

PREAMBLE

About 60 people from St. Mark's, St. Michael and All Angels and St. Richard's met in St. Richard's parish hall on 2 Feb 2013 for a morning of conversation. Participants shared best experiences of church, core values and hopes for the future. At first, participants worked in pairs, interviewing each other and noting the Core Values and Hopes as they heard them. Next, table groups of between 5 and 8 people were formed to look for Common Themes and Goals among the responses from the interviews.

CORE VALUES

Participants were asked about their Core Values.

What do you think is the core value of your church? What values give life to your congregation? What is it that, if it did not exist, would make your church totally different than what it currently is? If you name a single word or phrase, please define it.

Out of 128 responses the following Values were highlighted / emphasized:

Quality of Internal Relationships (40 responses)

- often using phrases such as "a sense of family" and "community"
- the special roles of elders and children are noted

Social Outreach (28 responses)

- 4 of those responses seek a balance between internal and external relationships, or hold the two values together

Welcoming, Hospitality and Inclusiveness (18 responses)

Worship and Music (18 responses)

- forms that are both traditional and new
- three are phrased in the negative (i.e. concern over the loss of music)

Spiritual Growth and Development (16 responses)

- qualities that help us grow

Role of Leadership (4 responses)

- removing obstacles and enabling the ministry of the whole people of God

Of particular concern:

- St Richard's Nearly New Shop and Day Care Centre
- music is core to St Mark's understanding of itself
- Aboriginal connections and ministry
- the ability to change without losing identity
- prayer
- financial stability
- efficiency

HOPES

Participants were asked about their Hopes.

If you had three hopes for the future of your parish and the Anglican Church in your region, what would they be?

Out of 145 responses these expressions of hope received particular focus:

Recovering Growth (37 responses)

- focused either on recovering what has been perceived as lost, or on new growth
- 18 responses (1/2) related to attracting and retaining youth and younger people

Mission of the Church (22 responses)

- particularly outreach ministry (8 responses)

Sharing of Resources (21 responses)

- increased partnership and sharing of resources
- 3 mention other denominations

Process (12 responses)

- moving this process along
- transparency
- making sure everyone is included
- less focus on buildings

Preservation and Survival (15 responses)

- that a particular church, ministry or program will be preserved, or flourish
- of particular concern is one expression of hope that the Columbarium would remain in the church (St Richard's)
- of these, 6 responses express survival as their hope

Financial Stability (12 responses)

New Directions (10 responses)

- new directions and progressive means for vitality
- 8 look to program delivery
- 4 advocate more involvement from membership

Other Expressions of Hope:

- alternative worship experiences
- hospitality and acceptance

Participants met in 10 table groups of 5-8 people, and were asked to look for Common Themes and Goals in the Core Values and Hopes from the individual interviews.

Looking at parish Core Values and Hopes, did any themes emerge? Were there any particular goals?

THEMES

Inclusiveness and Hospitality

- identified at 6 tables
- 16 expressions of similar themes to do with inclusiveness, hospitality and welcoming

Partnership

- identified at 6 tables
- 13 expressions of similar themes to do with partnership opportunities among the three churches and other denominations

Caring

- identified at 5 tables
- 7 expressions of similar themes related to caring for one another
- two statements stand out: "Generosity of spirit – wanting what's best for the whole" and "Leaving no one behind"

Participation

- identified at 4 tables
- 7 expressions of similar themes related to participation: involving the whole laity and taking ownership for the ministry of the church.

Buildings

- identified at 4 tables
- 5 expressions of similar themes looking for less focus on our buildings and more efficient use of building resources

Use of resources

- identified at 3 tables
- 7 expressions of similar themes looking for efficiency, better communications and less bureaucracy

Youth and families

- identified at 3 tables identified one theme each to do with youth and families

Other Themes

- supporting leadership
- prayer
- retaining Anglican culture
- being a visual example of faith
- being Christ centred in all we do

GOALS

Growth

- 5 tables named similar goals related to growth:
 - Getting more people to come – relevant
 - Attract young people and young parents (children, youth)
 - More outreach: reach the youth, reach the Twitter generation
 - Attract and keep parishioners
 - Growth – especially youth

Partnership

- 5 tables named goals related to partnership opportunities:
 - Unity of spirit in action
 - Efficiency
 - Collaboration
 - Trust
 - More interdenominational communications
 - Working together and breaking barriers
 - Partnership in ministry (share resources)
 - Shared ministry – better staffed, share volunteers
 - Establish joint initiatives

Sustainability / Financial Health

- 5 tables named goals to do with sustainability and financial health
 - Sustainability
 - Maintaining our strengths
 - Staying alive
 - Financial health
 - Survival of the church (and if not possible, what then?)
 - Keep what we have and add to it!

Other Goals

- “Taking ownership” and “Planned action” at one table
- “Outreach, community involvement” at one table
- “Traditional liturgy preserved” at one table
- “Continuation of music ministry” at one table