



Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church

Waretown, NJ

Strategic Plan on Return to Viability

February 11, 2020

Objective. To become financially viable in order to maintain all ministries and employ a full time dedicated Rector.

Our Vision. Over the course of the next three years, the size of the Saint Stephen's congregation will have grown in both numbers and involvement to a point which provides self-efficiency and the opportunity to employ a dedicated Rector.

Strategy. Saint Stephen's will pursue a three year plan which involves prayer, reduces operating costs, and embraces what God has placed around us. We will strive to improve fellowship, stewardship, communications, ministries and community outreach to grow the size of the congregation. Growth of the congregation will increase pledge income and our volunteer base. With commitment and God's help, we will return to viability.

Tactics.

1. **Prayer.** We pray for God's guidance and blessing to help us grow our church during worship services and at parish gatherings.
2. **Affiliation.** In order to reduce costs during this three-year regrowth period, we pursue a three-year affiliation with Holy Spirit of Tuckerton which involves:
 - A. A shared Priest-in-Charge; and
 - B. Both 8:00 and 10:00 Sunday Worship Services are provided at St. Stephen's; and
 - C. The costs of the Priest-in-Charge is equitably shared by each church; and
 - D. A Deacon or Permanent Supply Priest is retained to provide worship services at both churches; and
 - E. Special Services and programs requiring clergy can be inter-parish services at a location agreed upon by the Vestries; and
 - F. The Priest-in-Charge will be tasked with pastoral care duties for both churches; and
 - G. The selection of the Priest-in-Charge must be agreed upon by both churches with a commitment of three years; and
 - H. Each church retains governance and financial autonomy; and
 - I. A Memorandum of Understanding would be agreed to by both churches and approved by the Bishop.
3. **Select Engaged Clergy.** Recognizing that the relationship between our spiritual leadership and lay people is critical to growth, St. Stephen's must select clergy who recognize the importance of connecting with people. There will be a Discernment Committee appointed to canvas and recommend selection of clergy. The Vestry and Discernment Committee will jointly come to formulate a profile of characteristics desired. Clergy engaged in fellowship, stewardship, and in our ministries & community outreach will result in increased membership.
4. **Communication.** Saint Stephen's must have engaging communications. Communications will include a monthly newsletter, email, the Saint Stephen's street sign, printed media, verbal announcements, our website and expansion of the use of social media. There shall be a communications plan developed in each of the three years in this plan. We seek to enhance the connections between our ministries; to raise up new ministry volunteers and leaders and to build a culture of engaged laity ready to take place in the governance of the Church.
5. **Ministries & Outreach.** Consideration will be given to each ministry and outreach to determine what can be done within it to promote the objectives in this plan.
6. **Sunday School.** Growing churches help younger generations begin their spiritual journey by developing a foundation of faith. The Sunday School is another vehicle for growth and outreach.