

Our Vision for Our Future

A 5 year Strategic Plan 2018-2022

In May 2012, our church family held an all-member meeting in which several discussion groups covered key questions regarding ideas and concerns for St. Augustine's future. In October 2017, we held another series of discussions and focus groups to update our plan. Based upon sound planning we have entered into a closer relationship with the URI community. We have stabilized our financial situation. We have grown to love the progressive participation of our clergy team and our retired clergy, and we look forward to expanding our ministry programs.

The following are the core values and common threads that came out of these planning sessions and subsequent review by the Bishop's Committee:

- Our services will reflect the contemporary, informal, flexible style of our post and beam building.
- We welcome all who enter our doors who are seeking a close relationship with Christ.
- We are concerned about a "graying" parish. We want to provide more services to young people and families. We know that to attract more young adults, we need to be open to change in our services – such as having an evening service – and to renew our efforts in trying new things.
- We will engage the URI community through our campus ministry. This means having an active University Chaplain on our staff who will carry on with our outreach programs to our immediate neighbors, the URI students, professors, and staff. With our chaplain we will go to them – and the campus is just next door!
- We will share worship and activities with our neighboring Kingston churches around the campus, and collaborate on new programs and outreach activities. In the academic spirit, we are open to research and experimentation.
- We will continue our many team ministries, realizing that our personal connections can make the most impact – both with our families' and friends' spiritual needs and with new growth as we bring these people into our church home.
- We anticipate a continuing strong partnership between clergy and parishioners. We hope to continue worship services and education programs that provide inspiring, sometimes challenging (and humorous!) discussions on a variety of topics involving local, national, and world events.
- Last, but certainly not least, we will remember to care for one another.

We hope that with our welcoming, flexible, caring spirit and openness to change, we will grow our parish and serve more of the community.

To grow and prosper we will undertake the following strategic programs in the near term or next two years:

1) Provide adequate parking and lighting

Adequate parking is a major issue for full utilization of our facilities. The Church has about 10 off-street spaces for use during the week day and relies on on-street parking on Lower College Road and off-street parking at the daycare (across Lower College Road) and on Bayberry Road for Sunday services. During the week, the University of Rhode Island (URI) uses the on-street spaces for commuters, and we are not authorized to use the daycare parking nor the URI Bayberry Road spaces during the week days. This problem will become further exacerbated by the project that URI is planning in 2018 which will eliminate on-street parking along Lower College Road so that we will only have parking at the daycare on Bayberry Road for Sunday services. The lack of adequate lighting for nighttime activities was also a concern.

Implementation:

- ☐ Build an off-street parking lot on SW corner of Church property with access to Lower College Road and improve other parking areas on Church property to provide on-site parking for 25-30 cars.
- ☐ Work with URI, their engineer, and other professionals on the design. Retain the character of the garden.
- ☐ Confirm and formalize a shared parking arrangement with URI (first formalized in 1982) at the international center and daycare, on Bayberry Road (and possibly on Lower College Road) (providing an additional 35-45 spaces for available parking).
- ☐ Provide adequate walkways and lighting to the church from all nearby parking areas. Provide landscape lighting for the garden and various outdoor activity areas.

Schedule - completion by 2018.

Measurable goal – safer and user-friendly parking lots, lighting, walkways. Increased use of church facilities during the week and evenings.

Funding – Capital Fund, parking spaces in church lot could be rented to students during week

2) Provide for greater church building and garden use by the community

This idea ties into our desire to become a bigger part of the campus community and our desire to gain membership. Canterbury Hall could be used for URI speaker events hosted by St. A's or by our URI student group (s). We may begin to forge relationships with faculty members, which is something St. A's did in the past. Many faculty members brought their families to St. A's. Another idea is to promote the use of the labyrinth. This idea will attract students and others to explore their spirituality in other ways. Opening our doors during the day, welcoming anyone to use our church as a place of quiet

contemplation or prayer should be further explored and implemented if at all possible. There was a concern with safety and security of office staff that will need to be explored.

