of programs and activities St. David's offers on weekdays which are designed to attract people to the church such as coffee, lunches, entertainment events, programs on timely topics, lectures, meetings, music events, fine arts events, movies, exhibitions, and worship services.

Leadership Development

Objectives

- Develop our capacity to grow and support leaders
- Grow the pool of parishioners ready to serve in leadership roles within St. David's, the Diocese of Texas, and in capacities outside

Actions

- Assess needs of the leadership roles within St. David's
- Define leadership expectations within St. David's
- Develop a range of tools, materials, and training approaches to support the spectrum of leadership roles within the St. David's community
- Identify and recruit parishioners for opportunities to participate in programs such as Leadership Austin to participate in areas relevant to St. David's
- Assess leadership development programs such as those offered through the Diocese of Texas
- Identify and recruit parishioner and staff to participate in the Diocesan Leadership program

Resources

- Staff Resources: Clergy and staff involvement is expected to participate in the:
 - Development of expectations for lay leaders in St. David's
 - Identification and recruitment of lay resources for participation in the Diocesan Program
- Lay Resources:
 - Leadership Initiative Lead: One person to plan and guide activities
 - Leadership Initiative Team Members: Two to three people to support assessment and tools and materials development activities
 - Committees, Programs, and Small Group Leadership: Focused participation in data gathering to understand roles and needs within St. David's and in review activities to provide feedback on leadership expectations and tools and materials

Communications

Objectives

- Improve parishioners' knowledge of church resources and activities
- Extend knowledge of our church to the city, with special emphasis on downtown and to college students
- Improve our knowledge of downtown business activities and development
- Make it easy for visitors to enter and explore our church
- Improve communications with different stakeholders of St. David's

Actions

Communications Planning and Coordination

- Conduct stakeholder assessment of parish communications and develop stakeholder communications plan
- Perform a public relations audit of the church, assessing the need for media advertising, coordinated graphic design, new logo, press relations; with recommendations for new initiatives, budgeting and staffing
- Establish a regular coordination meeting between the leadership of ministries and programs to share highlights of planned activities for the near-term

Communications Operation

- Develop and implement a system for regular and repeated announcement of routine information at all Sunday services and in Looking Ahead
- Develop an elder hotline system for calling the church when help is needed and for communicating urgent news to older parishioners by phone

Web and Wireless Communications

- Complete rollout of new website
- Train ministry groups on website usage and maintenance
- Extend wireless internet to entire church
- Add a personal resource function to new web site to communicate professional and volunteer skills of parishioners

Small Group Capacity

Objectives

- Enhance St. David's ability to build community within the parish
- Develop tools and techniques to support small group formation and operation
- Develop capacity of clergy, laity, and staff to use small group tools and techniques

Actions

The following list provides an overview of the activities to move St. David's forward from where it is today:

- Identify lead person for Small Group Initiative
- Conduct Briefing Session to share data gather from Envision effort
- Gather Data and Assess Identified Needs
- Develop Small Group Resource Kit
- Present Small Group Resource Kit to leaders of groups/committees
- Modify Small Group Resource Kit based on feedback
- Publish Small Group Resource Kit

Resources

- Staff Resources: Limited staff involvement is expected during needs identification and implementation activities
- Laity Resources:
 - Small Group Initiative Lead: One person to plan and guide activities
 - Small Group Initiative Team Members: Two to three people to support activities
 - Committees and Small Groups of St. David's: Participation in data gathering and resource kit evaluation activities
 - Expected Duration of Initiative: 3 months

Strategic Planning Committee

Objectives

- Create a process within St. David's to identify future opportunities and challenges and to determine how best to prepare for what lies ahead
- Establish clear responsibility for oversight of the implementation of strategic initiatives

Actions

- Develop charter for Strategic Planning Committee
- Receive Vestry approval for creation of Strategic Planning Committee
- Identify and recruit members for the committee
- Define committee and subcommittee structure and responsibilities
- Develop strategic planning cycle for St. David's
- Develop implementation timeline for initiatives in strategic plan
- Develop process to assess and report progress to Rector, Vestry, and parish

Resources

This would be a standing committee. The Strategic Planning Committee would be composed of:

- A member of the staff
- A representative of the stewardship/development area
- A vestry member
- Five members who will head subcommittees formed to address each of the areas for which we have goals, i.e. Worship, Education, Evangelism, Outreach, and Operations

Quick Wins

From the information and comments received from the parish, the Envision Task Force has also identified several *Quick Wins* that contribute to the progress of the parish towards its future. *Quick Wins* are very tactical in nature and are expected to be implemented in a short period of time.

