

**St. George's Strategic Visioning Team (GeoStrat)**  
**Wednesday, December 07, 2005, St. George's Chapel**

**Minutes to Meeting #1**

*The mandate of GeoStrat is to investigate and consider all options, weigh the economics, and create a written strategic plan for St. George's, which will offer the best course of action to ensure the ongoing mission and ministry of our church family.*

**Present:** Cedric Cobb (Chair), Ann Cumyn, Shan Evans, Richard Howarth (MLT Liaison), and Bob Jackson

**Regrets:** John Busby (Executive Secretary), and Gerry Zampini.

*Note: Casey Stilwell is our designated prayer partner. She will be holding the team in prayer, but not attending meetings.*

**Action Items in Bold.**

**7:31 PM:**

- (1) The meeting began with prayer.
- (2) Cedric welcomed and introduced group members and gave a few opening remarks.
- (3) Cedric stated that he saw the formation of GeoStrat as a positive initiative, one that would help St. George's answer God's call to be the church in these changing times. He said he would like to add one more member to the team.
- (4) Background: Cedric went over the GeoStrat document that was developed by the Ministry Liaison Team (MLT) and sent out to the parish the week of November 20<sup>th</sup>. The mandate of the team was spelled out (*see mission statement above*). Cedric emphasized the importance of keeping lines of communication open between the team and parishioners, and that GeoStrat would act as a steering committee using project managers to do research and fact-finding.
- (5) Current Situation: the background to the current situation facing St. George's was discussed, that is: *dwindling financial resources; high costs for the repair and maintenance of our church buildings; a slow decline in parish membership and volunteers; and the expectation of a large outlay for a new church roof.*
  - a) **Ann** made the comment that the declining members could be divided into: 1) people who have died; 2) people who have transferred out of the province; and 3) people who have left St. George's. We couldn't do much about the first two groups, but we could do something about the last group.
  - b) **Richard** spoke to the issue of maintenance. He said much of the maintenance done by the MLT over the past few year

was in response to emergencies and not preventative. This concerned him.

- c) **Bob** raised the question of whether or not there was a connection between our finances and the demographics of our area. He notices that the parish is aging and there are not as many babies present as there used to be. He stressed the importance of gathering current population statistics.

(7) Being Positive: **Ann** stated that it is important for GeoStrat to focus on the positive as we explore the possibilities; that is, what is best for the people of the parish of St. George's given our particular circumstance? As the process moves forward, it would be desirable if the community as a whole began to see the virtues of a particular solution as it emerges, and not that it is being forced into anything. This was endorsed by all team members present.

(8) Budgeting Process: The team discussed how the parish budget was determined. It was stated that as part of our budgeting process we should be asking the question, "What are our maintenance and operational needs and what minimum membership do we need to support this?" Then we could look at what was essential, what was not so essential, and what we could do without. The two wardens present said that the MLT was doing just that with our current budgeting process, and wondering how much was left to do without.

(8) Discussion on "what does it mean to be a church in our current situation?"

- a) Sociological: the group talked about the sociological pressures that impacted on the church, its members, and other organizations.
- b) Marketing: it was noted that the church in general does not do a good job of advertising itself. Speaking to that point, the question was raised as to whether St. George's had followed up on the last visioning process, and specifically on the responses to what parishioners valued as being an important part of their life at St. George's.
- c) Window of Opportunity: weddings and baptisms were talked about as valuable opportunities for church outreach and evangelism. The suggestion was made to send a card on the anniversary of someone's baptism or wedding, and invite them back to the church.
- d) Cooperation between Churches: It was suggested that there is a need for more cooperation between Anglican churches in our area. Several ideas were suggested including rotating 8 a.m. services between churches, or having area priests preach at other churches on a rotating basis.
- e) The St. George's Spirit: It was generally agreed that St. George's is a great community, that it is unique and has much to offer and this should not be lost as part of the process. As we proceed, it will be important to keep sight of this fact.

f) Experts: it's important to seek advice and input from people within our parish who could lend their expertise.

(9) Action Items: our general discussion lead us to develop the following action items for the next meeting:

**Cedric will have Donna Howarth email the parish list to team members.  
Cedric will ask Donna to compile statistics of where people lived who were baptized or married at St. George's over the last three years.  
Cedric to contact Karin Van Dyke to help with the Power Point presentation for Vestry.**

**Ann will use the parish list to come up with statistics on where people live who come to St. George's.  
Ann will edit "Schedule B", changing it to "*Ideas for examination*", adding to the list, and stressing the positive aspects of the process.**

**Richard will develop a picture of the parish and its giving, indicating what age groups we have and what their pattern of giving is.**

(7) **Next Meetings:** at its next two meeting, the team will focus on its presentation to Vestry on February 19<sup>th</sup> .

**Wednesday, January, 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m., in the Chapel.**

**Wednesday, February 1<sup>st</sup> at 7:30 p.m., in the Chapel.**

**9:01 PM:** Meeting ended with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Cedric Cobb