



St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Building Community

1914 - 2014

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Past. Present. Future.

Future.

Building Our Future Together

By The Rev. Karen C. Lewis

"You are the light for the whole world. A city built on top of a hill cannot be hidden, and no one would light a lamp and put it under a clay pot. A lamp is placed on a lampstand, where it can give light to everyone in the house. Make your light shine, so that others will see the good you do and will praise your Father in heaven." (Mt. 5:14-16 CEV)

In the business world, visioning and strategic planning are popular tools to assist an organization in focusing its energies so as to generate interest and sales in the marketplace. A successful business has a vision that it lives and breathes – and sees its vision as a state of mind and not a statement on a piece of paper. A successful business prepares for the future, utilizing processes that help it discover its unique attributes; understand its marketplace, while holding true to its core values.

So why should we care what businesses do?

The successful ones model for us in the church how we, too, must adapt to the changing culture, while discovering our God-given gifts -- our God-given 'light' -- that respond to the needs of our neighborhood. It is often said that change is the only constant in this world. It is also often said, even in scripture, without vision you will die.

Do you know what St. Paul's vision is? Can you see it being lived out in our daily lives and activities? Does it direct our decisions, our activities, and how we spend our money? Most of us I suspect, are unable to answer these questions. And that's okay because our vision no longer fits who we are today.

We are now at a time in our transition to join together in envisioning our future – in discerning desired outcomes that will lead our ministries and mission to serve God's people in this corner of God's Kingdom. Now I know the cynic in some of us will say, "yeah, I've been through this

before and it only ends up on the bookshelf gathering dust." That certainly is a possibility if we choose not to invest in the process and make it our own, driven by God's will for our future.

How will we do this?

I've been honored throughout my ordained ministry to lead many congregations through a visioning process – one that creates relationships, encourages us to invest together – both young and old – in discerning our future. My preferred process is called Appreciative Inquiry (AI).

AI focuses on our gifts – on what is life-giving – on what we know best how to do – and then encourages us to do more of it. This is accomplished first through sharing with each other our stories of what gives us life at St. Paul's. We will gather in pairs to 'interview' each other – and in this story-sharing phase, we will discover our core values; what we value most about St. Paul's and about our life together. These interviews will be conducted throughout September so that your responses may be gathered together before our congregational summit on October 4.

On October 4 all will be encouraged to attend a day-long summit (I know it is a lot to ask to have you give up a Saturday) where we will spend time looking at our history – both the church's and the world's; we will discern the needs of our community through mind-mapping; and we will take the information gathered from your interviews to help us

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discern four or five desired outcomes that will direct our budget, our activities, our energies, our ministries, and our mission. In addition, we will have a clear sense of how these desired outcomes will be implemented – which may mean a change in some of our structures – in how we do things – in how we spend our money.

A few details about this . . .

- If you are concerned about missing the MSU game that day . . . it is an evening game (8 pm) against Nebraska and I promise to get you out in time to get to your seat in the stadium.
- Day care will be provided for the little ones, but I would like the youth to join us in this process, as their voices are valued and they too need to help in discerning the future of St. Paul's.
- AI is a process that requires all of us to join together – it cannot be done by committee or Vestry or a few folks alone. Our future is just that – our future – and all of us are responsible for it.
- I promise to feed you.
- By the end of the day on October 4 – you will have developed new relationships; learned a lot about the history of St. Paul's; be excited about our future and energized for all of the possibilities that lie ahead.

One more thing . . .

Many have been wondering about our clergy leadership for the future. As you know, I am on a two-year contract as your Priest-In-Charge which ends in early March, 2015. Part of the contract states that if the Vestry, Bishop, and myself decide that I am the right person to lead St. Paul's into the future, than I may be called as Rector. Once we have completed our visioning/desired outcomes process, the Bishop will be happy to have a conversation with the Vestry regarding the calling of a St. Paul's Rector. Therefore, this can happen before the end of 2014 and does not need to wait until March 2015. This will require discernment on all of our parts to ensure that St. Paul's has the best clergyperson to lead this community now and into the future.

Let our light shine . . .