Quick Win	Related Strategic Area					
	Worship	Caring	Educating	Serving	Growing	Operating
Magnetic Church Program					✓	
Better signage for church					✓	✓
Improvements to Website					✓	✓
Wi / Fi Hotspot implementation					✓	✓
Coffee Shop operation in bookstore					✓	✓
Build on the Holy Roasters effort					✓	
Pod Casting			✓			✓
Electronic Newsletter						✓
E-mail addresses for each ministry						✓
Participation in Diocesan leadership program				✓	✓	
Mentoring program				✓		
Dad's Group				✓		
Emphasis on social services from pulpit		✓				
2 hrs/week involvement in church				✓		

Time Line for Strategic Recommendations

	2006				2007							
	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A
Programmatic Initiatives												
<i>Service to Others</i>												
Complete Assessment of Current Practices				•								
Complete Development of Model and Plan for St. David's					•							
Put Skills & Needs Matching system in place						•						
<i>Pastoral Care</i>												
Complete Assessment and Short Term Improvement Identification				•								
Complete Long Term Vision, Needs, & Resource Plan								•				
<i>Entry Point Service</i>												
Rollout Entry Point Service											•	
<i>2nd Church Home</i>												
Complete Development of Promotional Campaign			•									
Complete Marketing Campaign							•					
Enabling Initiatives												
<i>Lay Leadership Development</i>												
Define Leadership Expectations for St. David's			•									
Recruit Participants for Diocesan Leadership Program							•					
Complete Diocesan Leadership Program												•
<i>Communications Improvement</i>												
Conduct Stakeholder Assessment and Develop Plan					•							
Rollout Senior Hotline			•									
Rollout new website	•											
Rollout personal resource function on web												
<i>Small Group Capacity</i>												
Complete assessment of current needs												
Public Small Group Resource Kit					•							
<i>Strategic Planning Comm. & Function</i>												
Complete Formation of Committee		•										
Complete Development of Progress Report				•								
Complete Parish Focus Group						•						

Appendix



Assessment of St. David

Part of the approach to assist St. David's in defining what it would like to become and how it will reach its goals involves understanding the current environment, i.e. priorities of today, strengths of programs and services, and areas for improvement. To achieve the most complete appraisal of St. David's, the Envision Task Force used the following tools:

- **Pew Sheet:** A short series of open-end questions distributed across the services designed to reach a broad range of parishioners and visitors to St. David's.
- **History of St. David's Exercise:** An interactive exercise designed to allow parishioners to reflect on the long history of St. David's.
- **Parish-wide Survey:** A broad questionnaire designed to gather data on the level of agreement within the parish regarding characteristics expressed by St. David's in the areas of: Proclamation, Community Development, Service, Communicating the Tradition, New Members, Lay Ministry, and Leadership.
- **Focus Groups:** A series of facilitated sessions where parishioners provided feedback on what the future direction for St. David's should be.
- **Ministry Questionnaire:** An open-ended questionnaire designed to obtain feedback from the leadership of ministries regarding future directions and the needs to reach goals for that ministry.

In defining a path for the future of St. David's, the Envision team identified six categories to encompass all we do as a church: worshiping, caring, educating, serving, growing, and operating. These categories provide the structure for the information gathered regarding St. David's.



Worship

Survey Results

- St. David's scored very well on the question of delivering a strong message of faith and love on a weekly basis (90% agreed or strongly agreed) as well as on the question related to the quality of music (93% agreed or strongly agreed).
- However, when worship is cast in the context of moving our parishioners to awe, surrender, and acceptance of grace, the strength of agreement, while strong, falls relative to the questions above (67% agreed or strongly agreed)

Related Comments from Leadership of Programs and Ministries

- Increase awareness of our obligation to pray corporately
- Recognition by the parish of the different outlets for prayer available at St. David's

Summary of Strengths to Build On

- St. David's has strong support for the traditional Episcopalian liturgy as exemplified by the Book of Common Prayer.
- St. David's has a range of styles of services that appeal to a broad base of parishioners.
- St. David's has a long tradition of providing skilled music performances as a part of worship. Many parishioners consider this a vital component of their worship experience.

