



**ST. JOHN'S NORWOOD**  
Chevy Chase-Bethesda

VISION STATEMENT

2015



Dear People of St. John's,

**W**ith great pleasure, the Vestry and Vision Team present to you St. John's Norwood's Vision Statement 2015.

It's been a longtime coming! You'll recall that our visioning process began at the Vestry retreat at Rehoboth in the summer of 2013 when your governing body recognized that while St. John's was growing and strong, it lacked an articulated direction for its future. Like other institutions, churches run the risk of spreading their resources thin, struggling with lay leader burnout, and potentially failing without a clear understanding of their direction, focus, and purpose.

It was time therefore to identify and pursue the focused, purpose-driven ministries and mission that God has in store for us—not a new direction, but rather a focused one. To help St. John's find the answer to the questions—to whom and what is God calling us most in this season of our life together and how do we get there?—the vestry created a Vision Team and tasked them to undergo an in-depth visioning/discernment process with the parish.

Comprised of 10 parishioners, including the Rector and Senior Warden, and supported by the secretary of the vestry, the Team began its work on Renewal Sunday 2013. According to its charter, the Vision Team's primary objective was to, "look both inward and outward. [The Vision Team] will listen prayerfully to the parish and define the core identity of St. John's. It will also look out to the broader community and learn where the greatest needs are. Our vision lies where our greatest gifts best meet the greatest needs of our larger community."

Since that time, the Vision Team has met dozens of times, using scripture to anchor and focus its discussions. The team asked for parish input—and you have energetically added your voice, responding to forums, articles in Crossroads, questionnaires, and participating in Lenten Circle Gatherings. The Team gathered demographic information about Bethesda-Chevy Chase, convened meetings with community leaders, and interviewed local citizens. It has been a challenging, sometimes difficult, but hugely rewarding task for the Vision Team members.

Recently, the Team presented the Vision Statement 2015 to the vestry who agreed that it was now ready to present to the congregation. Please drop us a line, give any one of us a call, come to a forum, and watch the video about the Vision Team process. Please participate in a Circles Gathering this Lent. We need your input and will count on brainstorming with you about how we might implement the Vision Statement.

A new Vestry mandated committee will be formed this summer to help us figure out how we will implement the Vision Statement. But, remember, we cannot do this without all of you!

Sari Ateek, Rector  
Vision Team Co-Chair

John F. Ross, Senior Warden  
Vision Team Co-Chair



## *The Visioning Process*

**E**ach Visioning Team meeting began with a bible discussion, lead by one of the embers.

Reading the scripture kept the team focused, inspired, and true to our charter and purpose. We came back to a Matthew passage over and over again.

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. [Matthew 5:14-16]

This passage suggested that by opening up our church and offering generously of our time, talents, and resources, we might help—if only in a modest way—the Kingdom of God beyond the walls of our church.

We carefully adhered to the vestry charter, which told us that “Our vision lies where our greatest gifts best meet the greatest needs of our larger community.” So we broke up the visioning process both to examine our parish internally—to

learn about our passions and strengths through our history and in conversations with parishioners—and to evaluate the community’s needs, a process of looking externally.

After the process of data gathering, we found that the meeting point between St. John’s and the Bethesda-Chevy Chase community was the notion of “community.” We then delved into examining what this word meant both within our congregation and within our local area. The strengths of our parish community—its strong fellowship, welcoming nature, excellent educational activities, and commitment to nurturing the growth of socially conscious organizations—seemed to intersect with the needs of BCC, in which we kept hearing about isolation, income disparity, and feelings that its citizens were not heard.

Consequently, the Vision Team, in recognition that we cannot address BCC’s every need for community building, came up with specific areas in which St. John’s passions and gifts would have the largest, most beneficial impact.

Here’s the Vision Statement:

### **THE DREAM**

A Bethesda-Chevy Chase defined by altruism and kindness

### **THE VISION**

St. John’s will use its talents, resources, and energies toward realizing this dream by addressing three pillars of community building:

1. Equipping individuals for healthier and more holistic relationships.
2. Investing in inter-generational connections.
3. Creating more meaningful interactions across societal strata.

### **WE WILL DO THIS BY:**

1. Creating spaces of common interest through which organic, authentic relationships can form and flourish.
2. Fostering a culture of mentorship in which everyone has something valuable to share.



## The Vision Team:

Sari Ateek  
John F. Ross  
Co-Chairs, Visioning Team  
Pat Cascio, Secretary

Deborah Burke  
Margaret Hilton  
Melanie Folstad  
Tom Kennedy

Becky Neal  
Stefanie Rarden  
Carl Schaefer  
Penny Winder

## Additional Resources and Feedback:

Members of the Vision Team and the Vestry would be delighted to talk further with you about the St. John's Vision Statement 2015. We encourage you to contact us by phone, email, or in person.

A document containing more details about the findings of our research can be found on the St. John's website. Hard copies of this document will be available in the church office. You'll also find a short video, in which team members reflect on the challenges and joys of this process on the website.

You can also send us comments at [visionstatementcomments@stjohnsnorwood.org](mailto:visionstatementcomments@stjohnsnorwood.org).

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## Members of the St. John's Vestry:

John Ross, Senior Warden  
Roxy Wolff Wyand, Junior Warden  
Pat Cascio, Secretary  
Steve Philpott, Senior Treasurer  
Bill Assmann, Junior Treasurer  
Craig Ulman, J.D., Chancellor

Kurt Ellison	Chris Obara
Liz Everhart	Anna Smith
Bill Fry	Lon Anderson
Belinda Russell	Anne Derse
Becky Neal	Tom Hebert
Brad Kennedy	Nancy Petrisko

Our members represent a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds, nationalities, political affiliations, family configurations, sexual orientations, abilities, and religious traditions. Indeed, chances are that there's someone like you at St. John's. We are single, married, partnered, divorced, widowed, remarried, gay and lesbian, with and without children, empty-nesters, old and young, and differently-abled. You name it – we are here. And we welcome you!

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