

**26 April 2014 St. Philip Anglican Church Congregational Meeting
Compilation of Group Discussions**

What one thing do I most appreciate about St Philip?

Group 1

Acceptance

Natural, no hype, push family community

liturgy of BAS vs common prayer

Place of flow of the Spirit

Sense of belonging/being yourself/acceptance/no hype/not being forced into things

Welcoming/youth groups/sense of community

Sense of participation in worship

intergenerational nature of congregation/kids free to be themselves

Offer the different "styles" of service even to less attended

Group 2

Inclusiveness, openness, Christ centred

Children's ministry

Inclusive environment whose foundation is Christ + exuberance of the youth - not just some

Mix of ages, young and old, the community of "life"

Feeling of being committed to God through the people of St Philips - missed it when not here

Caring, loving wonderful minster - my church is my family

Intergenerational community of faith - family

Group 3

Friendly people

Spiritual Teaching

Community and family

Vibrant faith-based, all ages

Faithfulness

Openness to differences

Don't need to earn your right to be here

Group 4

St P. opens up my heart and makes my day go so much better; sermons.

A "yes" community. Open hearts

Space, both physical and psychological/spiritual/the presence of which C. Page influences and provides

Openness, sermons, people, community, comforted by people

Commitment to being Christ to others. Tangible living of Christian faith outside our walls.

Freedom for children

Relationships; youth being able to connect, longevity of those connections with kids and their families

Steering course in between fundamentalism and liberalism

Group 5

Variety of music

Community of people; Christopher's leadership

Loving gentleness that is nurtured

Contemplative prayer

Multi-generational - all age groups contribute to the life of the church

Inclusive community - warmth to diversity of people

Christopher and his interpretation of readings, his guidance to our spiritual lives

Gentle, loving, wise leadership

The love and support we offer each other e.g. prayer, meals, listening to, etc.

Gentle, non-judgemental community

Humour (spontaneous)

Group 6

Good place for families

Bible study, home groups, fellowship

Extended family

Welcomed and included

9:15 worship

Responses received from those unable to attend on saturday, grouped together below.

Teaching/message, informality, sense of belonging, acceptance and welcome, vibrancy, a place of peace, rest and healing. Feel like a rebel by going to church!

Atmosphere of welcoming acceptance.

The variation in services from silence to interactive music.

Youth and family programs and occasions

But most of all the theological content - as in the sermons.

Welcoming and open.

It isn't what you get out of something that is important, but what you bring to it
St P has something for everyone - contemplatives, and those who are not drawn to silence; joiners, and those who like to stay on the periphery....music....quiet vs. boisterous family, etc

Leadership of the church - sermons - it is something we should never take for granted

Inclusiveness

Acceptance

Sharing love of God

What dilemmas do I believe we face in our current life as a parish?

Group 1

Music

Financial

Not a sustainable parish - vulnerable to closing from Diocese

How do we make the decisions to get us into this situation?

concerns about being asked for more

look at sources of income other than monthly giving

Kind of decision making process/long term effect

Lead by Spirit /NOT \$ is bottom line/God will supply

Shift focus from \$ to what we get for \$

Group 2

financial concerns

few people doing a lot of the work due to other commitments of young families

reduction in volunteerism as a value in our society

vision - lack of - need to establish

physical plant

fiscal responsibility vs commitment to salaried staff

the size of the congregation vis a vis self-sustainability

desire to do "big church" but we don't quite have "big church" resources

we are a church that is somehow on the tipping point - not small yet not large

Group 3

Budget - how to balance

Discern what we most value

Poor attendance across all services

Anglican community in decline
Significant change will continue to occur
Youth group - how to prioritize and vitalize

Group 4

Frustration that we are under the eye of Diocese because we cannot meet our financial obligation.

St Mary's journey produced an insecurity that we may not have overcome (baby bats in cave analogy)

Further to previous; knowing that you could lose it may have made people detach, de-invest.

Diocese breathing down our necks makes the financial a worry it wouldn't be otherwise. Being accountable to another force removes autonomy to solve.

What is our purpose? St P. does a great job of encouraging inner life, how does it actively engage with our world?

