



# *The* Episcopal Diocese of Newark

*Equipping congregations... Empowering people... Engaging the world ...with the hope and justice of Jesus.*

## DIOCESAN MINISTRY PLAN OUTLINE

### **Diocesan Goal:**

For all congregations in the Diocese of Newark in response to God's call to mission to be vibrant, life-giving faith communities that proclaim the Gospel and make it relevant in their unique environment.

### **Intent of Ministry Plan**

Creating a ministry plan is a means of engaging in a dialogue with your congregation about how it might first examine and then begin to address exercising its ministry in seven vital areas. As a starting point, each congregation is invited to make a self-assessment using the diocesan vitality characteristics, ministry capacity questions, and issues explorations in order to examine its areas of ministry objectively. Topic issues to explore these ministry and mission areas as well as tools and resources to assist you in developing your ministry plan can be found in our Diocesan Covenant available on our website.

The ministry plan should be viewed as the product of the process outlined above in the context of the on-going diocesan covenant responsibility of each congregation to "develop a ministry plan with achievable measurable goals and objectives".

## **I. MINISTRY AREA: EXTERNAL MINISTRY CONTEXTS**

*Where and to whom is our congregation called to minister?*

### **EXPECTATIONS**

1. Each congregation will actively seek information about its mission field (the area in which it is located).
2. Each congregation will consider information about the area in which they are located as they develop ministry activities.

### **MINISTRY PLAN QUESTIONS**

1. In what ways do you seek information about your community or neighborhood?
2. What have you learned from that information that is informing your approach to what you do as a congregation?
3. What do you believe God is calling you to do now in your community?
4. What is your congregation's plan to engage the community over the next 3 years?

## **II. MINISTRY AREA: CHRISTIAN IDENTITY, GIFTS, STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES**

*What gifts has God given to us to do ministry?*

### **EXPECTATIONS**

1. Each congregation has big picture priorities that can be articulated by the person in the pew.
2. Each congregation can demonstrate measurable effort in attempting to address its priorities.
3. Each congregation regularly clarifies and articulates its strengths.
4. Each congregation regularly clarifies and articulates its challenges.
5. Each congregation understands its effect on and reputation in its community

### **MINISTRY PLAN QUESTIONS**

1. Does your congregation have a mission and/or vision statement?
2. What are your top 4 priorities as a congregation?
3. What have you done in the last two years to live into those priorities?
4. What are your greatest congregational strengths to achieve those priorities?
5. What are your greatest congregational challenges to achieve those priorities?
6. For what is your congregation best known in your neighborhood? And how do you know this?

## **III. MINISTRY AREA: VISION/FUTURE GOALS/DREAMS**

*To what ministry is God calling us at this time?*

### **EXPECTATIONS**

1. Each congregation identifies its unique purpose based on its understanding of God's dream for it.
2. Long term possibilities for the future will be derived from each congregation's unique overall mission and those possibilities will be revisited each year.

### **MINISTRY PLAN QUESTIONS**

1. What do you think God wants from and for your congregation?

2. What possibilities does your congregation see for itself in 3 years? In 5 years?
3. What plans do you have for identifying, nurturing and empowering future leaders for your congregation?
4. What is the role of role your congregation's youth now and in the future? What is your ministry to them?

**IV. MINISTRY AREA: SYSTEMS FUNCTIONALITY (VIABILITY)**  
*How well do we carry out the internal functions of our church in God's name?*

**EXPECTATIONS**

1. Congregations will meet all canonical responsibilities. For example:
  - a. Parochial reports will be turned in by March 1
  - b. Audits will be turned in by September 1
  - c. Diocesan pledges will be turned in by December 1
2. The trend for both the number of pledges and the total amount of pledges consistently increases over time.
3. Each congregation finds ways to discern members' gifts and seeks to engage all of its members in congregational priorities.
4. Each congregation consistently seeks to expand the number of people involved in leadership to engage in succession planning for leaders and to train and support its leaders.
5. Each congregation actively maintains safe, attractive, accessible buildings for ministry use.
6. Vestries regularly devote time to identifying and developing congregational ministries.
7. Each congregation regularly operates with balanced budgets.
8. Any excess of expenses over income will result from strategic decisions to invest in growth or ministry