St. Paul's is one of the best-kept secrets in Lansing. It is time for us to uncover that light and let it shine for all of our community to see. We have an abundance of gifts to offer to our world – God-given gifts that are so desperately needed. AI will aid us in discovering our abundance and lead us from a feeling of scarcity – of surviving – to a place of hope and joy in all that we have and all that we can do. Please block off October 4 on your calendar as a day to join your church community in discerning its future. As we celebrate the past 100 years of our church building, let us also look forward to the next 100 years of ministry in this place.

Present.

An Update on our Mid-Year Pledge Campaign and 2014 Budget

This has been a tumultuous and eventful year so far here at St. Paul's on the budget front, and this seems like an opportune time for a summary report on behalf of the Vestry that will bring parishioners up to date.

Mid-year pledge drive

First, a heartfelt "Thank You" to all parishioners who responded to the Mid-Year Emergency Pledge Campaign to reduce our 2014 operating budget deficit. As we have said before, the Vestry and members of the special campaign committee are gratified by the support. And we also continue to remind you that, if you had been planning to contribute but it has since slipped your mind, there is still time. If you have misplaced the pledge form mailed to you, they are available through the Parish Office.

As of July 25, 53 mid-year pledge increases have been submitted totaling just under \$50,000. In addition, a number of parishioners who regularly contribute but who do not make pledges appear to be increasing their contributions. So although we are still short of our original \$75,000 goal, we can at least say that, along with the budget cuts already made, our 2014 budget is much more stable than when we began the year. Further, there are several other revenue-raising and cost-cutting efforts underway to provide both short-term and long-term budget relief (some of which are described elsewhere).

The chart on the next page shows, for returned pledge forms only, how parishioners have responded, at various levels, by increasing their pledges for the remainder of 2014.

2014 Budget Actions

Before launching the mid-year pledge drive, the Vestry made a number of painful reductions to the current year (2014) budget effective July 1. Notably, these included:

- elimination of the positions of bookkeeper and assistant music minister
- 10% reduction in the rector's salary, housing allowance, and pension contribution for 2014 only

- 10% decrease in the office manager's compensation, with the prospect of making the position half-time in future years
- reduction of the music minister position to half-time from full-time
- \$7,000-plus decrease in our annual Diocesan pledge (granted by the Diocese for this year and next)
- use of designated funds and newly acquired grants to replace operating revenue for Mission and Outreach programs.

Together these actions eliminated more than \$40,000 from the 2014 budget, and if all of these cuts were maintained at this level for 2015, they would produce roughly \$75,000-\$90,000 in reductions. The need for further adjustments will be determined as next year's budget is developed this fall and the Every Member Canvass gets underway.

Grants for Mission and Outreach

We can also report that, thanks to Carol Miller and the Mission and Outreach Committee, St. Paul's was awarded a \$2,500 Social Services grant from the Diocese of Michigan for the Needs Closet Ministry (which is designed to help Lansing's neediest people with bed linens, towels, winter coats and diapers). The committee also received \$500 church social service grant from the Greater Lansing Community Foundation, with the proceeds to pay for interpreter services for the Bhutanese support group and for supplies for the Needs Closet.

Exploration of Other Revenue Sources

St. Paul's is actively investigating the possibility of becoming a concessionaire at Michigan State athletic events in the coming school year. Slots are still open (for football, women's basketball, and hockey); we are hopeful that we will be able to undertake one of these projects and

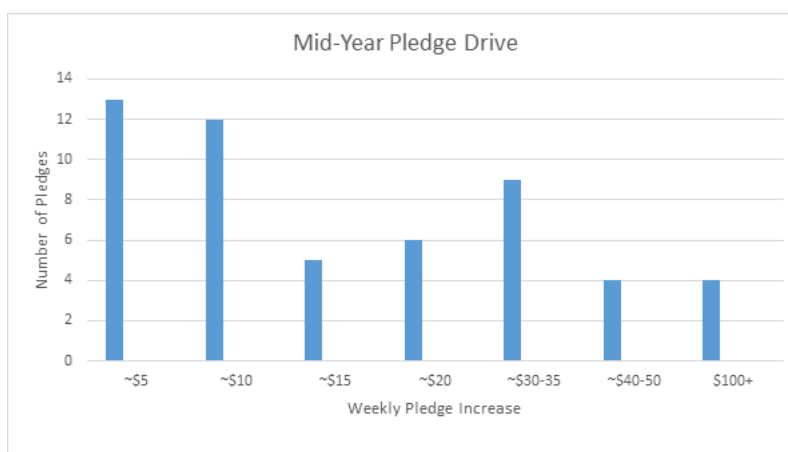
find a sufficient number of volunteers. And other revenue-raising opportunities, such as ways to rent or lease space in our buildings and the recruitment of prominent speakers for community-wide events, remain under discussion.

