

# Strategic Planning Newsletter No.1

Dear Friends,

I hope that this letter finds you all well, and that Lent has been a good time for you, and your preparation for the Easter mysteries.

There has been some interest in the Strategic Planning Process for the Parish, so following the Vestry meeting I intend to share with those of you who are new to us the background to our Strategic Plan and the plans for this year. I wanted to write to you all after the Vestry Meeting to bring you up to date with the Strategic Planning Process.

## Background

In 2005, just after I arrived in December 2004, we conducted a Healthy Churches Check and a lengthy Strategic Planning Session. The Healthy Churches Check comes out of the UK and looked at 25 Growing Churches in the Diocese of Durham. The seven marks are;

1. Energized by Faith
2. Outward-looking focus
3. Seeks to Find what God wants
4. Faces the cost of change and growth
5. Operates as a community
6. Makes room for all
7. Does a few things and does them well.

About 60 people were in attendance on the first Saturday and together we scored our church. During the week the team I had assembled and analysed that information and that informed our direction for the next Saturday that looked at the Strategic Plan for the parish. The resulting document can be found here. <http://stjohnsgordon.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/St John the Evangelist - Strategic Plan 2005.pdf>.

In 2007 we revisited the Healthy Churches Check and found that we had turned the parish around. It wasn't perfect, but we were getting much better in the areas we were deficient in.

About five years later we had a Future Directions Group, <http://stjohnsgordon.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Future-Directions-Final-Report.pdf> which looked at a whole host of issues within the parish, and in about 2017 we had a small group in the Upper Room led by Bishop Michael to have a look at the Strategic Plan with fresh eyes. So, about every 5 years we have revisited the plan in some form or another with varying levels of success in implementing them.

## National Church Life Survey

In all of this we have had two NCLS surveys, (2006 and 2016). These help clarify some of the issues within the parish, and highlight areas we might have missed in the Strategic Plan. However, I think it is fair to say that we have not integrated that information well in our Strategic Plan thinking. I want that to change.

**April 7 2019**

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## Present

At the Vestry Meeting of 2018 a request was made to have a Strategic Planning Session again. Whilst I can see some value in another session, I think the higher priority is to ensure we are effectively leveraging the information and plans that we already have. To achieve this, I have asked Mr. Stephen Woodhill to look at all the information we have and to consolidate it.

Stephen is the CEO of the “Group of 100” which looks after the top 100 CFO’s in the country. He is an experienced strategic thinker and planner and is therefore ideally suited to help us derive a plan that the whole of the parish can interact with.

My goal in all of this is to move us beyond planning to action.

## Way Ahead

There is one piece of information that I believe is important to add to what we have and that is a revisit of the Healthy Churches Check. The Healthy Churches Check will be a way for us to check on the actions we have taken to date and further guide to the parish’s thinking with respect to the seven marks identified above. The gaps will become a focus for the critical actions in our revised strategic plan.

The Healthy Churches Check on Saturday will be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2019 from 10am-3pm. I ask you all to mark this date in your diary, and plan to be there. The more there are on the day the more helpful the HCC will be.

In the interim, I will be issuing a regular Newsletter entitled “Strategic Newsletter 2019.” This is number one in that series. This will contain information on the Healthy Churches Check to prime you all for the day.

It also gives me 8 Sundays, including this one, to give some information about each of the marks, and other preparatory material. I will be uploading each of these Newsletter to the Web Site in a Strategic Plan Blog as I did with the Organ Project.

I do hope that you will take the opportunity to engage in this process and to make your contribution on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June.

With every blessing to you all,

Fr. Keith

**April 7 2019**