**MINISTRY PLAN QUESTIONS**

1. How do you identify members' individual gifts and engage them with your priorities?
2. In what primary ways do you recruit, empower, and support people for leadership?
3. What are the top 3 priorities / needs for your buildings?
4. How does your congregation plan for repairs and capital needs?
5. Is your congregation's budget in deficit? If so, how have you and how do you plan (in the next 3 years) to address this?

## V. MINISTRY AREA: CHURCH GROWTH / EVANGELISM CAPACITY

*How does God enable us to invite, form, and send out disciples?*

### EXPECTATIONS

1. Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) consistently increases over time.  
**Note:** ASA reflects increasing participation and growth.
2. The person in the pew can describe the unique characteristics of your congregation.
3. Each congregation assesses the reasons new members first visited in order to enhance its ability to attract new potential members.
4. Each congregation understands the reasons new members joined, in order to enhance its ability to build its membership.
5. Congregations understand the faith experience of their new members, so that they can best understand and respond to ministry opportunities.

### MINISTRY CAPACITY QUESTIONS

1. What has been the trend in your ASA (Average Sunday Attendance) in the last 10 years?
2. Why did the people who most recently joined the congregation come to church the first time?
3. Of those most recent members, why did they join?
4. What percentage of people who joined in the last year are not Episcopalians?
5. How are we actively engaged in evangelism?
6. What role do our youth play in church growth and evangelism?

## **VI. MINISTRY AREA: STEWARDSHIP**

### *How do we understand and practice stewardship of God's abundant goodness?*

1. Members of the congregation understand stewardship as their response to God's love and God's call to tend and care for the whole of creation, including ourselves, our possessions, and this earth.
2. Clergy and congregation practice simplicity of life and generosity in giving.
3. Congregation through the leadership of vestry and clergy are asked to support the ministry of the church with their time, talent, and treasure, especially through the practices of proportionate giving (or tithing) and witnessing to God's work in their own lives.

## **MINISTRY CAPACITY QUESTIONS**

1. Does your congregation practice year-around stewardship?
2. Does your vestry lead by example in its stewardship?
3. How does your congregation understand stewardship?
4. How does your congregation educate and engage youth in the practice of stewardship?
5. Describe your present and future stewardship plans.

## **VII. CAPACITY AREA: SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

### *How do we as a community of faith nurture one another in the knowledge and love of Christ?*

## **EXPECTATIONS**

1. Each congregation creatively and authentically lives out the Baptismal promise to "continue the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers".
2. Worship is both vibrant and fresh in expression and rooted in tradition with the result that people are energized and inspired for daily life.
3. Worship expresses the cultural diversity of the congregation and its neighboring communities.
4. The planning and leadership of worship and spiritual activities invites participation and engages the creativity of the entire congregation.
5. There is a regular and comprehensive review of worship and spiritual activities in all its facets, especially worship times, alternative services/venues, and liturgies.
6. Both clergy and laity are engaged in the ministry of pastoral care.
7. The vestry, clergy and congregation both corporately and individually have adopted a spiritual discipline and /or Rule of Life.

## MINISTRY PLAN QUESTIONS

1. How is worship/liturgy planned and reviewed in your congregation?
2. How are liturgy participants (e.g., Altar Guild, choir, acolytes, lay readers) identified, recruited and trained?
3. What opportunities are provided for spiritual growth in your congregation?
4. To what extent do youth participate in liturgical and spiritual formation activities?
5. Are lay people significantly involved in your pastoral care and healing ministries?
6. Are there opportunities to do joint worship and spiritual formation with other congregations?