



# A Strategic Plan for Growth and Ministry

The Episcopal Diocese of Vermont  
2005 – 2010

Update adopted by Diocesan Council  
September 2010

## The Vision

The Diocesan Council acknowledges and responds to changing cultural and institutional realities. We envision a vibrant, active, innovative, mission-oriented church that witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and discerns and welcomes God's call to us, the Diocese as we engage in God's mission in the world as the baptized Body of Christ. Five themes emerge from this call:

### ***Formation***

that promotes lifelong Christian learning and spiritual growth across all ages; increases and develops existing educational opportunities; and supports the ongoing development of appropriate resources.

### ***Liberation***

that increases active involvement in identifying and expanding local and statewide social justice programs; strengthens ongoing efforts to dismantle racism and other forms of discrimination; and supports international social justice programs, mission partnerships and the Millennium Development Goals.

### ***Communication***

that conveys the good news of Jesus Christ and the mission and ministries of Vermont Episcopalians to one another, their neighbors and the wider community through a variety of media.

### ***Connection***

that builds a culture of mutuality and collegiality throughout the diocese, raising an awareness of our inter-connectedness with each other, with other people of faith and with all of God's creation.

### ***Celebration***

that recognizes and gives thanks for the abundant gifts and resources God has entrusted to us for our mission and that acknowledges our responsibilities as God's stewards.

## Key Ministry Area #1: Christian Formation for All Ages

To support education for baptismal ministry for all ages throughout the Diocese and to provide aid to parishes in providing Christian education and training programs.

1. Develop and support ministry to children and youth and coordinate programs throughout the Diocese.
2. Support diocesan formation programs like Education for Ministry.
3. Support and uphold the Commission on Ministry Committee on Christian Formation, the Diocesan Ministry Support Team, and the Companions as they nurture baptismal ministry.
4. Facilitate the dissemination of resource materials through the increased use of technology: the web site, storage capacity, and regional access to materials.

## Key Ministry Area #2: Spiritual Growth Ministry

To increase varied opportunities for spiritual growth at the parish and diocesan level, being aware of and responsive to our changing culture.

1. Encourage parishes to develop ways that support spiritual growth and the use of existing diocesan resources / events.
  - a. Coordinate and share information about these activities.
  - b. Continue support for diocesan sponsored spiritual growth and wellness programs (Examples: Holy Tuesday retreat day for clergy, retreat days of the Rock Point Board at the BBCC and at Mission Farm, and others).
  - c. Encourage local communities to create / develop prayer and study groups, meditation groups, biblical study groups, reflection groups, and others.
2. Create a task force to offer resources in the area of spiritual direction to the people of the Diocese.
3. Encourage and support “fresh expressions” in our worship and outreach.
4. Encourage leaders and members of parish communities to adopt a rule of life or daily spiritual practice.
5. Explore the possibility of establishing a Spiritual Life Committee.
6. Support the practice of Christian meditation such as is taught by the Christian Meditation Center at the Cathedral.

## Key Ministry Area #3: Outreach and Social Justice

To support the Gospel commitment to social justice and outreach throughout the Diocese.

1. Uphold the Dismantling Racism Commission in its raising awareness about issues of racism and working to end racism within our communities and the state of Vermont through annual educational and training programs.
2. Encourage parish participation in programs or organizations dedicated to social justice like prison ministry, refugee resettlement, and interfaith community action.

3. Model when and how to be a prophetic voice on issues of social justice.
4. Continue the diocesan support for the Millennium Development Goals and to encourage parishes to include them in their outreach planning.
5. Encourage parishes to implement outreach programs independently or in cooperation with other parishes, faith communities, or organizations within their geographical areas.
6. Encourage parishes to better understand Jubilee Ministry and to consider becoming Jubilee Ministry Centers.
7. Encourage parishes to develop, use, and share liturgies that address outreach and social justice concerns.

### Key Ministry Area #4: Communications

To provide for up-to-date sharing of information within the Diocese and the wider community.

1. Support the Communications Committee as they implement the recommendations of the 2010 Communications Task Force.
2. Model appropriate and positive communication, especially with regard to the use of the Internet.
3. Enhance diocesan communication by the use of email, list-serves, a user-friendly web site, conference calls, adequate access to the internet, and others.
4. Tell the good news of Jesus Christ in the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont in fresh and compelling ways that will increase the visibility of the Diocese throughout the state.

### Key Ministry Area #5: Organizational, Structural and Financial

To enable the deepening of baptismal ministry through an effective and financially sound organizational structure.

1. Support the work of the Bishop and the Diocesan Ministry Support Team in their ministry within the Diocese.
2. Encourage participation of all the baptized in the many committees and organizations functioning at the diocesan level.
3. Broaden an understanding of the purpose of the Diocese throughout the state.
4. Maintain the financial health of the Diocese through careful budget preparation and management (Possible tools: budget summits, a planned giving program, fundraising, a capital campaign, the Oversight and Audit Committee).
5. Support local parishes in the management of their financial resources to maintain or build their financial health.
6. Assure diocesan policy for parish assessment is effective and consistent in implementation.

### Key Ministry Area #6. Parish <-> Parish <-> Diocese

To encourage mutuality in the spirit of baptismal ministry throughout the Diocese.

1. Encourage diocesan presence in all regions; regional presence in all diocesan activities.

2. Develop mutuality in decision making. Examples:
  - a. Budget Summits create a forum for groups seeking budgetary support to present their goals to Diocesan Council.
  - b. Clergy gatherings and Fresh Start continue to help clergy focus on mutuality in leadership.
  - c. Congregations not in transition benefit from regular mutual ministry reviews and creating policies that support mutuality in leadership.
3. Encourage Parishes to use the Bishop's Visitation as an opportunity to stay connected to the Diocese and to engage in conversation about the various ministries of the Parish.
4. Increase the understanding of the role of the Diocesan Ministry Support Team and Companions and how they support Parishes.
5. Create opportunities for parishes to collaborate with one another in areas of ministry, shared resources, materials, and people.

### Key Ministry Area #7: Rock Point

To develop Rock Point as a spiritual and ecological center for children, youth, and adults, while maintaining it in good physical condition.

1. Bring renewable energy projects to Rock Point and create dynamic models of energy conservation and efficiency by 2015.
2. Sustain the Rock Point land use management plan that identifies best uses for all aspects of the property.
3. Care for sensitive ecological systems.
4. Become a spiritual life center for the diocese and beyond.
5. Broaden programs for children and youth to include ecological education programs, summer camp, and others.
6. Support the ministry of the Bishop Booth Conference Center and the Rock Point School.
7. Maintain the current facilities in good working order.

### Key Ministry Area #8: Caring for God's Creation

To support a commitment to God's creation throughout the Diocese.

1. Foster awareness, awakening a hunger for a right relationship with God, others, and God's creation.
2. Deepen an understanding of our relationship with creation through liturgies, personal study, interaction, and collaboration.
3. Engage in lifestyle changes, both congregationally and individually, that promote environmental responsibility and sustainability.
4. Inspire and support congregations in protecting our earth, water, air, and atmosphere.
5. Provide guidance and resources to assist congregations with energy conservation, efficiency, "green" building projects and the use of renewable energy sources.