Implementation:

- ❑ Repair, reroof garage, provide new garage doors and better use of interior space to accommodate storage and provide a setting for outdoor events. Build patio/terrace west of garage with fire pit and pergola against garage.

Schedule – 2018-2020

Measurable goal – better outdoor space for events connected with Canterbury Hall, more student/parish activities

Funding – capital fund, grant-funding (Potter Fund), gifts and other donations. Student help

- ❑ Build new storage cupboards in Chapel Hall and repaint.
- ❑ Install new windows in Canterbury Hall to replace those that are clouded and in need of replacement.

Schedule – 2018-2020

Measurable goal – Refreshed and better organized facility for student/ parish activities

Funding – capital fund, grant-funding (Potter Fund and others), student help

- ❑ Install new windows in Vicarage to replace those that are clouded and in need of replacement.
- ❑ Upgrade kitchen and second floor bathroom.

Schedule – 2018

Measurable goal – upgraded housing for clergy staff or rental

Funding – capital fund, gifts, and other donations. Diocese funding

3) Expand liturgy/programs

First, there has been a continuing discussion of whether to combine services or keep two. Recently the parish recommended keeping two Sunday services at 8 and 10am. This not only satisfies current needs but also factors into solutions for adequate parking. There was also interest to have an evening service from time to time and we will explore this opportunity. Evening services centered on music and a

simple program may also be student-oriented and thereby more attractive to our URI community of students and faculty.

Music has a passionate following and is seen as a major attraction. Many who have been involved in planning discussions have expressed the thought that students will be more attracted to a service with music that is inspiring and pleasing to them. Rod Luther (our music director) is interested in Spiritual music, which seems to get church-goer's toes tapping when he plays it. Others expressed interest in contemporary or folk music.

Adult education classes should be included in the "tween" service time slot (9:00-10:00am). These programs should be connected to current issues and be relevant to 21st century life. Student-led services and alternative spirituality will be explored and encouraged.

Both of these ideas are aimed at attracting students, but have the benefit of freshening up how we do things from time to time for the regular members. Alternative spirituality could include discussions on methods of meditation and prayer, or periodically having seminars on using the labyrinth.

Implementation:

- ❑ Declare 2018 to be the year of music and alternative service exploration.
- ❑ Form a committee to facilitate music exploration.
- ❑ In 2018 explore contemporary, Spiritual, and other music at our services. Periodically poll the congregation. Make sure of copyrights, etc. before using music that is not in the hymnal. Go to other churches and see what they are doing. Find a style or combination that moves us.

Schedule – completion by 2019

Measurable goal – increased attendance with more diversity and younger age groups

- ❑ Adult Education- explore a *vibrant* education program. Decide who will lead? How often? Topics?

Schedule- start classes in the spring

Measurable goal – attendance at classes

4) Gain greater sustainability

As an older church population, we must gain membership to sustain the St. A's community. Not only must we be clever and cost-conscious with our annual budgets, but we must seek ways in which to be relevant in the 21st century. Increasing our activism involving social issues along with URI and the greater community could lead to wider recognition and return participation with our ministries. Greater community-side activism brought more people –young and old- to the church in the past (Vietnam war era under Father Hall). We will explore and implement other ideas for increasing

membership including building upon our popular Feed-a-Friend dinners by adding Feed-a-Family and Feed-a-Faculty. We will outreach to other churches and community groups to form joint ministries.

There has been a repeated voicing by some church members of impending burnout. Others are not concerned and wish to forge ahead with new and exciting programs. Most members are actively involved in a number of volunteer activities for the church. There over 2 dozen ministries at St Augustine's, most staffed by volunteers! We will find a way to enable people to ask for and get help when it is needed, or to pass on duties to new volunteers.

Implementation:

- Direct and equip a to-be-formed committee to engage outside groups – families, URI faculty, URI Students – this could be in conjunction with the Campus Ministry or a separate program. ***The program should involve creative activism in current issues and events.***

Schedule – 2018 and 2019

Measurable goal – increased attendance and activity.

