

Vestry Companion to St. Andrew's RenewalWorks "Next Steps"

The goal of this Vestry Companion is to make the language of the Next Steps more accessible to the congregation (i.e. *What does it mean for us?*); to help members of the congregation see how the Next Steps of the Report are a deepening of what God is already doing within each of us.

Below are the Vestry statements on each of the "Next Steps" of the original Report. The Report's original language is directly below for reference. The four Next Steps commended for St. Andrew's focus over the next 2-3 years are *Name Spiritual Journey*, *Build a Congregational Way of Life*, *Multiply the Means for Scriptural Reflection*, and *Sing Songs Together with Deepened Familiarity*.

- 1. Name spiritual journey-** The language of "spiritual journey" is a lens for seeing the awe and wonder and beauty of connecting spiritually with God and neighbor throughout our lives. The life of every member of St. Andrew's includes their spiritual journey, but some in our congregation are not accustomed to using that language. The Leadership of St. Andrew's will help us to tell the stories of our own spiritual journeys and increase our sensitivity to the spiritual dimensions of our lives. The Leadership of St. Andrew's will help members grow in familiarity with the tools of Christian discipleship – Scripture, Church Tradition, embrace of human Reason, Baptismal and Eucharistic practice – to help us see how these resonate in our personal lives, and see God at work in our lives.

St. Andrew's will start this work right where we are presently. We will provide suggestions to ministry leaders to help them in this new territory. We will seek opportunities for steadily naming God's presence in all our active ministries and gatherings. Leaders will speak specifically to the ways our Sunday worship already embodies "spiritual journey".

.....

From Report: *The leadership will proclaim "loud and proud" that we are on a spiritual journey to move deeper in our faith. A transforming journey of growth in faith will include connecting our faith to the "action of the moment" in our lives and cultural context.*

Part of this growth comes from naming and lifting up the holy. Part of this growth will necessitate confessing and calling out racism, fascism, ecological devastation, militarism and sexism, among other evils that tear at the dignity of God's creation. Spiritual journey requires engaging these with the tools of Christian discipleship. The Bible, Church Tradition, and Reason are our historic and compelling sources of truth about God and creation. And the Baptismal Covenant and Holy Eucharist serve as the cornerstones of our belief and worship. Through these, we can intentionally open ourselves to God's guidance as disciples; both personally and in public life.

2. Build a congregational way of life – Jesus of Nazareth used his words and actions as an example of a distinctive, Godward, *way of life*. Jesus’ “disciples” are those who commit to following Jesus’ example. A *Rule of Life* is a Christian term for when a particular community (like St. Andrew’s) lists and commits to a few specific shared *practices* that help them, in their context, grow into Jesus’ example. Oftentimes this means naming what we’re already up to, and reaffirming it. All Christians have a “ministry” through their lives. Practicing a Rule of Life helps us to affirm and deepen that.

St. Andrew’s Leaders will teach the congregation about traditional Christian Rules of Life, and how they help Christians follow Jesus’ way. We will name some of the communal practices (“ways”, “rules”) we already have (example: The Lord’s Prayer). We will try out some practices as pieces of a “St. Andrew’s Rule of Life”, and through trial and error come up with a list of practices that can celebrate, guide and inspire us in daily ministry. We will invite all those who desire to join together in these practices. We will print these up as a pocket card to encourage and strengthen and comfort us while we’re out in the world.

...

From Report: A Rule of Life helps connect the work of our daily lives with our spiritual growth, affirming that we are all ministering through our lives, and helping build that ministry. First, teach about what Rules of Life might be, and how to incorporate them. (For example, introduce a prayer for everyone to say daily; then, repeat that prayer together in church on Sunday; print it on a card to carry in one’s pocket.) Then, involve the community in creating a congregational Rule of Life together. The Rule of Life initiative will be most fruitful if there is solid teaching along the way.

3. Multiply the means for scriptural reflection – Scripture is the story of God’s love, and of God’s people getting to know God’s dream for our lives. Worshipers at St. Andrew’s hear a lot of scripture every Sunday, but most who took the RenewalWorks survey said they don’t tend to reflect on it consciously in daily life. Growing in comfort with scripture affirms our personal authority as disciples, and helps us define our own walk with God and neighbor.

St. Andrew’s leaders will increase opportunities for scriptural reflection in worship, committee and ministry meetings, and during ministry activities. We will start basic. We will offer “scripts” and formats for reading and reflecting on a Bible passage. We will make it frequent and diverse enough to be accessible for all members.

...

From Report: Set out on not just a Bible Study, but a broad program that interweaves scripture and the myriad venues and disciplines of Christian discovery.

- *Start basic*
- *Make the process accessible and meaningful*
- *Make it frequent and diverse enough to welcome everyone and build competence for this reflection in all committees.*

4. Sing songs together with deepened familiarity – In our Spiritual Inventory results, “Personal Spiritual practices” were emphasized as an area for growth. Communal singing is a rich part of St. Andrew’s weekly worship, and for many has formed our relationships with God. Because song is both prayer and another way into scripture, it is a natural area in which to build on our strength. We desire to increase the accessibility and diversity of our sung musical selections.

Accessibility in this sense means “singability” in **range**, tempo, and familiar language. It also means singing songs we can “take home” with us in simple or repetitive song phrases that we know by heart and can call upon in all the needs of daily life (without a text in front of us).

Diversity means a blend both ancient and modern hymns, repetitive chants as in the style of Taizé or Iona, folk songs, “camp” songs, and other contemporary compositions. Diversity is also known in the variety from slow and heavy, to uplifting, to bouncy, with diverse instrumentation, and even including silence.

St. Andrew’s leaders will work to increase accessibility and diversity of music in our principal worship and beyond. A Music Team will be gathered to support the Rector and Director of Music in this work. This might include in-worship or special event-based teaching of musical pieces, or deciding together upon “core musical pieces” we sing more often as a congregation. We hope to embody that lyric which says “all God’s creatures got a place in the choir”.

...

From Report: *The RenewalWorks Team understands that singing together is mostly on hiatus during the pandemic, but names this for possible action in the future.*

St. Andrew’s knows God often through song. Creatively increasing the accessibility and familiarity of this form of spiritual practice, and folks’ comfort with it, would be a strong and natural way to grow communally, and also help people “take the Spirit on the road” with them.