Summary of Areas to Improve

- The idea that young people prefer informal liturgies may be incorrect; many indicate that the traditions of the Episcopal Church are what attract them to the church.
- Non-Episcopalian newcomers find the liturgy dauntingly unfamiliar.
- Roman Catholic visitors are unsure how to take part in our liturgy and how to join the church.
- There is currently no "upbeat," informal service that would appeal to some young people and to the congregation of the discontinued 5 o'clock service.
- Unique service congregations seldom attend services at other times; there is the danger of such service congregations being cut off from the body as a whole.

Suggested Means of Improvement

- Continue to provide a wide variety of liturgical and musical styles for worship.
- Consider increasing the use of Rite I and of re-instituting Morning Prayer at some Sunday services.
- Continue to emphasize the reading of scripture at every service.
- Continue to expand the celebration of Holy Days with proper liturgies.
- Organize neighborhood groups to hold Daily Office services away from the church.
- Provide education programs for parishioners on the traditions of music in the church.
- Become a "singing church;" regularly teach unfamiliar hymns to parishioners.



- Consider offering a new 11:15 service for young adults and others who prefer “upbeat,” celebratory, “charismatic” liturgies; keep it short; serve lunch afterwards.
- Continue to nurture our parish choir to keep it at the level of other large Downtown churches.
- Offer more alternatives to less-skilled adult singers interested in choral singing.
- Expand the youth choir through 12th grade.
- Produce more-challenging plays/musicals for children.
- Disseminate our music and liturgy to a wider audience by using television/radio broadcasts, podcasts, tapes of sermons.
- Advertise our worship services in all media.

Caring

Survey Results

- St. David's scored very well on the questions about feeling accepted and warmly supported by the parish (84% agreed); on regularly providing social events where members can get to know one another (81% agreed) and on extending a warm welcome to a wide range of people (78% agreed).
- St. David's scored in the medium range on “there is a strong feeling of togetherness in this parish” (57% agreed).
- St. David's scored very poorly on the question “Conflict: Rather than gossip about someone they dislike” only 20% agreed and a large percentage of respondents were neutral (64%).
- St. David's also scored poorly on the question “Our parish monitors for burnout among our lay leaders to ensure that their energy and commitment to their roles remain high” (12% strongly agreeing/agreeing and 70% were neutral).

Related Comments from Leadership of Programs and Ministries

- Increase guidance of parishioners to take time to pray for others within our parish and our community

Summary of Strengths to Build On

- Physical space provides the capacity to support group activities.

Summary of Areas to Improve

- There is a desire for more retreats for the whole parish similar to the Laity Lodge retreats; and the youth would like more lock-ins.
- St. David's needs to assess the needs and wants of our seniors who are living in retirement communities, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities and minister to their needs.
- We need to have a formal structure or mechanism for dealing with conflict within the church.



- There are many needs and opportunities to support various groups within the church such as, singles, newly married couples, parents, gays and lesbians etc.
- There is a need and desire as well for intergenerational groups and social activities

- When people within our congregation are in need, there is no process or structure for discovering the need and supporting the person- this includes visitation of hospitalized parishioners.

Suggested Means of Improvement

- Develop and provide opportunities for seniors and youth to be in community
- Parenting workshops for parents of children of different age groups (teens, young children)
- Develop James Ministry and Stephen Ministry groups to help people in crisis
- Ongoing grief/caregiver groups
- Flower/visitation guild for shut-ins and hospital patients
- Stronger chapter of Episcopal Church Women at St. David's
- A laughing club
- A Narcotics Anonymous program
- Neighborhood small groups
- List contact information of persons responsible for each small group in "Looking Ahead"
- More emphasis on lay ministry
- Computer help, both for folks who need help job hunting and navigating online and as a service to all parishioners who need computer assistance
- Prayer groups
- Community building opportunities for new residents downtown
- Clergy support of 20/30's group
- Program for empty nesters/young seniors
- Men's retreat with golfing, skiing, fishing, biking etc.
- Provide a "special spiritual place" for children
- Have a youth oriented column to let parishioners know who's coming, going, and had important things happening in their lives
- Reasonably priced flu shots for everyone
- Athletic teams/groups
- More access to priests
- A teen gathering or "club" on Friday nights in the gym; open to teens from other churches etc.



