

January 17, 2010 – *Dreams Into Action*

St. Philip's is "a strong and loving community that welcomes, encourages, and empowers all to grow in Christ and to do God's work in the world." Through our vision invitation, "*come and see ... grow with God ... go and do,*" we invite all persons, regardless of demographic factors and faith expectations, to experience God, to learn and be formed spiritually, and to develop their individual gifts with which to serve God in the world. We embody our vision through the core values we exhibit: lifelong learning, acceptance, compassion, dignity, excellence, and leadership. We are entering a time when our actions in light of our vision and core values will be strongly tested, because of economic and budget restraints that challenge us to a new way of living out our faith. It is inspiring to remember that St. Philip's was founded in the midst of the Great Depression through the ability of founders to sustain their vision of mission and ministry.

MISSION DISCERNMENT

If you were active at St. Philip's in spring of 2008, you no doubt attended at least one dream-catching session. Dream-catching sessions were the initial phase in the Mission Discernment Process, which was initiated to enable the Parish at large to discern what God is calling St. Philip's to do and be. Each session began with prayer and reflection on the answers to two questions: "what is God calling us to do" and "what do we need to fulfill God's call." More than 30 sessions were held, along with tear-out sheets in the bulletin, a bulletin board in the Perry Garden on Sundays, and e-mail submissions. About 400 parishioners dreamed more than 900 dreams, ranging from simple ideas to conceptual programmatic concepts to ambitious challenges. The master list of these dreams is accessible on St. Philip's Web site.

The dreams were distilled into five program areas: communications, outreach, children and youth, mission support, and facilities needs arising from new and expanded ministries, including a labyrinth to enhance spiritual development. Task forces were charged with developing dream-based projects within each program area. Some dreams have resulted in completed actions. For others, the groundwork has been laid for implementation in the near future. Planning is continuing for other dreams that can lead to action in the future. Projects emerging from the dreams often relate to more than one ministry or program area. All represent movement forward in our parish life together.

COMMUNICATIONS

The communications objective was to create a strengthened communications program to inform and facilitate the involvement of Parish members and to spread the message of St. Philip's to the Tucson community and potential new parishioners. Goals that have been completed include the hiring of a full-time Director of Communications to help develop and oversee a comprehensive communications program for St. Philip's. A twice-monthly E-Newsletter for communicating electronically with our Parish was inaugurated on July 17, 2009. Subscribe by e-mailing parishnews@stphilipstucson.org

Projects underway include developing an effective local public relations program with increased publicity about St. Philip's in Tucson local print and television media. St. Philip's has already received some excellent coverage. A top priority of the Committee has been to create an improved and professional quality Web site for St. Philip's. Initial design work has been completed with a comprehensive set of new and dynamic features identified. A local firm will be contracted to construct the new site, partially funded by a \$3,500 grant from the Arizona Diocese. The advantages of the new site will be attracting new and younger generation with a modern method of communications; providing a means of distributing electronically many of St. Philip's current print publications; and providing the means to podcast special events and programs. We are also working to encourage the use of the social networking site "Facebook" to create a communications network for Parishioners as well as drawing the interest and participation of younger Parishioners. We envision communications projects in the future to bring St. Philip's completely up to date, by creating a wi-fi environment for the entire St. Philip's campus, including all meeting rooms. Some other technology needs include updating hardware and software, modern and effective sound and recording equipment for our Church and meeting rooms, and electronic signage both to attract people to our campus and to better communicate for those on campus. We will form a Technology Committee to assess and evaluate all such evolving technology needs.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

St. Philip's After School Music Program makes a difference in kids lives. In addition, it brings joy to those involved in it, staff and volunteers. In 2008-2009, the program started with four children. We used two of our church's strengths, music and youth programs, to put together a program to help children grades 3 to 5 who live south of our church, children who would never have access to this quality of musical training. For the 2009-2010 season we are at capacity with 20 kids.