BW&L and Energy

One of the troubling ongoing issues is the high cost of utilities for our buildings, particularly since the Board of Water and Light might approve a 7% rate increase for next year. However, Senior Warden Sue LeDuc reports that there have been some hopeful developments in the past several weeks.

Sue and Vestryman Bryan Goldberg attended a meeting in June with five other downtown churches to discuss our high utility bills and a strategy for approaching the Board of Water & Light. The other churches involved are Central Methodist, Christ Community, St. Mary's, and First Presbyterian. To give you some perspective: St. Mary's utilities for 2013 were about \$83,000, the cost for Central Methodist about \$53,000, and our costs at St. Paul's approximately \$40,000.

We had heard that Consumers Energy had a special (lower) rate for non-profits and planned to propose something similar to BW&L at a meeting scheduled with the utility. Unfortunately, upon further investigation we discovered that there is no special Consumers rate. But the meeting went forth as planned on July 10 with Sue LeDuc attending along with clergy and others from the five churches. BW&L staff had prepared print-outs of 3 1/2 years of utility charges for each church. (There were some inaccuracies due to not including all meters for each church, which they are correcting). They acknowledged the value of our churches to life of the city, and downtown, and are willing to work with us to find some relief. They proposed an energy audit of each church to include steam, electricity, and water at BW&L expense. They were open to considering a tiered rate scale for us. It was a hopeful meeting.



Past.

Celebrating 100 years of our church building

The first service in the newly built St. Paul's Episcopal Church was held on September 23, 1914.

(This was the fourth building for the parish since its founding in 1849 – the first being the old State Capitol building!) The Parish will have a full year of commemorations and celebrations of our building's 100th year starting this September.

Sunday, September 28 – We will begin the year of celebration with a 10 a.m. service from the 1892 Book of Common Prayer – the prayer book in use 100 years ago. The service will be followed by a parish potluck.

Docents Wanted

The 100th committee would like to offer tours of St. Paul's led by docents, as we mark the 100th anniversary of our building. To do this we need a few people who would like to be trained to give tours of St. Paul's, and others with historical knowledge willing to help us write up information for a tour. We would like to offer these tours when there are events in the church to which the community is invited. October 1 would be our first good opportunity. If you are interested contact Sally Lawrence.

Request from your 100th committee

The committee needs pictures, newspaper articles, or any other historical memorabilia you may have dealing with St. Paul's during the last 100 years. We would like to put together a "Wall of History". Also, the committee would love photos or memorabilia of your own history at St. Paul's (baptisms, weddings, special occasions or events). If you have anything of interest you would be willing to share please contact Sally Lawrence or Hillary Walilko.

Wednesday, October 1, at 5:30 pm.— Bishop Wendell N. Gibbs, Jr. will join us at St. Paul's for a special service of celebration, followed by a reception in the Merrifield Room. Dignitaries from the Lansing area will be invited to join us to acknowledge the heritage of our historic downtown landmark.

Prayers for the Church from the 1892 Prayer Book

BLESSED be thy Name, O Lord, that it hath pleased thee to put it into the hearts of thy servants to appropriate and devote this house to thy honour and worship; and grant that all who shall enjoy the benefit of this pious work, may show forth their thankfulness, by making a right use of it, to the glory of thy blessed Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(From the Consecration of a Church or Chapel, BCP 1789 and 1892)

O GOD, whom year by year we praise for the dedication of this church; Hear, we beseech thee, the prayers of thy people, and grant that whosoever shall worship before thee in this place, may obtain thy merciful aid and protection; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(From the Feast of the Dedication of a Church, 1892 Book of Common Prayer)