Educating Adults, Youth, and Children

Survey Results:

- St. David's scored very high on the question about providing basic Christian instruction when a person wishes to be baptized or confirmed
- St. David's had middle range scores (47-55%) on questions about the quality of our Sunday school, the number of Bible study classes, and our support of members in relation to engaging in meaningful Christian rituals in their private or family lives (private prayers, grace at meals, spiritual direction, etc.),
- St. David's scored very low on the question "The expectation is clear at St. David's that we expect all our members to devote two hours to their parish each week, one for worship and the other for some type of adult Christian formation activity." Only 29% of respondents agreed with this statement.

Related Comments from Leadership of Programs and Ministries

- Raising consciousness of stewardship in the parish – changing the focus from care taking to being more proactive

Strengths to Build On:

- The current Adult Education offerings, particularly those by Michael White, are highly valued, along with the variety of adult offerings
- St. David's has the elements in place such as size, facilities, geographic location, and interested and thoughtful parishioners to become known for offering lecture series by prominent Biblical scholars
- St. David's Day School and the weekly child care are highly regarded.

Areas for Improvement:

- Availability of Bible Studies:
 - There is a desire for more Bible study at a variety of times and places
- Offering a Range of Bible Studies and Sunday School:
 - There is a need for Christian education for people new to Christianity and/or who consider themselves at a "beginner level" of either Christianity or the Episcopal Church
 - There is a desire for more advanced Christian education "fill in the gap between Sunday School and Seminary education."
 - Create a Family Sunday school inclusive of adults and young children.
- Applicability of Christianity to Daily Living:
 - Sermons should address topics such as everyday Christian living, peace and justice and the problems facing ECUSA.
 - There is a desire for how to apply the Bible teachings to everyday living.



Suggested Tactics for Enhancing Education for Adults, Youth, and Children:

- Applicability of Christianity to Daily Living:
 - Marriage enrichment course
 - A family based study group which acts as a forum for discussing parenting issues
 - David Ramsey's Financial Peace University
 - Faith-based life skills classes, specifically on parenting and marriage
 - Small group Family Life SS Class, focus on scripture as relates to daily life with discussion
- Provide leadership education for clergy and lay ministers
- Vary the format of Christian Education:
 - Provide bible study on-going Sunday mornings;
 - Studying one book of the bible at a time
 - Provide fellowship in the evenings, during the daytime, and in neighborhoods
 - Have more weekend educational series
 - Alternate modes for offering education: electronic adult formation, spirituality by Blackberry
- Topics of Interest:
 - Old Testament festivals
 - Preaching series by Gareth Jones
 - Book group devoted to writings about spirituality
 - Spanish class
 - More historical lectures
 - College Program
 - Teach about stewardship from a young age
 - Adult mentor program for Youth



Serving

Survey Results

- St. David's scored favorably (about 80% strongly agreed and agreed) on questions regarding serving the poor, financial giving to charity, and opportunities to serve.
- The internal assessment of St. David's ministries shows that there is limited participation for directly helping those in need, and that there are few opportunities to do so. The ministries that currently exist would benefit from greater parishioner participation.
- Successful outreach ministries at St. David's are, for the most part, grassroots.

Related Comments from Leadership of Programs and Ministries

- Establish outreach to the homebound in our parish

Summary of Strengths to Build On

- Trinity Center is a huge strength and is widely supported.
- Other successful outreach efforts of our parish include: Southern Malawi, the cold-weather shelter, and Trinity Center Bridge.
- Both internal and external assessments show wide support for St. David's outreach ministries.

Summary of Areas to Improve

- If our outreach efforts are to be successful we need to continue to develop a culture of servanthood.
- There is an Outreach infrastructure (committee) that can be improved and better utilized.

Suggested Means of Improvement

Data from the focus groups, surveys and pew cards reveal very few concrete ideas on ways to improve our outreach activities. Everyone who commented on outreach supported Trinity Center and considered it very important that we continue to work with the homeless population downtown. The following ideas come partly from suggestions made in focus groups and in pew cards, and partly by members of the outreach committee.