The real heroes in our program are our 45 volunteers, who take on such tasks as teaching music lessons, walking the children from their school, and supervising homework and practicing. Some of the volunteers are youth. These volunteers say they get so much reward out of helping these kids. Staff involved in the program are Garmon Ashby, Rosalind Garcia, and Bruce Phillips, as well as Julie Harman, a staff singer. The Rev. Clare Yarborough also helps out on Wednesdays.

The ASMP children and St. Philip's Girl and Boy Choirs rehearse together on Thursdays, which is a positive experience for both groups. Garmon hopes in the future that this joint choir can be an ambassador for our church by singing in the community at large. The children sing at Evening Prayer once a semester. In the future we plan to establish them singing at Evening Prayer on a weekly basis. Our ultimate hope is to be able to minister to more children to make a big difference in a lot more children's lives.

WORSHIP EXPERIENCES THAT SPEAK TO FAMILIES, CHILDREN, AND YOUTH

At St. Philip's we offer a variety of family-friendly worship opportunities throughout the year. The core of these is our Third Sunday All-Generations Eucharist, with liturgy in accessible language and a story presented instead of the sermon. Of the many ways our children and youth serve the parish, the most visible is in our worship. Acolytes serve an important role in liturgy. The Chalice Players, guided by Alison Lee and Bruce Phillips, interpret the lessons and Gospel in a way that our younger children can better absorb and that makes adults rethink the familiar messages. The Boy and Girl Choirs share the gift of spirited and compelling song, trained so well by Garmon and Jeffrey. The other Sundays of the month, while most of us gather in the church at 9 a.m., Bruce Phillips convenes Worship with Us for our youngest parishioners, assisted by volunteers Sasha Velgos and Ali McCallum. As well as being a very real part of St. Philip's present, our children are the future of this parish. As suggested in many dreams, we seek to develop more innovative worship experiences.

In December we began by celebrating the Feast of Saint Nicholas with a special family-oriented service held in the music center. The mood was effervescent with nearly forty young children in full pre-Christmas mode percolating on the floor in

front of Clare. Afterward, while the kids were in church school, many parents remained for a discussion of the challenges we face in nurturing generous spirits in our children. The next family-friendly service will be on Sunday, February 14, commemorating the Transfiguration and packing up Alleluias for Lent. Not having an upper room to huddle in, the parish celebrated the Pentecost Vigil in an innovative service in the Music Center this year. The Bethlehem Market keeps getting better every year.

We sponsor two important summer programs on campus, Summer Arts and Summer Journey. They are important ways to reach out to the community and have led to new families joining the parish. We often travel away from Campbell @ River for retreats and for the choir camp in August. Mission trips have allowed our youth to put their faith into action. Our J2A youth return from the bi-annual pilgrimage as young adults who have had a moving encounter with their Christian heritage. Our Children, Youth, and Family Ministries strive to help all St. Philipians marry our worship to service, and reach beyond our beautiful campus to help a suffering world.

It is truly amazing what is being accomplished with the facilities and resources at hand, through hard work and dedication of staff and volunteers.

ELDER CARE

Expanding the programs that minister to the elderly at St. Philip's was a frequent "dream." In 2009, a team emerged to begin seriously investigating this ministry. We began by presenting forum series in the fall of 2009. These included Identifying Yourself as a Caregiver, providing resource information for Caregivers, with Jan Sturges from the U of A as guest speaker; Hospice Care In Tucson, with Abigail Byrd, a Spiritual Advisor for Casa de la Luz Hospice; Living Wills and DNRs, presented by Kenney Hegland, a lawyer and co-author of "Alive and Kicking: Legal Advice for Boomers"; and What Gifts Our Elders Really Want for Christmas, presented by Brigid Waszczak. We noticed 3 or 4 newcomers each session, indicating that this is a good way to reach out to the Tucson community, filling an apparent need. The speakers all volunteered their time and provided their own print materials.

