

ST. DAVID'S LONG RANGE PLANNING SURVEY SUMMARY

Dear People of St. David's,

Thirty individuals or households responded to our Parish Long Range Planning Survey. Given our average attendance of 53 and our number of "pledging units" (41), we think it is fair to say that this response represents the perceptions and opinions of about two-thirds of our core community. An impressive level of involvement.

As we worked our way through these detailed (twenty-one single spaced pages and about 14,600 words) reflections about St. David's, we were impressed both by our community's like-mindedness about certain core themes and our community's tremendous diversity and creativity of thought and vision.

This document represents a distillation of the survey responses. Its primary focus is the discovery and description of what our community holds in common. For those of us who want to explore the full range of our members' responses, the survey answers have been recorded in their entirety in a larger document which is being emailed along with this summary to all community members who have email technology. For those who don't, copies will be available on the table in the church foyer.

As we pondered and organized the survey data, we also considered what was shared in the three parish conversations which took place during March, attended by 57 parishioners. Included, too, were the hopes and prayers written on the "garments" which were a part of our Palm Sunday liturgy, those strips of cloth we laid down before the Messiah and which, stitched together, currently hang in our sanctuary.

What follows is a summary of our community's collective thoughts, reflections, opinions, dreams, and visions. Although the compilers have made observations about recurring themes and have included some ideas that have come up in conversations apart from the survey and the parish gatherings, none of these are conclusions. The conversation continues...

SURVEY SUMMARY

OUR FAITH COMMUNITY

(worship, faith formation, fellowship, educational programs)

1. What do you consider to be the most important aspect of the St. David's Christian community? St. David's is a welcoming, accepting, caring community, open-minded and inclusive. We engage in rich, relaxed and meaningful liturgy and worship. We provide loving support for one another. Our community is structured in a way that encourages openness and involvement. We have a relaxed atmosphere and leadership style. Our members live out a remarkable participation in service to the larger community. [To this the LRPC adds: We share a sense of humor and a tendency to not take ourselves too seriously. We are a community of idealists.]

2. If there was one thing you could change about the community as it currently exists within this parish, what would that be? What would that give you that you don't already have? Many of us yearn for more and better physical space for parish social and educational gatherings. Many of us long for more young families, youth and children. Many would like to

see intentional programming for children. Many express a longing for opportunities to get to know one another better and to deepen spiritually.

3. What was it about St. David's Church that attracted you? The music. The liturgy. The whole worship experience. The opportunity to engage in Episcopal liturgy in Brown County. The love, acceptance and concern shown by the church community. The emphasis on outreach. [To this the LRPC adds: The lack of factions.]

4. What keeps you at St. David's? Our sense of inclusive community, spirituality, commitment to one another. The quality of the music and worship. Our sharing in outreach projects. The sense that St. David's is a safe place emotionally.

5. Is there something that we could do that would attract more people to our parish? If so, what would that be? Improve the facilities. Intensify outreach. Offer more activities at church during the week including the hosting of "outside" community activities. Provide more options for youth. Make the church known through better marketing. The focus should not be on growth in numbers but on growth in our capacity to incarnate the love of God in the world.

6. Does St. David's have a particular role as a Christian community? If so, how would you describe that? To practice outreach – both as individuals and as the St. David's community. To provide a place where diversity is welcomed, love is practiced, reconciliation is valued, all informed by the example of Christ. To be a creative center – particularly musically. To nurture leadership. To represent the Episcopal tradition in Brown County. To find a way to include and reconcile people who hold divergent opinions and beliefs.

7. What do you consider to be the most important aspect of the worship at St. David's, as it currently exists? The creative liturgy. The variety and quality of music. Good preaching. Frequent communion that does not exclude anyone. The passion of the leaders and the community for meaningful worship that meets people where they are.

8. If you could change one thing about the experience of worship at St. David's, what would that be? Why? Redesign worship space with more seating that allows us to see one another. Shorten the announcement time. [Our community generated a wide variety of responses to this question. The LRPC encourages a reading of the responses in the full survey document.]

9. What do you consider to be the most important aspect of your lifelong growth in faith, character, service and fellowship (formation) and the Christian education opportunities/programs that are provided at St. David's? Opportunities for spiritual growth through workshops, sermons, Bible study, and discussion groups. [Our community generated a wide variety of responses to this question. The LRPC encourages a reading of the responses in the full survey document.]

10. Is there anything you would like to see changed or added concerning on-going formation and Christian education? More Bible study opportunities. Regularly scheduled and consistent Sunday school and forum programs.

