

St. James-by-the-Sea Episcopal Church

## The Next Steps Forward

...starting to fulfill the Mission Action Plan 2018

The meetings of the congregation on June 26, 2018, concluded with lively and constructive small-group discussions. These involved around 100 members of the parish and elicited over 130 different suggestions in written comments. This is what we said.

### WE SUPPORT EXISTING PROGRAMS AND ASPIRE TO CREATE MORE PROGRAMS

Many comments draw attention to current programs, such as Cursillio, the Angel Tree Ministry, and the Interfaith Shelter. But we made it clear in our comments that we should be doing more. Specifically, we want

● **more programs that speak to the needs of specific groups** within the congregation, such as

- newcomers, (this was mentioned by 5 different members)
- the men of St. James
- seniors
- young adults
- those in their twenties to forties
- young families
- grandparents
- intergenerational gatherings
- singles, divorced, and other members who may feel isolated
- those coping with mental illness problems

● **more musical programs** such as

- a folk mass
- a children's choir
- an opera group

These comments are reminders to the Vestry to continue its support of existing programs in ways that strengthen them and to identify centers of shared interest that may need support to coalesce in new programs. Yet, the creation of new programs and vitality of established groups is typically the work of the individuals and groups from the congregation with a shared interest who take the initiative.

☛ ***Which of these programs would you like to help establish or join?***

### WE WANT TO PROVIDE STRONGER SUPPORT FOR EXISTING PROGRAMS

We underscored in our comments that in the next year St. James should strive to strengthen programs through better communication and by flexibility that accommodates the needs of an increasingly varied membership. Suggested improvements include

● **More flexible scheduling** to meet the needs of different members, such as

- Eucharistic services (mass) for those who cannot attend on Sunday mornings (adding Saturday and evening services)
- social and outreach programs for those who work during the week

- **Better communications** including
  - updating our website
  - creating newcomers' and children's web pages
  - improving our advertising (for example, in the *La Jolla Light*, and for special events like Evensong)
- **Improved stewardship** that includes
  - year-round stewardship
  - planned giving programs

The major responsibility for meeting these expectations, which can be accomplished in the next year, will fall on the clergy, staff, and Vestry.

## **WE WANT TO UNDERTAKE NEW INITIATIVES TO ENGAGE OUR NEIGHBORS**

A recurring theme in our comments is a call for new initiatives to reach out to our neighbors, including

- partnering with the UCSD campus ministry (This was the second most commonly mentioned suggestion, with 13 comments.)
- working more closely with Bishops School
- evangelism (Mark 15:16, "Go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every living creature.")

These are initiatives for long-term commitments that we can begin in the coming year. They will call for collaboration among our parish leaders, individual interested parishioners, and partnering institutions.

☛ ***Will you step forward as a volunteer to help move these undertakings forward?***

## **WE WANT TO MAKE ALL PARTS OF OUR CHURCH BUILDINGS ACCESSIBLE TO ALL**

Our most common concern is improved building access, particularly for those with limited mobility. Fourteen members mentioned improving access to all levels of the church buildings with either an elevator or ramps. Others mentioned specific problems such as access to the communion rail.

We may want to make this one of our highest long-term goals, but it is likely to be a complicated and expensive multi-year undertaking. Governmental regulations may not permit us to address these needed improvements one at a time and a comprehensive reform may require a substantial financial outlay that is beyond the parish's normal annual income.

☛ ***Are you prepared to pitch in with a capital campaign to raise the funds that will at last address this worthwhile objective?***