



CHRIST CHURCH, DARTMOUTH
A People United in Justice and Love

July 7, 2021

To: Parishioners of Christ Church

From:

Re: Summer Discernment Exercise

Parish Council has formally adopted a revised Mission and Vision statement. Coming out of that process we want to turn our thoughts to how we should be using our facilities in the light of our new vision. The spectrum of our opportunities include:

Option A: Long-term Housing mission (such as rental property low-income and/or market value residential); and a facility for Church use (artistic, musical, and other forms of expression), and maintaining our church as our worship and gathering space.

Option B: Community Outreach mission (Foodbank, clothing bank, temporary housing; community organization office space/program delivery space); a facility for Church use; and maintaining our church as our worship and gathering space.

Option C: Hall for Church use (as now), and a sanctuary [effectively no change]

Attached is a longer document with more data for your consideration.

During the summer we would like you to prayerfully consider, in the light of our new Vision and Mission, how we should proceed with the stewardship of our facility resources. We will be having parish meetings to discuss facility strategy in September.

Discernment Exercise

PREFACE:

As many know, the Parish of Christ Church, Dartmouth, has undergone intentional listening and visioning. In December 2019, the creation of two sub-committees was unanimously passed. The *Ministry Vision Sub-Committee* and the *Campus Strategic Planning Sub-Committee* worked on behalf of and with the parish council to examine its vision and resources to carry out specific ministries.

In September 2020, a parish-wide survey gathered data that was assessed throughout Lent in a series of visioning sessions. Specifically, the sessions examined our current ministries and potential areas for growth. Conversations both in person, zoom and via correspondence provided the *Ministry Visioning Sub-Committee* with data and a sense of guidance. This subcommittee continued its work by creating a Vision and Mission statement that outlined and articulated our ministries, core values, and mission. This document was circulated to Parish Council and then to the parish for feedback and consideration. Other sessions were held for further feedback. The appendix of this document is Christ Church's new Vision and Mission Statement, passed by Parish Council on X 2021.

After consulting widely, many churches and developers have suggested that organizations wish to know the vision and mandate of an organization before partnership conversations begin. With this information in hand, Parish Council feels that the next step is to review our facilities and the potential opportunities for our parish and the community. Therefore, the *Campus Strategic Planning Sub-Committee*, working with the new Vision and Mission Statement, and considering the ministry we currently provide and new growth opportunities, have examined possible outcomes for the property at Christ Church.

Factored into the outcomes is the knowledge that current, continuing costs of running our Parish Hall are \$70,000 a year in actual and deferred maintenance. The property committee of the parish has also encouraged the *Campus Sub-Committee* to consider options. In the study of our parish buildings, conducted by *WSP Canada Inc.* (January 27, 2021) at the request of parish council, it was determined that with a possible inflation rate of 2% that the hall will cost \$691,690 to maintain (p. 8 of the report)

Another factor in this presentation is the current increase in poverty rates and the dramatic need for low-income and affordable housing in Nova Scotia and downtown Dartmouth. Through government and non-profit research, the statistics are alarming:

12.1 per cent of Nova Scotians lived below the poverty line in 2019 – the second highest rate in Canada – and 11.4 per cent (45,100) of Nova Scotian households are in core housing need. Almost 70 per cent of public housing tenants and 60 per cent of rent supplement clients in Nova Scotia are women; people of African descent and other racialized groups continue to experience systemic barriers when they try to access

affordable housing. Nova Scotia's population grew from 942,970 in 2016 to 979,449 in 2021 (as of Jan. 1), but the housing supply has not kept pace with demand.¹

Acknowledging the need for shelter and the mission of outreach to the community, and as our property is situated in downtown Dartmouth, the following three options are presented for Parish Council's consideration.

In options A and B, the parish wishes to maintain the following:

1. Office space for staff/volunteers
2. Space required for various ministries (i.e. Historical Committee, ACWs, etc.)
3. Food Bank and Clothing Ministry
4. Space for receptions (i.e. Funerals and Weddings)
5. The church building is a continued place of worship.

It should also be noted that options for development² could include removing the hall building if it allows us to carry out the Vision and Mission of the parish.

The options also would consider the space our church building holds, for example, possible interior changes to accommodate our needs (what we want to maintain).

Option A: Long-term Housing mission (such as rental property low-income and/or market value residential); and a facility for Church use (artistic, musical, and other forms of expression), and maintaining our church as our worship and gathering space.

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Note: Option A and B are just that, options. Nothing precludes an amalgamation or a combination of both A and B into another option (D).

What partnerships? *Further investigation on other partnerships to be carried out by identified Task Groups of Parish Council. A list of potential partnerships include:*

- Elizabeth Fry Society
- Coverdale
- Mental Health Services

¹ <https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20210531002>

² Development should be seen in a positive light. Development could be considered as bringing about social change that allows people to achieve their human potential. This includes economic resources, including property.

- Educational partnerships
- L' Arche
- Phoenix House
- Homebridge Youth
- Metro Community Living Support
- Dartmouth Non-Profit Society
- The Northgrove (formerly Dartmouth Family Centre and Dartmouth North Community Food Centre)
- Indigenous communities
- Legal aid
- Shelter Nova Scotia
- Stepping Stone
- United Way
- MacPhee Centre
- Nova Scotia Health
- Downtown Dartmouth Business Association
- Property development for low-income/affordable housing and profitable housing (a mixed economy).
- Partnerships for non-profit office space and like-minded organizations.
- Local businesses
- Social entrepreneurship (Social Enterprise Network of Nova Scotia)
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Note: Any partnership with for-profit housing/development would have to be consistent with the Vision and Mission Statement of the parish and would be expected to provide the parish with resources to carry out ministries. Any potential partnerships would have to take into consideration our needs for office space, reception and group functions, performing arts space, our food and clothing ministry, etc.).

Exercise for this summer:

Members of Parish council are requesting that the people of the parish reflect on this document and its possible outcomes. Within the Christian context, this is what we call a period of discernment. The textbook definition of discernment is: “The process of assessing and evaluating, particularly in relation to trying to determine God’s will in a particular situation or for one’s life direction.” (Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms). Discernment is active because it includes listening, conversation, and prayer.

It is hoped that by the fall, as a community we can then enter into conversation about the options before us.

Scripture that can guide our discernment:

Proverbs 3:5–6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.

James 1:5

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

Romans 12:2

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Matthew 7:24

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise person who built their house on the rock.

Prayer that can guide our discernment:

Christ Church Collect for Visioning

O God, draw us together as a
community that seeks
understanding. As followers of
Christ, we are guided by your Holy
Spirit. Fill us with your
vision. Assist us as we reflect on
who we are as a church.

Help us to be mindful of the
resources we have and what you
are calling us to do. Fill our hearts
with love for your mission as we
seek to grow and build your
Kingdom, through Jesus Christ our
Lord, who is alive and reigns with
you and the Holy Spirit, one God,
now and for ever. Amen.

Lord, we pray that you will be with us and keep us as we go upon this journey. Let no change or chance take us out of your hand; prosper us in our way and give us grace always to do the things that will please you.

O Spirit of God, we ask you to help orient all our actions by your inspirations, and carry them on by your gracious assistance, that every prayer and work of ours may always begin from you and through you be happily ended.

O Lord, mercifully receive the prayers of your people who call upon you, and grant that they may know and understand what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to accomplish them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

If you have any questions please feel free to approach Father Kyle, The Wardens or John MacDonald – Chair of Campus Visioning