5) Retain the Clergy Team, the Campus Ministry, and our Team Ministries

Our clergy team – the vicar and the campus chaplain - is important to continue. We will also encourage our retired clergy (and newly retired clergy from elsewhere) to make St Augustine's their home. The retired clergy enrich our lives enormously. The hiring of a new vicar will be contingent upon the acceptance of this concept. We also wish to add interns/postulates from local seminaries, specifically for the campus ministry program. We will also establish office hours during the week to visit with the vicar.

The Campus Ministry is a key program of St. Augustine's and is overwhelmingly supported by the parish, The Feed- a-Friend, breads for grad students, to-go activities, etc. will be continued and they will be expanded if that is appropriate. Ideas emerging for new activities including social activism and alternative spirituality will be enthusiastically explored and implemented if determined appropriate. Although Burnout is a constant danger, we will continue with the ever rewarding Team ministries that we have embarked upon as individuals or as collective volunteers. These constantly evolving activities are so important to who we are.

Implementation:

- ❑ Initiate recruitment of a new Vicar and Campus Chaplain due to the retirement of our existing clergy in 2019. Be open to new ideas and experimentation with shared programs at other churches. Strive for a successful transition period in which our retiring clergy mentors their successors, enabling continuity and progress with our programs and this plan.
- ❑ Make teaming with retired ministers a part of the job description
- ❑ Make sustaining both campus and team ministries an important criterion for employment

- ☐ Continue to recruit retired clergy

Schedule – when search begins for new vicar. Ongoing for retired clergy (postulates too?)

Measurable goal – having a pool of clergy to draw from

- Expand Campus Ministry – Form a committee to explore social activism activities on campus, which can inform parishioners and perhaps inspire greater awareness of current events and creative solutions. Take advantage of our current URI Chaplain’s experience and work with her on the possibly mentoring of a new chaplain to be her successor.

Schedule –2018-2019

Measurable goal – increased value of Campus Ministry to students and parishioners alike by bridging the gap between both groups. Increased knowledge on campus of St. Augustine’s and increased interest in St Augustine’s and attendance at church activities

Long term (3-5) year plan goals:

- Grow the campus ministry, draw URI to St Augustine’s and connect St Augustine’s to URI, engage the URI students and faculty/staff on all levels – social, creative, social justice, environmental, recreational, food and health, spiritual. Remember that which was loudly voiced at our community meetings: “The URI chaplaincy is St. Augustine’s; we are the URI chaplaincy.”
- ☐ Sustain the team ministries and expand into new opportunities as they present themselves.
- ☐ Recruit URI students and faculty/staff and their families for membership as well as community members and their families.
- ☐ Maintain and improve the church and garden facilities for greater enjoyment, accessibility, and sustainability. Be creative about access, including elevator access.
- ☐ Allow our clergy to dream and flourish in the campus environment in which we are located. Continue to remain open to new ideas and Experiment!

What we seek in our clergy



At our parish meetings, we discussed the characteristics we would like to see in our clergy. We are blessed with a clergy team of a vicar and a URI chaplain who are a team and who partner with and challenge us to implement our vision. Our vicar and chaplain have also welcomed a cadre of retired clergy to St. Augustine's. They also challenge us. We are convinced that this combination of multiple assets in a clergy team is our base for the future. In 2019, our vicar, David Dobbins, and Jan Grinnell, our URI chaplain, will be retiring. We have begun the process of planning for the future with this strategic plan and we are defining the clergy team that we will select to replace David and Jan. Going forward our clergy team will continue to uphold and promote a strong partnership with the laity, they will:

- encourage the ongoing development of our ministries
- be grounded in Scripture,
- be good speakers, storytellers, and be able to connect with young adults as well as older parishioners
- relate scripture to current events.
- be open to and supportive of change and be willing to experiment
- provide pastoral care to all of our parishioners
- support and promote a team approach with retired clergy and deacons
- have a sense of humor