Priorities for 2020-2021

St. Philip’s is in a season of change and discernment. We are prayerfully considering how to steward gifts of land and money from Jacqueline Harris. We are engaged in a study of our campus, and we are facing considerable costs to maintain our buildings. Both priests have departed, and we are engaged in a search for a new rector. And around us, our neighbors are struggling with systemic racism and oppression, poverty, educational inequities, inadequate housing, unjust criminal justice practices and a lack of health care, among other challenges.

In this context, in this moment,
what kind of church do we want to be?
Where is God calling us next?

Over the past year, the vestry has engaged in conversations about our mission, values, priorities, and desired impact. We invited an Episcopal priest, the Rev. Nathan E. Kirkpatrick, to interview more than 30 parish leaders and staff to learn about what animates our communal life. In December, we held a retreat to discuss his findings and name 2-3 internal and external priorities to guide our decision-making as we call a new rector and approve an annual budget, among other things.

This work is not finished. Our challenge now is to continue to refine these priorities, expand the conversation about them to additional parishioners and staff, and work diligently toward realizing them, with God’s help.

**Caring For Our Parish**

1. Strengthen formation, pastoral care and worship: What does it mean to be disciples of Christ? How might we structure formation, pastoral care and worship to prepare parishioners to love our neighbors?
   - Areas of focus:
     - Anti-racism and racial healing and reconciliation
     - Spiritual formation for all ages and stages
     - Empowering and equipping lay leadership and volunteerism
     - Strengthen relationships among parishioners
     - Support continued excellence in worship, with an emphasis on developing worship leaders
     - Evangelism
     - Connect clergy to parishioners

2. Steward our resources
   - Maintain our buildings and properties, including the Harris property until a final decision is made about its future
   - Explore creative use of facilities aligned with community needs
   - Continue to make progress on the campus study
3. Enhance communications
   - Expand our capacity for story-telling
   - Effectively articulate ways for parishioners to engage more fully in the life of our parish and community
   - Ensure we have the structures in place, including adequate technology, to creatively pursue communications strategies

**CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY**

We aspire to be a church community that has close and personal relationships with our neighbors, who see evidence that we are living out our baptismal covenant to seek the dignity, justice and peace of all people.

Areas of focus:
   - Racial justice
   - Eradication of poverty
   - Pursuit of educational equity

We begin this work knowing that there are structural issues that must be dismantled to be effective in this work. We are also humbly aware that we cannot undertake this work alone; we must have partners. We also must open ourselves to be changed as much as we seek to bring about change.