- Emphasize our call to servanthood in sermons, educational offerings, and youth and children's programs. (This idea was expressed several times on pew cards.)
- Create a program to help parishioners discern their spiritual gifts. Encourage them to find uses for their gifts in existing ministries or to create ministries to put their gifts to work. (Many parishioners said they didn't know what their gifts were or that their gifts were not being put to use at St. David's.)
- Improve the structure and function of the Outreach Committee (currently underway).
- Improve communication with parish about outreach opportunities that already exist in the parish, specifically Trinity Center and Next-to-New.
- There is a desire for "drop-in" outreach activities such as the Crop Walk or Habitat for Humanity projects that require no preparation, training or commitment.
- More youth/adult mission trips (international, domestic, East Austin).

Growing

Survey Results

- A substantial number of parishioners report lack of satisfaction in the following areas that bear on evangelism: sense of unity/togetherness, ability to share disagreements, Sunday School/Bible study, and proactive involvement of new members in parish life.

Related Comments from Leadership of Programs and Ministries

- Prepare for the demand for a service for youth that serves the ages in between Bethell and the standard services

Summary of Strengths to Build On

- We value our existing programs and liturgy, being associated with a place that has a rich history, and diversity—both ethnic and age diversity.

Summary of Areas to Improve

Parishioners want a focus on recruiting the following populations:

- downtown workers (speakers series with lunch and/or dinner)
- downtown dwellers (venue for small group meetings, community events)
- downtown needy (partnering with other churches)
- seniors (programs at St. David's and in senior facilities)
- college students/younger populations (music programs, linking to SXSW/First Night)
- diverse populations (linking to other churches such as St. James)
- young families (expand day care to full time)
- organizations that may need meeting space (Kiwans, 12-step groups)



- visitors (provide docents for historic sanctuary tours and brochures w/ information on services for hotel visitors)
- former parishioners (dealing with issues/inviting them back)
- Roman Catholics (education program on similarities and differences)
- friends (provide events where parishioners encouraged to bring guests)

Suggested Means of Improvement

- Advertise who we are and what we offer using the **Internet**. In addition to the Internet, use flyers, a lighted sign and/or marquee, banners near church, college newspapers, an outreach program to contact new residents, televising services, pod casting via Web site, promoting bookstore, brochures in hotel lobbies, especially promoting morning/evening prayer and Compline and labyrinth
- List ministries and contact persons in Looking Ahead
- Provide liturgy at non traditional times, such as Eucharist, Bible study, healing services (plus lunch) at noon and/or before work
- Develop programs that will attract downtown neighbors such as Habitat for Humanity, small ministries with contact information in Looking Ahead, weekend retreats, presentations/groups discussion on "hot" issues: i.e. sexuality, morality
- Provide life cycle programs/events such as classes for newlyweds and programs for the newly divorced, especially single women
- Have more stimulating adult education programs and some that are parishioner-led
- Create services for the non-churched
- Sponsor programs that touch on political and/or downtown-related issues, town hall meetings
- Assess why folks quit coming to church when they do
- Make the 5:00 service more warm, joyful



Operate

Survey Results

- St. David's indicated very strongly (90% agreeing) that "An up-to-date web site featuring parish activities is very important."
- While most parishioners indicated agreement that they are being "contacted about the annual stewardship program", a significant number, approximately 35%, disagree or are neutral.
- 54% of the survey respondents indicated that they agree or strongly that "Our parish continues to identify people with leadership potential and gives them both training and leadership opportunities to further develop their skills."
- 44% of the survey respondents indicated that they agree or strongly agree that the "decisions the vestry makes are representative of the parish." A significant number, 47%, indicated that they were neutral.
- St. David's scored poorly on the question "Our parish monitor for burnout among our lay leaders to ensure that their energy and commitment to their roles remain high" with only 11% agreeing and a large percentage (69%) scoring that neutral.

