

Christ Church Vision

Who are We?

The answer to this question is two-fold: **(1)** We need an accurate assessment of who we are as a community of believers and **(2)** We need a clear statement of who we are as it speaks to our intentions for the future.

(1) Though seemingly rather homogeneous, we are a diverse community. We are comprised of rich and poor, young and old, and a growing element of ethnic diversity. More than this, many of us come from different church denominations and traditions, as well as different sized churches (which, according to Tim Keller, may have more effect on our expectations than denominational doctrines). We are not a “neighborhood church” for several reasons: **(a)** Our history as Georgia’s First Church identifies us beyond a single locale, **(b)** Our unique role as a liturgical church in the evangelical and reformed tradition of Anglicanism attracts people from various parts of the city, and **(c)** our recent relocation to the Thomas Square Neighborhood means that the vast majority of our members live elsewhere. Though we are not a “neighborhood church,” we are a church “for the neighborhood.” That is, we wish to be a positive and Gospel influence in the Thomas Square Neighborhood, both in word and deed.

(2) For many years we have struggled with who we are. Scott Sherman visited us in 2012, charging us to “be who you are.” Rick Munroe met with our Vestry and Council in 2014 and charge us to “decide who we are,” noting our unique identity as a biblically centered, liturgical parish. It is important that we determine clearly who we are, which will help us be clear about who we are not. This particular challenge falls most directly on the Rector, but without support from parish leadership, it will not feed our future fruitfulness in mission.

To that end, we would describe us with these words:

We are a Gospel church. The message of God’s saving work in Christ is the core of our identity.

We are a biblical church. The Gospel is found in Holy Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, and preaching and teaching the Bible is therefore at the center of our mission.

We are a liturgical church. Worship is our first priority. All that we are and do flows from worship. Isaiah 6 powerfully shows the prophet engaged in a vision of the Heavenly Hosts worshipping God. Such a vision of God in worship revealed Isaiah’s on unworthiness and sin. But from the altar an angel touches the prophet’s lips and he is cleansed. *Then* we read of Isaiah’s response to the call to mission, “Here I am, send me.” Mission flows out of worship. Liturgical worship, with written prayers, forms and cycles throughout the year, guards, guides and presents Christ as the focus of our worship as we celebrate the Gospel through both Word and Sacrament, equipping us and calling us into God’s mission in the world.

Therefore, **we are a missional church.** We recognize the need to reach out in several ways: first, to love and care for one another as the Body of Christ; second, as servants of and partners with our surrounding neighborhood and the city of Savannah; third, as Gospel-bearers throughout the world, specifically to those people and places we discern God may be calling us to go.

Where Are We Going?

Introduction

Throughout our Vision Team meetings, our conversations emphasized the need for “culture changes.” If we want to move forward in our vision, there are things within our very church culture that need to change. Culture change takes time, but we believe the Gospel will work such changes in

us and through us. Our hope is that you would be able to catch where such changes may take us, and together move forward in God's purposes.

First and foremost, we are dedicated to the proclamation of the Gospel. We believe the Good News of Jesus Christ in His life, death, resurrection, and return carries the power both to save and transform lives. This declaration, not demand, takes root in our lives which then conforms us to the image of Christ.

Gospel proclamation becomes the central purpose of the pulpit at CCA. As Anglicans, our liturgy also allures and woos us toward the Gospel in such a way that sends us into the world with a lively faith.

We will continue to develop a lively faith through intergenerational catechesis. We will continually pass on the Christian faith to each other. Catechesis is the continual process of sharing the historic faith revealed in Holy Scripture. When this sharing occurs among all generations, by the mercy of God the faith becomes sustainable. An emphasis will be placed on catechesis within the seasons of the Church, and lay leadership development in our community groups.

We will move towards an emphasis on pastoral care through Stephen Ministry. As a medium-size church with people that go through various issues in life, parish leaders need to foster pastoral care on a one-on-one level.