In September 2009, we convened a steering committee for establishing an adult day care program at St. Philip's, with the goals of focusing on the spiritual interactions between all who come in contact with the program; coinciding the half day program with the Family Caregiver Support Group that is already in place; and preparing and presenting a Policies and Procedures for a half-day adult daycare program, keeping in mind the potential of a larger program. The committee consists of Chairman: Cathleen Carlton; Vestry Representative: Beth Brouillette; Community and Adult Care Managers: Ed Helmbrecht and Sue Alexander; St. Philip's parishioners: Brigid Waszczak, Chuck Converse and Ann Branham; Lawyer: John Evans. Also involved are Elaine Damgaard and the Rev. Blake Hutson, representing the Pastoral Care Commission. In addition, we are consulting with RNs, doctors, and other successful Adult Care Managers as necessary. Funding is being investigated and will come from outside sources and fundraising.

The next set of forums, beginning this month, will cover Social Security Eligibility and Benefits Collection, with a community liaison from the Social Security Administration; Safety and Seniors, with Buzz Bean and Lynn McBeth from Caregiver Consortium and HealthSouth; and Where to Find Community Resources, with Karen Ring from Caregiver Consortium. The next big event in our sights is an Elder Care Fair with a target date of May 2010. Guests from the community will be available to answer questions. In addition we are hoping to have a medication check by pharmacy students, a Red Cross blood drive, Delta Society Representative (pets that are trained to go into nursing homes), Pima Health System Representatives, HealthSouth Representatives to demonstrate safety equipment, representatives from community hospice facilities, and representatives from assisted living facilities.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The long-term plans of the different ministries can come true through future improvements in our facilities. There are two aspects; to investigate the feasibility of a multi-purpose facility and to construct a labyrinth at St. Philip's for spiritual needs and growth.

We must determine our physical needs based on the future needs of our ministries. There is strong usage of our facilities by parish ministries and community groups, which requires careful scheduling so that current facilities can meet our current needs. Initial implementation of the exciting plans for new ministry initiatives has been carried out within existing facilities, sometimes by sharing those facilities with existing ministries. Further expansion of these ministries, however, will be limited unless more adequate and appropriate facilities are available. In addition, the future of St. Philip's relies heavily on growth in the number of children, youth and families. Although our present facilities are satisfactory for the present number of families, as the number of families increases, so will the need for more education and social events and the associated growth in facilities. St. Philip's relies on revenue from the Little Shop and rental of our space to outside organizations. Our future plans for new facilities should therefore include expansion of the Little Shop and additional space for rent. We will carefully embark on this process, starting by forming or expanding committees to make disciplined detailed studies of the needs, both ministry and support, and informing the Parish of progress every 3 months. In parallel, a campus planning committee will be formed to develop a Master Plan for St. Philip's long-term needs, including buildings, grounds, and parking areas, based on reports from the needs committees. Although progress will be determined by need, a desirable goal is to have a master plan for presentation to the parish by mid-2011.

Beginning with the dream-catching sessions, there has been great interest in and support for having our own labyrinth at St. Philip's for individual spiritual formation and growth. A labyrinth committee was formed, and we walked 3 labyrinths at Tucson churches during Advent for the labyrinth experience. Members of the committee and younger members of St. Philip's constructed a "canned goods labyrinth" in the children's chapel, giving other members of St. Philip's the opportunity of the labyrinth experience. Building a labyrinth at St. Philip's will require coordination with the Buildings and Grounds committee and approval by the Vestry. Steps include studying labyrinth designs and potential locations at St. Philip's and investigating methods of funding the labyrinth. We hope to present a detailed proposal for 3 different designs, 3 different locations, estimated costs for each and fund-raising method to the Vestry this year and looking toward completion in 2011 after sufficient funds have been raised.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Further detail is contained in a more complete progress report that will be available on our Web site and in the Library.