

The Church of Saint Andrew  
Vision Process  
Spiritual Development

Definition

Spiritual Development is the work of groups and/or individuals within our community which enables supports and encourages our membership in their faith development. Our liturgical & worship program, Christian education, Sunday School, youth groups, bible study, baptism preparation, Alpha, Logos, Cursillo, prayer support groups and related programs & activities are all part of the spiritual development program of the parish.

What are we currently doing in this area? (random order)

- A rich, diverse liturgical program
- Opportunities for development such as EFM
- Our Special Gifts Fund
- The Sunday school program
- Bible study – Thursday morning's
- Baptism [flexibility and inclusiveness]
- Community openness to faith growth
- Our library
- Acceptance of children in our worship services
- Our willingness to extend Eucharistic hospitality to others
- Active spiritual encouragement by others
- We are a safe space for spiritual expression
- We create opportunities to encounter God
- We engage all the senses in our program
- Our youth program is a key element
- Our choir, the selection of hymns, and relationship to the readings create a meaningful package each week
- Day by Day readings
- Our educational programming at Advent & Lent particularly
- The Alpha program
- The use of the Labyrinth last year
- The Stations of the Cross as a congregation
- The sermons illustrate the readings week after week
- Our book club
- Our natural acceptance of differences and new people

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- The way we talk to the children during the Eucharist
- The many mentor relationships in the parish
- Care Notes – often arriving without notice or expectation
- Home Groups – just a few currently but hopefully more in the future

The spiritual development of our members – a frank assessment and identification of areas for possible improvement (random order)

- A need to deepen the Labyrinth experience perhaps by adding a guest speaker and development program
- An increased focus on inclusion
- A renewed emphasis on new membership ministry
- Increased communication with the membership
- Introduce parenting program during the day
- Consider core hours of the week day and use of church for expanded programming
- Expand efforts to reach seniors and/or the disabled
- Youth programming regarding their spiritual journey
- Focus on impact of our support groups
- Leverage the coffee times more
- Our children's programming other than the Sunday school specifically ages 6 to 9 and 10 to 12 years
- Technology "talk"
- Parent/child connection – worshiping together
- Sunday school teacher growth and ongoing education
- Programs to encourage and train leaders
- Renewed focus on accessibility (comprehensive understanding of the term)
- Effort to reach people where they are
- Active listening to those who have "been there"
- Teaching the teacher programs
- The worship life of our congregation is the foundation of our life as a Christian community
- Audiovisual technical improvements to create the mood or setting desired and to convey the message
- Sermons could be recorded and uploaded to our website

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- Go beyond the alpha program – another level of spiritual growth
- Annual retreat and/or quiet day – a time of listening for God's word to us all
- An intentional development of leadership skills across the parish
- Multiple options for Bible study (especially for parents and working folks)
- Increased interaction and collaboration with other Anglican parishes in our region to create a critical mass and prevent planning duplication
- The place and role of prayer – prayer lists, open prayer time, and meditation opportunities

Summary Statements (by the vision team)

There were two statements made during the evening which effectively summarize the conversation of participants during the workshop:

- We strive to create opportunities to encounter God
- The worship life of our congregation is the foundation of our identity as a Christian community

We are a community which supports and encourages spiritual development and is comfortable with conversations of a spiritual nature.

Our liturgical life is at the center of our existence and a steady source of spiritual encouragement. It's vibrancy and variety ensure that it is a constant source of energy for the majority of our parish.

Our Parish programming is diverse and numerous however is not as accessible as we would like. For example, Bible study for adults is offered during the workday and there is no evening option.

Our parish needs to reach people where they are which is not always conducive to weekly worship and/or church programming delivered in

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the evenings from a room within the church walls. Over the next five years the use of technology and the Internet will become even more endemic and should be a critical tool in the expansion of the spiritual development program for the parish and the wider community.

Leadership also was a key theme of the discussion. Whether lay or clergy, participants agreed that education and support for our parish leaders is an important ingredient of our future success.

The opportunity for our parish, through its programming and interaction, to be a conduit for its members to encounter God, is extremely exciting. Workshop participants agreed that this is already happening for some. The ideas for further development of the spiritual development program of the parish will hopefully help enable others to experience such a profound event in their lives.