SOME THOUGHTS about what seems to be emerging regarding our identity as a faith community:

- **We appear to have a strong consensus about who we are as a worshipping community.**
- **We wonder if a message is emerging that we need more physical space for the Narthex (foyer) and Sacristy.**
- **It sounds like we clearly desire to have a worshipping community that is rooted in the Episcopal tradition and yet offers opportunity for creativity, and contemporary expressions of our theology and tradition.**
- **It seems as though there is a yearning for opportunities to go deeper spiritually through Bible study and other opportunities for continued education.**
- **It sounds like there is some desire for growing our capacity to serve families with children, the dilemma seems to be whether or not we create the space and wait for them to come, or wait them to come before we create the space.**

MISSION, OUTREACH, & MINISTRY

11. What do you consider to be the most compelling need of our surrounding community?

The needs of the poor: soul care, food, shelter, education, health care, transportation, affordable housing, proper sewage treatment. Reconciliation in families. An emphasis on the need to help people develop skills that would move them out of poverty. [The LRPC observes an underlying desire to transform social systems that create poverty.]

12. If St. David's was to decide to do 'something and do it very well' in the area of outreach and ministry, what would it be? Develop a community arts program using our creative gifts. Provide educational opportunities for children. Provide space for community groups. Provide transportation. [Our community generated a wide variety of responses to this question. The LRPC encourages a reading of the responses in the full survey document.]

13. Does St. David's have the capacity to implement the program listed in #12 above?

Seven respondents answered "yes" and seven respondents answered "no" answers.

If not, what would we need to do in order to be able to respond?

Space, space, space – bigger and better facilities. Handicap accessible van & drivers. Involvement of most of our members.

14. If Jesus moved to Brown County in the year 2007, what do you think he would take up as his ministry?

He would provide for the needs of the poor in a variety of ways. He would teach us to love one another. [To this the LRPC adds the belief that Jesus would ask us to focus on the care and preservation of our planet. Our community generated a wide variety of responses to this question, most referring to the manifestations of God's realm on earth. The LRPC encourages a reading of the responses in the full survey document.]

SOME THOUGHTS about what seems to be emerging regarding our mission and ministry:

- **It seems like we are in agreement about a call to serve the poor and very diverse in our opinions about what form that service might take. But there seems to be consensus that**

our current physical space is not sufficient to providing a ‘corporate presence’ in the community.

- **We wonder if whatever physical space is created for out-reach should be designed to be a flexible, shape-shifting structure that could accommodate both community outreach needs and fellowship/gathering needs of the parish.**

STEWARDSHIP (time, talent, treasure, governance, leadership)

15. What do you consider to be the most challenging issue related to managing our financial, human, and physical resources? Our lack of adequate facilities to support our vision of ministry. Encouraging greater contribution of time, talents, and dollars. Our small numbers. Inadequate financial resources to finance a major building effort. [The LRPC guesses that, if the community had been aware of the Vicar’s intention to retire at the end of 2009 at the time of this survey, the challenge of making that transition and calling a new priest would probably have been listed in response to this question.]

16. Is there anything you would like to say to the Bishop’s Committee or the Long Range Planning Committee concerning the issue of Stewardship? The community affirms St. David’s strong volunteer ethic, the congregation’s generosity. [The LRPC notes and affirms one request for continued emphasis on growth in giving, including education about bequest.]

17. If money were not an issue, is there anything you would change at St. David’s? Bigger and better facilities. [Our community generated a wide variety of responses to this question. The LRPC encourages a reading of the many suggestions in the full survey document.]

SOME THOUGHTS about what seems to be emerging regarding our stewardship of time, talent, and treasure:

- **It seems that there is some concern that we may not have the physical and financial resources to achieve our vision of expanded facilities.**
 - **It appears that we place a high value on the gifts and talents manifested within our congregation, and on our generosity in applying them (and our treasure) to the work of representing Christ in Brown County.**
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NEXT STEPS:

Some of the recommendations the LRPC has gleaned from the community’s responses to the survey have already been acted upon. For example, Jonathan will begin keeping regular office hours at the church during the week. Other recommendations have been referred for consideration to our various committees, commissions, and groups. A brief survey is being developed that will be sent to families and individuals who were once active in the parish, but are no longer.

A gathering in the form of an after-church forum is planned for Sunday, May 20th, to talk about what we, as a community, prayerfully discern God has communicated to us so far in the

process. Prior to that gathering, please feel free to share with us ideas that may emerge while reading the contents of this summary.

In Christ,

The Long Range Planning Committee [LRPC]:

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