We hope to go further up and further in with the Gospel to where our people will take imaginative movement in mission. This will occur both with individuals in their various vocations, but also within the very life of our community. God has brought us to the Thomas Square community. As stated earlier, though not a neighborhood church, CCA will be a church for the neighborhood. The Whitefield Center will be a vital hub for a number of such ministries. It will be an ecumenical witness to the rest of the city in cooperation and partnership in mission. We will focus our attention towards the SCAD community including students, faculty, and staff. We will continue our ministry efforts in "The Lunch Place" to feed and build relationships to all community members. We will join and participate in the Thomas Square Neighborhood Association. As we grow both spiritually and numerically, we will explore possibilities of expansion both within our facilities and to plant Gospel-oriented Anglican churches. This may involve offering a fourth service.

Where we are going might be summarized in three main areas:

- 1) **Worship** – Strengthening our Gospel-oriented identity in the Anglican tradition.
- 2) **Catechesis** - Intergenerational faith formation on both Sunday morning and throughout the week.
- 3) **Pastoral Care** – A culture of passing on the faith and lay leadership development, particularly in community groups and Stephen Ministries.
- 4) **Mission** – A church for the Thomas Square Community, with attention to Whitefield, SCAD, The Lunch Place (Isaiah 58), and a representation with the Thomas Square Neighborhood Association. Growing facilities, planting churches.

Finally, we will go through a healthy and helpful transition of saying "goodbye" to our current rector, and welcoming a new rector. Details of this process are referenced in our time-line, and details will be discussed and implemented in 2018, with a view toward his retirement in 2020.

Conclusion

As we imagine where we are going together, a helpful way forward is through clarity, consistency, and follow-through. This affects our current ministries and will affect our future ministries. There may be ministries we would love to see flourish, but if the leadership of these ministries does not carry a sense of clarity with the vision of the church, consistency in the Gospel, and follow-through

within the community, then it will experience frustration and disappointment. Here is the Good News. Grace liberates us to be ok with both failure and loss. We may grieve, but we do not grieve like those who do not hope. We are not the Saviors of our church. As long as our hope is in the Gospel, the ship will not sink nor the sky fall upon us. Let us not fight nor flight, but put everything on the table for the Gospel. "For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake." (2 Corinthians 4:5)

How do we get there?

Principles of Ministry

1. Clarity in vision, consistency in vision communication, and follow through in vision logistics
2. Efficient use of lay leadership, with more responsibility resting on Vestry & Parish Council and fewer committees
3. Decision making power moves away from whole membership towards the staff and key lay leaders
4. Staff roles directly give care, oversight, and accountability to ministry leaders
5. Adopt a more shared and spread out responsibility for shepherding and pastoral care
6. Encourage healthy membership, as defined in our Membership Rite
7. Primary growth of the church comes through effective newcomer assimilation
8. Though we are not currently a neighborhood church, we are distinctly for the Thomas Square Neighborhood, therefore several key ministries will serve this neighborhood
9. We are also a larger party of the Anglican body so we reach to the regional diocese, national province, and the international Anglican Communion

General Steps Towards Reaching the Vision

Re-Organization of Church Governing

We envision streamlining and clarifying what the Vestry and Parish Council handle, with the goal of having a clearer organization of church leadership as a whole. Parish Council in particular will amend its membership requirements to better reflect and serve its role and responsibilities.

Ministry Development

We have identified four key ministries that serve our four areas of ministry (Worship, Catechesis, Pastoral Care, Mission) - Sunday Morning Formation (Preaching & Christian Education), Community Groups, Stephen Ministry, and The Whitefield Center. These key ministries are seen as our initial focuses for the next five years as we pursue a change of culture in our Parish. These key ministries will be led by staff members with lay leader support, in hopes of strengthening the quality and effectiveness of ministry.

Leadership Development

We envision a unified approach to leadership and its principles and language throughout the Parish, including all in roles of leadership. All who hold a position of leadership will receive regular training and shepherding as they not only lead, but develop and equip leaders within their ministries. Staff will play a direct role in the development of leadership.

Strengthening of Healthy Membership

We envision bringing clarity to what is expected of members at Christ Church Anglican, based on a renewed Membership Rite. We also desire to have a better idea of how members are functioning in the church. Newcomers will be assimilated with improve and increased intentionality and communication as they consider membership.