Ditto. Aware of a lot of people who aren't coming. Why? How well are we going out to make disciples...to make ourselves felt as a presence and light to the world?

A need for new small groups, established groups are closed and exclusive

Group 5

Time - constraints placed on us by what is happening within the city - many things happening at any given time

Financials - budgeting for building - we need to set aside money for upkeep of building and planning

Church isn't #1 priority because of all that is available to do on Sundays

11 service - strengthening the 11 to help it flourish

Financials - a concern that we are running a deficit budget

Group 6

The established Anglican

Finances

Follow-through on some of our "talk" organization and communication

Budget - balancing needs and wants and living within our means

Responses received from those unable to attend on saturday, grouped together below

Getting our countercultural message of Love, Hope, Peace, Joy and Freedom out to the hungry/thirsty world.

Breaking down old biases against church (boring, judgement, hypocrisy, rules that limit, 'square' etc. and Financial situation.

More visibility of efforts in the community with the poor, etc

Less people attend church than in the past, thus less financial income and less people participate.

Many people overcommitted or work, thus not able to volunteer

The monetary issue is a concern and I do not have a solution. We increased our giving last month but not enough for impact I am sure. Since one supports charities and not-for-profits separately from the church - and there is such a need - it makes for difficult decisions.

Sustainability. How to keep the way of worshipping and being together in community without becoming enslaved by the corporate way of doing things.

Demographics of the parishioners – we have a strong children’s program and a lot of young families, but it is this same group that is short on both time resources and financial resources. As a result it appears that the same relatively small group of people are the ones who typically do most of the ‘volunteer’ type work in our church. In addition, we seem to lose youth when they reach a certain age. This is also a group who could potentially be a resource for ‘volunteer’ type roles.

Listening to God’s will for our parish

3 core values

Group 1

Inclusive church/importance of community
Faith community - belief in God
Spiritual home

More fully embody these core values already
Rob and activities he brings

Group 2

Christ centred
inclusive/intergenerational faith community
strong connections within our St Philip community and outreach to the wider community (local, world)
expression of the arts (music, other fine arts)
connection to everyday life and the secular world - birthday bag, Estevan carol singing, Jazz vespers, bluegrass mass

Group 3

Faithfulness
Love/caring

Leadership/commitment
Stewardship
Openness/Diversity/Flexibility
Embrace Tradition

Group 4

Relationships
Mission
Openness
(autonomy i.e. Integrity and inclusiveness were important mentions although not fitting in with 3

Group 5

Transparency
Inclusiveness (includes diversity and loving) and wisdom (seeking and opening to God

Group 6

God is one
Love-acceptance- God first/Prayer
All are welcome - all are loved, our borders do not stop at the property line

Responses received from those unable to attend on Saturday, grouped together below

Love, welcome to all, transformation.

Fruits of the Spirit.

Exemplifying and engaging with the values of Christianity.
Welcoming all people in the spirit of the message Christopher always says before communion "It is Jesus who invites you".
Supporting each other in community.

Community
Faithfulness - to God, to others, to St P.
Inclusiveness

Listen
Love
Discipleship

d. what might we do to help us more fully embody these core values?

Group 1

Group 2

Remember the core values when making major decisions as a parish
Acknowledge the core values **live them**, discuss them

Group 3

Increased attendance
Build upon who is already here: more people/more involvement
Living these values in daily life - "salt" evangelize
Communicate a welcome family environment
More biblical focus - retain scriptural values

Group 4

This question needs its own day (everyone commented that that is probably why it has not been answered by others)
and/or it will be answered during the discussion of the main question.

Group 5

Loving - love the Lord with all your heart, and soul and love your neighbour as yourself: tangible expressions of love
Transparency - council needs to communicate more clearly with parish - involve parish more in decisions
Inclusiveness - include communication board for involvement in all areas of parish life
Wisdom - more quiet time for reflection within service

Group 6

Creative look at what is needed and awareness of needs so that people can respond

Responses received from those unable to attend on Saturday, grouped together below

Pray, disciple, and take action

Ensure people feel connected - home groups/bible studies or other opportunities to get to know people at more than a 'superficial' level

Worship, Fellowship, Education times together to reinforce our values

What might we do to move us towards being a more truly sustainable parish?

Group 1

Being aware of situation/considering it before crisis standing

Sharing of statistics

Diverse way of people becoming part of community - variety of paths of initiation to congregation

Should we begin doing the fundraising we haven't traditionally done because we are worship focused

Strategies to encourage various age groups

Important to keep young families involved

Use bequest moneys for ministry given for use

Diocese definition of sustainability

Craft fair to raise \$ for missions, freeing up \$ to cover other costs

People available talking to visitors

Huge need for spirituality/intentionality/spirituality

People searching: come explore 21st C Anglican

What is happening in Oak Bay can we be a presence? community garage sales/spiritual column in OB news/shaw cable

Effort for \$ - is it worth it?

Group 2

Two things to consider:

Stewardship

"Pruning" just as an arborist prunes certain branches of a tree in order to sustain and enhance its growth, if we as a church must consider pruning we should do so only in a way that will sustain and enhance growth

Options/considerations

Accept the financial reality and become, in a sense, a "smallish church", only doing what can be sustained financially - not with a sense of failure but with a joy - being a small, bright beacon of Christian faith consistently strong in the community

Join with another local church (St Matthias?), one building, two priests, shared administrative and program staff, multiple services and program offerings

Increase the size of the 11:15 congregation through some tweaking of that service (music, children's program, other ideas?)

Improve/re-build programming for youth and young adults. some concern about losing this age group - not many teens, young adults these days. Another opinion - as long as the youth and young adults have had a good grounding in their childhood it is OK (natural) for them to leave the church for a time - they will still make good choices.

Social enterprise? Feasible at the parish level? Maybe more realistic at Diocesan level.

Group 3

Consolidate Christian communities

More fully engage with other communities

Aboriginal.Neighbourhoods

Youth

Respect and develop leadership - more commitment from members taking into account natural ebbs and flows

Move to a newer/different model of church to meet changing needs of society

What does truly sustainable mean?

.money?

.programs?

.infrastructure?

.numbers?

.spiritual life?

More than a dollar figure. Redefine what sustainable means, inform the Diocese, that it is more than a dollar figure. Approximately 2-3 year outlook?

Trust and willing to take risk

Get rid of short-term paranoia, don't obsess about the future, focus on thankfulness.

Recognize the struggle between pastoral and business models. Additudinal changes

Everyone has a voice, need to recognize differences of opinion.

"PR Campaign" we know that we're sustainable. Need to convince others.

Youth - look at more ways to bring in families. Also young adults - more ties with

UVic/Camosun?

Fear of losing out with young people

Also need to keep focus on elders - also provide great resources to Parish.

Community connections - welcoming/hospitality need to be foremost in our focus.

How does God call us? Ask frequently!

Need to remember we are called to be stewards. Can't be looking for a "way out".

No one suggested that staff/programs need to be cut back.

Group 4

(we did indeed answer question d in considering this question with a practical vision)

We believe these are consistent with the Grace Cycle Christopher described.

These ideas are not just about meeting our own needs but the needs of others as well.

* **Development of 11:15 service** . Build it up according to the traditions and ethic of the service. Enrich it, build it up. Make it more attractive as a traditional service, make the tradition really rich. Introduce BAS? (There was talk of changing it to make it "more vibrant" ie more popular music etc. but there was disagreement because we would be saying "your way of doing church is not ok". The clash of these two POV brought about the better idea of building up the 11: 15 along its own traditional lines. Everyone got on board with that.) Practical consideration: as the 11:15 grows, 9 am attendees will need to leave more parking spaces open.

***Farmers Market on Saturday Morning**. We have this fabulous lawn facing the street near Estevan Village. Serving the neighbourhood, only markets are downtown or on the Peninsula. There is an Oak Bay market on a Wednesday evening, but not Saturday morning. Serving the wider community, supporting sustainable and ethical food production. Middle ground between church and community, mingle. Builds relationship with community in neutral ground. " We are coming out to you" not " Please come to us". Individuals, if they want to give to church might garage sale at site on the day too. Community Kitchen might like to make food for sale. Modest revenue via table rental perhaps consistent with other market rates. Rather than one off flea market by us FOR us. It is opening up to being part of the wider community. Could be bi - weekly but as it is only spring / summer....

***Fundraising for individual causes**. It was noted that the trend is not for people to give to one organisation and hope the money is put to good use, but to give to individual causes directly. Reality is that the world does not care if the church survives but does care if orphans do. We need to work with that trend. Therefore instead of fundraising "for St Philip" we fundraise for Hope Home, or for the Home for the 100th sheep. Eg, we can put up a separate table for those at the Farmers market with cookies and cakes and info about these worthwhile causes the church supports. We could approach our friends for these causes much more authentically than for church itself. (harsh but true) Frees up offering gifts for the

maintenance and running of St Phils. Random thoughts: an info graphic on our website that we could access to note where our giving and needs are at. -open up building as concert venue

Group 5

*Importance of making decisions from place of trust and abundance / generosity vs. fear and scarcity

Solar panels! for electrical and heating??

Thrifty Smile Cards??

What are the attitudes we need to have in order to be sustainable? takes us back to core values.

Special offerings for special needs of church e.g. roof, painting, sound system, etc.

Ensuring diversity in age - future growth vs dying congregation

Turning our kitchen into a commercial kitchen and renting out - could tie into community kitchen

Late Sunday services - Blue Grass, Jazz Vespers are great ways to welcome/invite people from outside St P

Group 6

Questions - are we talking financial sustainability or more from a human sustainability?

Continue in ministry to a wide range of "age groups"

Instead of asking what we should stop, ask what we can start or expand.

- demonstrate a model (to other parishes?) of acceptance, of a welcoming atmosphere for the young

Tweaking small costs (i.e. why a mail-out for this meeting)

Do we need to invest (related to our core values) some of our reserve money to "make" money?

Are we spending on every day expenses or investing to forward our core values?

Is there a possibility that parishioners might (be willing?) to loan (or endowment fund) for our start up?

Maximize the investments so that ideally income from it is increased

Critically look at each ministry - what we do, who it serves. What we need to do.

Should we do more?

More inviting friends to our stuff

Sell pens at \$1 per pen!!!

Responses received from those unable to attend on Saturday, grouped together below

That is the \$64,000 question. Financially we all need to 'buck up' a bit more each month; services and programs will have to be reduced and a 'new way' of 'doing church' may need to be adopted.

More review of needs, goals, and resources, and plan and pray for guidance. Use more volunteers. So redesign the structure somehow to be affordable and fiscally responsible.

Rank what is important and make goals and a plan – take action

Include the parish in praying for guidance, decision making , and carrying out goals/plans.

Maybe we need to let go of having to keep things exactly the way that they are. Growth is always preceded by discomfort, and what matters is the way we grow rather than how we maintain the status quo. Would we be open, for instance, to sharing our space with others? I am thinking of St Mary's Oak Bay, having the Canadian Academy of the Performing Arts on their premises, Knox Presbyterian sharing their church with a Chinese church, the Opera school establishing itself at St John.

Difficult and complex question... that has multiple layers

Short term: I think it is difficult to associate our weekly/monthly offering to the financial needs of the church. It might be useful to give some sort understanding of how much each family/member would need to contribute per month to meet our budget. This information would of course, have to be provided in a context that doesn't put pressure but just provides information along with a basic understanding of how the financial aspect operates and that St. Philip's is solely funded by the weekly offerings and how it fits into context of the Diocese as a whole.

'Longer term: a) Grow the parish in middle age – older adult demographic.

The 'how' is the tougher question!

- Ensuring visitors and new members feel welcomed, comfortable and included.

- opportunities to get to know others by home groups, bible studies etc.

b) Focus on youth - perhaps collaborating with other parishes in the area to increase the # of youth and sharing of resources.

c) Continue with lots of the things already being done – such as a great children's program, alternative services once a month etc.

Prayer, listening to God's will! Acting on those 'needs' together, by groups working together in fellowship groups, more volunteering of talents for even simple tasks