

St. Mary's Plans for the Future

What will the legacy be?

St. Mary's Episcopal Church has been a faithful servant to the Waynesboro Community for nearly a hundred years. Legacies have been established and passed down for generations. And like the elders, the current generation is working hard to pass on its legacy.....ensuring a sound spiritual and financial foundation to ensure St. Mary's continues as a viable community ministry for future generations.

In late 2008, the Vestry of St. Mary's concluded that the parish is doing an excellent job ministering to the congregation and in community outreach. But it was more difficult to formulate a good response when challenged with the question -"What legacy are we leaving?" It was decided that not only should this question be answered, but it is equally important to have long range plans in place that guide the transition to building the foundation of that legacy.

The Vestry appointed a small exploratory committee and the process kicked off in January of this year. It soon became clear that our greatest resource in this endeavor was readily available - the congregation. Within a short period, more and more parishioners came forward to provide input and volunteer their services.

The newly enlarged Long Range Planning Committee ventured even further. Demographic information for the Greater Waynesboro Area, coupled with a review of the needs of the community, provided important baseline information. A parishioner survey was completed, along with an evaluation of the church's strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities available within the community. The Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania provided valuable input, including several visits by the Bishop and his staff. A series of Lenten services was conducted with planning discussions that complemented our traditional Christian Lenten practices.

The ground work for the planning was conducted throughout the spring and St. Mary's Long Range Plan was ultimately completed and approved by the Vestry in September. The plan lays out specific objectives and goals in the areas of worship and spiritual growth, financial stability, and membership sustainment and growth. Through this plan, St. Mary's has committed to continue current community activities, things like the election day Lasagna Dinner, the annual block party, food booths, and of course outreach support to a number of local organizations that provide help to the needy. Additionally, the plan lays out a number of other activities that are being explored to further God's work in the community.

The process of developing the Long Range Plan turned out to be equally valuable. The members of St. Mary's learned a great deal about their past, the traditions, what is important today and into the future, and most importantly, grew in faith by working together in a true discernment process. Through the Long Range Plan, and with our deep faith in God's will, St. Mary's legacy will continue.

St. Mary's Episcopal Church is located at the corner of 2nd and S. Broad Streets. There are a number of worship and ministry services available throughout the week. More information is available on the web at <http://www.episcopalparish.org/stmarys/>. St. Mary's is willing and happy to share the Long Range Plan and the discernment process used. Churches, organizations, or individuals interested in learning more may contact St. Mary's at 717-762-1930, or by e-mail at stmwpa@superpa.net.