Related Comments from Leadership of Programs and Ministries

- Certain ministries need a clergy advocate
- Improve ability for groups to prepare and plan succession for leadership of programs, groups, and ministries
- Easily resolvable barriers, such as computer needs or targeted volunteer participation, to successful operation of programs and ministries have been allowed to persist
- Evaluate duplication of effort or focus between the programs and ministries

Summary of Strengths to Build On

- Continuation of focus groups on an annual basis to facilitate feedback on needs of the parish
- Historic Sanctuary and the new facility are attractive and should be maintained.

Summary of Areas to Improve

- Improve planning and assessment of communications
- Increase the use of a multitude of channels to convey information regarding events at St. David's, groups, contract persons, etc.
- Advertise what St. David's has to offer in terms of services, programs, meals, etc to downtown community

Suggested Means of Improvement

- Publish a resource directory on the web of the services that St. David's provides
- Include a vestry member in the annual focus group meetings to allow more contact between vestry and the parish
- Use e-mail distribution as a means to notify parishioners of events and activities



- Establish a clear owner for the website and the maintenance of content and functionality
- Establish a program to provide tours of the historic church
- Connect with groups that serve or plan for downtown to enhance our role and voice in the activities and future of downtown Austin
- Establish a long term plan for the physical space at St, David's.



Data Gathering Tools

Over the past year, the Envision Task Force obtained feedback from the parish and our visitors regarding St. David's of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. The task force used the follow tools to gather information:

- Pew Card Surveys
- History Reflection Questionnaire
- Focus Groups
- Parish-wide Survey
- Ministry Questionnaire

Pew Card Questions

Over the course of several weeks, the Envision Task Force distributed the following questions designed to obtain open-ended feedback from the parish.

1. If St. David's started..., I would be so excited I would tell everyone I know!
2. If St. David's did not continue to..., I would lose interest in remaining a member.
3. If, with the stroke of a pen, I could change one thing about St. David's it would be...
4. What skill or gift has God given you that is not being put to use at St. David's...
5. Briefly describe your favorite moment or experience at St. David's...
6. What is the single best thing St. David's is doing or could do to help you grow in your relationship with God?
7. What is the most important question facing St. David's?
8. How do you picture St. David's in 10 years (in 25 words or less)
9. What is the greatest need in the downtown community that you believe St. David's could positively affect?



History Questionnaire

As part of understanding who we are, the task force developed a series of wall-size panels that chronicled the history of St. David's. At the end of the panel, parishioners were asked to provide feedback on two questions:

1. What does the history/legacy of St. David's mean to you?
2. Given our rich history, what do you believe St. David's most significant opportunities are to extend our legacy in the future? Can you suggest changes that would give us a new direction in services, programs, activities, music, ministries, outreach, staff, facilities or other areas?

Focus Group Sunday

In the winter of 2006, well over 100 parishioners participated in 17 facilitated focus groups. The focus groups provided an opportunity for the task force to discuss with the parish regarding ways that we could improve our community from the perspective of our baptismal covenant and what it is calling us to do in terms of service to others, evangelism, leadership, spiritual formation, community/fellowship, clergy/staff, size of parish, liturgy and music, and facilities.



Parish-wide Survey

The Envision Task Force issued to the parish a broad questionnaire designed to gather data on the level of agreement within the parish regarding characteristics expressed by St. David's in the areas of: Proclamation, Community Development, Service, Communicating the Tradition, New Members, Lay Ministry, and Leadership. The following table presents some of the summary statistics on the responses and the questions:

Gender	Total
Female	126
Male	37
Unknown	9
Grand Total	172
Years at St. David's	Total
Less than 2	15
2-4	19
5-14	64
15-30	45
More than 30	21
Unknown	8
Grand Total	172
Service Attended	Total
11 Church	40
3 Trinity	1
5 Bethell	6
8 Church	10
9 Bethell	22
9 Church	75
Unknown	18
Grand Total	172
Age	Total
18-24	2
25-34	17
35-44	34
45-60	56
Over 60	58
Unknown	5
Grand Total	172



Ministry Questionnaire

The Envision Task Force requested feedback from the various ministries and programs of St. David's. The leaders of these groups were asked the following questions:

1. Describe what your group does.
2. About how many people are currently active in this ministry?
3. Envision this ministry in five to ten years from now. How will it change?
4. If you envision this ministry continuing and growing, what will be needed to achieve this?
5. What are some current challenges this ministry faces?
6. If this ministry disappeared, who would miss it?



End Note

¹ Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero