

# St. Matthew's Episcopal Church Three-year Strategic Plan

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Approved: January 13, 2014

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## Attendees

### St. Matthew's Vestry

Senior Warden Allen Todd  
Junior Warden Tom Marsh  
Clerk Marlin Collins  
Pat Sackinger  
Victor Apodaca  
Ned Gains  
Shannon (Torrence) Houlette  
Jeremy Johnson

### St. Matthew's Rector

The Rev. Scott Fisher

### Facilitator

The Rev. Shirley Lee

## Introduction

On Saturday, May 11, 2013, the Rector, vestry, and facilitator met for a one-day planning session. The purpose of the planning session was to create an action plan for the next three years for St. Matthew's Episcopal Church (the "Church" or St. Matthew's) to focus the efforts of the vestry on the most important priorities and challenges. The importance of a strategic plan is to find common goals and to align the efforts of the members and resources of the Church with those goals. As with any plan, the St. Matthew's strategic plan can be changed and adjusted with the goals of the Church. Members of St. Matthew's are encouraged to make recommendations to the vestry to ensure the plan truly represents the spirit of the Church.

The result of the planning session was the development of the following strategic plan:

Members identified the six highest priorities (in order of importance) for the next three years:

1. Financial
2. Buildings and grounds
3. Attending to the church body
4. Planning for staff transition
5. Outreach
6. Compliance

## Financial

St. Matthew's has a unique makeup that encompasses people from the greater Fairbanks community as well as an extended membership throughout Interior Alaska. The Church is a hub of activity for its members and others within the Fairbanks community. To serve such a range of activities requires adequate financial resources. For the past several years St. Matthew's has worked very hard to balance its budget, barely meeting that budget most years and occasionally dipping into its reserves. Financial resources are an essential ingredient in order to fulfill the mission of the Church pay a very small staff,

ensure the utilities are paid and keep a roof over our heads. Focusing on financial issues is essential to fulfilling all other missions of St Matthew's.

## Financial Action Plan

Short-term:

- **Establish financial oversight committee – completed** Sept 9, 2013, first meeting with the establishment of the St. Matthew's Financial Oversight Committee.
  - The Financial Oversight Committee meets with treasurer one week prior to each vestry meeting to review the financial reports and make recommendations for the long term financial stability of the Church
- **Conduct fundraising during current year**, starting immediately

Long-term:

- **Long-term pledges/annual pledge drive**
  - Assigned to stewardship committee
    - The Stewardship Committee will start an annual pledge drive in late 2014.
- **Transition into an annual fundraising plan (event fundraisers)** – in process, anticipated first meeting early 2014
  - Establish quarterly fundraisers (e.g., PFD, Tribal Hall, ....)
  - Create fundraising committee

## Buildings and Grounds

St. Matthew's has a rich history that goes back near the founding of Fairbanks. The first Episcopal service was held at the Fairbanks Saloon on Sunday March 29, 2003 by a missionary priest. The following year, St. Matthews Hospital was constructed and was operating by September 1904. By Sunday October 16, 1904, St. Matthews Episcopal Church was completed and its bell called people to its first service. Both the hospital and the original church once stood on these current premises.

The Church provides more than just a place to worship on Sunday; it is a home to many ministries, [summarized list]. We also host activities for many groups within the larger Fairbanks community (e.g., 12-step programs). More than just love is required to keep St. Matthew's a safe and comfortable place for parishioners and community members to meet.

## Buildings and Grounds Action Plan

Short-term:

- **Sacristy roof repair/replacement**, and survey condition of the roof; scheduled review of roof – summer 2014
- **New floor for parish hall – completed** Sept 26, 2013 – prior to the 2013 Alaska Diocesan Convention

Long-term:

- **Capital plan for facilities maintenance**
  - Form volunteer corps to assist Junior Warden and Sexton

- Develop schedule for regular maintenance
- Form Capital Plan committee (vestry and congregation members)
- Develop buildings and grounds plan
- **Remodel office**

## Church Body

St. Matthew's is not only a beautiful building; St. Matthew's is a community of people, united in the body of Christ. Like a building, the church members require love and attention. How do we keep up spiritual health, develop leaders, and communicate with one another? The Church body action plan strives to strengthen these parts of the church body.

## Church Body Action Plan

Short-term:

- **Support for the basic church functions** (e.g., funerals, baptisms, Eucharist celebrations, Sunday School)
- **Recruit a new web page gardener** – **Completed** January 15, 2014
- **Resume publication of printed newsletter** – **Completed** December 7, 2013

Long-term

- **Improve spiritual health:**
  - Increase youth involvement in services
  - Implement volunteer and leadership training and development
  - Develop regular "communication" with the membership through renewed focus on newsletters and website
  - Develop adult and youth education program(s)
- **Develop leadership and membership for programs and committees:**
  - Signup posters in the parish hall
- **Strengthen leaderships at St. Matthew's**
  - Host ministry empowerment training
  - Training for discerning how best volunteers can contribute to the Church
  - Assign a standing committee seat to each vestry member
- **Foster and develop communication methods that reach out to St. Matthew's members and potential members**
  - Look down road... website, social media sites

## Staff Transition

Spend a "normal" day at St. Matthew's and be prepared to be amazed by the number of people and groups that utilize the Church. The high volume of activity at St. Matthew's would not be possible without the continuity and organization provided the small staff. They provide the structure that allows St. Matthew's to fulfill its many ministries. Key members of the staff have served St. Matthew's for many years. We love and value each member of the St Matthew's staff and the invaluable contributions they continue to make to the Church. We also know that change is inevitable and recognize the need to record the knowledge of current staff in order to be prepared for transitions when they come.

## Staff Transition Action Plan

Short-term:

- **Document office functions**
  - Log daily, weekly, and monthly functions, including annual calendar for regular duties and community calendar
- **Create written office standard procedures** (e.g. Annual Report to Diocese)
- **Prioritize area used for records storage**

Long-term:

- **Archive material, including digitizing documents when appropriate, and creating a searchable database**

## Outreach

St. Matthew's will remain viable so long as it continues to maintain its membership. In the past few years, the Church has recognized the need to include young members in order to maintain the vitality of the Church. The position of the Youth Minister was created to both acknowledge and address the need to bring in children and young families. We also see the need to be a welcoming place for new members of both the greater Fairbanks community and Interior Alaska.

## Outreach Action Plan

Short-term

- **Host the Diocesan Convention – Completed Oct 6, 2013**
  - Hosted successfully in October
- **Recruit new participants to existing church programs**
  - Provide signup sheets in the parish hall

Long-term

- **Stabilize funding of youth minister position and youth programs**
- **Develop outreach programs**
- **Increase Sunday services attendance**

## Compliance

Compliance quite simply is making sure that the activities of the Church are consistent with the Canons of the Episcopal Church, the law of the land and other applicable standards. Compliance includes, for example, Safe Church training to make sure that youth that participate in activities at St. Matthew's are nurtured and protected. It means making sure we comply with wage & hours laws, accounting practices and the host of other standards that underlie a well-run Church.

## Compliance Action Plan

Short-term

- **Form a compliance committee**
  - To be completed by the committee

Long-term

- **Perform a compliance review**
- **Perform risk analysis**
- **Develop and implement a compliance plan**

## **Conclusion**

The Vestry will review and update the strategic plan annually. This document is a living document that will be revised as the needs of St. Matthews change. The Vestry will use the plan as a guide with a goal of extending the 3-year plan to a 5-plan in the third year of current strategic plan.

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