



The Episcopal Diocese of Vermont

Draft Capital Campaign Case Statement

The Diocese of Vermont: Strengthening Our Ministry for the Decades to Come

For over 200 years Episcopalians in Vermont have grounded our lives in the Great Commandment to love God and neighbor. Since the days when Bethuel Chittenden rode horseback through the young state of Vermont spreading the Good News among our villages, the Episcopal Church in Vermont has been responding to the changing opportunities for ministry that have been part of every generation. Our commitment to “proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ” remains strong today. Yet, as a church and as a diocese, we are challenged by an increasingly secular culture, declining membership, growing human need, the aging infrastructure and need to “green” our buildings, and the immense environmental concerns of our time.

The world is changing at an unprecedented rate. The assurances and assumptions that have guided our lives are increasingly called into question and have become more fluid. In spiritual, social, economic and scientific ways, we feel the ground is quaking beneath us.

As Episcopalians, we are awake and aware of the shifts in thinking that are taking place. Our faith emboldens us to respond with determination and hope. The powerful love of Christ and our deep commitment to ministering to our neighbors enable us to address both the threats and promises of change. To be faithful to our calling in a rapidly changing world, we must strengthen our spiritual lives, and at the same time, open ourselves to new understandings and expressions of what it means to be spiritual beings. Simple tangible steps are a critical part of our response. We must provide physical spaces, technological support, and financial resources to help our congregations to move forward. We are ready to take action in the following areas:

- ❖ We will take full advantage of the extraordinary treasures we have at Rock Point and Mission Farm. Doing so will provide gathering centers, north and south, for spiritual renewal and response retreats for both individual and groups; for educational programs on a wide range of topics essential to ministry in the 21st Century; and for growth in our awareness of contemporary issues and acquisition of new skills in order to respond effectively and creatively to current challenges to ministry.
- ❖ We will reduce our impact on this embattled earth by becoming better stewards of this “fragile earth, our island home.” We will lessen the environmental burdens of our buildings while modeling and promoting more sustainable living practices. Consequently, we can reallocate some financial resources from maintenance to an increase in helping our neighbors.
- ❖ We will learn to utilize rapidly evolving technology to strengthen our connection to one another, and to support and embrace our neighbors who are both members and seekers.

Our reach will extend beyond Vermont to the worldwide community as we proclaim the Good News of God's love in Christ.

The Episcopal Diocese of Vermont has always been a stronghold of resilient individuals who, despite diverse opinions on a wide range of social issues, have been committed to the ministry of God's justice and mercy. We have boldly worked toward alleviating suffering; we have actively sought reconciliation and peace on earth. Issues change through time, but our commitment to being a prophetic voice in the world is unwavering.

We need to prepare ourselves for the work ahead. Together, we must develop additional resources through a capital campaign, a significant effort for us but an essential investment we are called to make to address the challenges of the future. Our overarching goal is to increase and strengthen our capacity for ministry for decades to come. Funds raised in this campaign will provide new and essential tools for Christ's mission at home and in the world.

Tools of Our Ministry in Vermont:

We propose a capital campaign spread over five years with a goal of \$4 to 6 million. A specific funding goal will be established in January after the current proposals are fully developed. The three intertwined components include:

For the Ministry of Environmental Stewardship

To expand the grant and loan programs of the diocese, offering congregations the ability to reduce their carbon footprints and improve their buildings, saving both fuel and money.

- To create a smaller footprint through energy saving measures and alternative energy production at Rock Point.
- To develop congregation-based sustainability projects in the areas of agriculture, nutrition, recycling, and other long term earth friendly projects.
- To partner with other groups within and outside Vermont to promote environmental awareness and activity.

For the Ministry of Communication

To reach out to seekers and non-members with the message of God's love, welcome and hope.

- To maximize use of the internet for routine communication and to link our congregations.
- To provide news and information through website, social media, electronic newsletters and other means throughout the Diocese.
- To offer off-site meetings, trainings, and informational webcasts to increase opportunities for greater involvement and learning.
- To link individuals, congregations, study groups and others for a sense of unified purpose within the Diocese.
- To have a fully-developed interactive website and community platform to spread the Good News and promote diocesan events and offerings, and more.

For the Ministry of Rock Point and Mission Farm and Their Renewal as Centers for Spiritual Development

- To improve and enhance the facilities for individual, small group and congregational uses at Rock Point and at Mission Farm, ensuring that both serve as models of environmental stewardship.
- To expand opportunities within the Diocese for individual spiritual exploration and growth in a variety of traditions and expressions, building from programs at Rock Point and Mission Farm and beyond.
- To encourage members to consider the value of Sabbath and respite, both independently and in working groups.
- To encourage and help fund “fresh expressions” in worship and outreach in order to be more inviting to spiritual seekers.
- To enable congregations to engage these programs through additional grants programs.

Expenses for Campaign:

Every campaign incurs some cost, even with significant volunteer participation. This campaign will require guidance, materials, travel by volunteers and staff, and extensive communication by mail, electronics, and in small gatherings.

Time Frame for Campaign:

To be raised in cash and pledges by 2017.