Communication and Administration

We envision an improvement in our parish communication and branding that stretches to every email, publication, and internet presence. We also will pursue a capital campaign for the acquisition of new property, and keep a close eye on our personnel needs. The efforts of discerning our church vision will continue as an active conversation.

Specific Steps Towards Reaching the Vision, *with corresponding principle numbers*

Re-Organization of Church Governing

- ~ The Vestry will handle Finance, Property, Holy Orders, Capital Campaign & Endowment, and Personnel and will re- assess the effectiveness and organization of how these matters operate. (1, 2, 3)
- ~ The Parish Council will handle Facilities Design, Worship, Missions, Communication, and Calendaring and will re- assess the effectiveness and organization of how these matters operate. (1, 2, 3)
- ~ Parish Council positions draw exclusively from ministry heads and staff ; therefore, should a Vestry or Parish Council member resign from the ministry as head, they also resign from the governing body. (2, 3)
- ~ Missions Committee will be comprised of global, regional, and local ministry heads, with the heads/chairpersons of ministry partners sitting on the committee. They will re-assess all mission we support moving forward. (1, 3, 8)
- ~ Every committee and sub-committee must have a succession plan (1)

Ministry Development

- ~ The main categories of our church's work fall into these four categories: Worship, Catechesis, Pastoral Care, and Missions. Each of these categories are put directly under a specific staff person. (1, 3, 4)
 - ~ We identify the following ministries as initial areas of emphasis for the next five years that have the greatest ability to enact and bolster cultural change within the Parish. (6, 8)
- Sunday Morning Formation (Preaching & Christian Education)

Worship, Catechesis

Community Groups

Worship, Catechesis, Pastoral Care, and Missions

Stephen Ministry

Pastoral Care

The Whitefield Center

Missions

- ~ These emphasized ministries are lead by staff members with lay leader support. (1, 3, 5)
- ~ Move Isaiah 58/The Lunch Place under the umbrella of the Missions Committee. (1, 5, 8)
- ~ Explore the start up of a campus ministry at SCAD. SCAD is a part of the Thomas Square Neighborhood, the most diverse student body in the area, and the largest student body in Savannah. (8)
- ~ Adopt the term "ministry partner" to refer to ministries that have a distinct connection to our church, but are also self-governing. This includes The Whitefield Center and Tour of Homes. These ministries are a priority for our parishioners and key locations for local ministry and missions. (1, 8)

Leadership Development

- ~ Pursue a unified approach to leadership, so that staff, Vestry, Council and Parish share the same values, principles, and language (1, 6)
- ~ Ministry heads not only manage the ministry, but serve as shepherds of their team members (1, 5)
- ~ All ministries have a "head" who answers directly to a staff person for the purposes of pastoral care, development, accountability, and communication. (1, 2, 4, 5)
- ~ Offer regular leadership training ministry heads and those seeking positions of leadership (2, 6)
- ~ Equip staff to effectively lead our focus ministries and the leaders of other ministries (3, 4)
- ~ Charge all focus ministries to prioritize leadership development within the ministry (1, 2, 4, 5)
- ~ Marc teaches on the Ten Principles of Leadership (1)

Strengthening of Healthy Membership

- ~ Review and amend as needed our church's Membership Rite. (1, 6, 7)
- ~ Make our membership rite and expectations more public, raising the bar for church membership. (1, 6)
- ~ Develop detailed methods of newcomer tracking and membership tracking. This becomes a standing agenda item at Parish Council. (1, 6, 7, 8)
- ~ Pursue a more accurate membership roster, including active member/active non-member/inactive member lists. (1, 5, 6)
- ~ Offer regular catechesis on church membership. (1, 6, 7)

Communication and Administration

- ~ Communication is clear, professional, and timely in all areas of the church (1, 2, 7)
- ~ All publications (newsletter, bulletin), communication (emails, mailings), and website to be updated and refined (unified branding) with the goal of being more accessible to a variety of readers (1, 7)
- ~ Pursue property development and purchases that serve our ministry and staffing needs, including a capital campaign (8)
- ~ Continue to strategically develop the vision for the church (1)