



WHAT'S NEXT ?

We've got the City's approval. We've got the land. "What's next" may seem to have an obvious answer - particularly if it's just a matter of pulling out the old Anglican trunk of steeples and church halls and asking a group of folks to make it happen. What a mistake that would be. What a missed opportunity.

The great creative opportunity that is now ours, is to bring together our imagination, prayer and collective ferment into determining the shape of St. Martin's future in ministry, witness and form.

Eight years have gone by since the last major step taken by the parish. In 1998-9 it took nine months of various conversations facilitated by church consultant,

Roy Oswald, before the congregation gained a clear collective mind and will to move ahead under the grace of God. Those strategic goals and mission have served so well. That task is done.

It's time again to hear from everyone. To assist us with this vital, creative conversation, we have hired the services of church consultant, Don McLeod, to lead us into a new process that begins this Lent. (see program below)

It all begins this Sunday, February 3rd.

Don McLeod is preaching. It's our annual meeting. It's time to raise the sails afresh for the wind of God to launch us forward into God's future.

Blessings,

Richard

Crossing the River

A Process of Discernment, Imagination & Action

What is God calling St. Martin's Anglican Parish to be in this time and place?

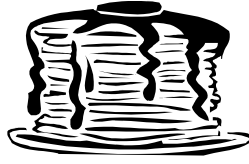
This process is intended to clarify and renew St. Martin's unique Vision for Ministry and inform an ongoing strategic plan. The plan will be based on a vision that is inspired by a faithful response to God and compels the parish to move "across the river" into its future.

At the end of their long sojourn through the wilderness the people of Israel came to the heights of Moab and overlooked the land. "When Moses finished reciting all these words to all Israel, he said to them: This is no trifling matter for you, but rather your very life; through it you may live long in the land that you are crossing over the Jordan to possess." Deuteronomy 32:45, 47

Process Outline

- February 3** **Preparing for Crossing the River:** Presentation of the process to AGM
- February 24** **First Conversations:** Considering the Legacy : The story of the people of St. Martin's 1912-2008
- March 1** **Discover:** Parish Event #1: 9:30am to 12 Noon SATURDAY
What in God's name is going on in our Church? Gathering stories of life-giving experiences within the parish. **Valuing the Best of What Is**
- March 15** **Dream:** Parish Event #2: 9:30am to 3:00pm SATURDAY
What is God and the community calling us to be? What would our church look like in 5 years time? Developing common images of the future. **Visioning the Ideal**
- April 19** **Design 1:** Parish Event #3: 9:30am to 12 Noon SATURDAY
Aligning values, structures and mission with the ideal. Developing achievable plans and steps to make the vision a reality. **Dialoguing What Should Be**
- May 4** **Testing the Water:** An interactive "Liturgy of the Word" : the World Café approach to dialogue
- Summer Season** **Design 2:** Forming working groups to develop Key Strategic Directions/Ministry Goals
- September** **Deliver:** Special parish meeting to review & commit to the Vision for Ministry and Strategic Plan.

THIS COMING WEEK



Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper! February 5, at the Church of the Good Shepherd (408 – 38th St SW). There are two sittings for the meal (at 5:30 or 6:30 pm). Please call Cheryl at the Good Shepherd (246-8123) to indicate which sitting you would like to attend.

ASH WEDNESDAY

Let us prepare the way of the Lord . .

7:00 p.m.

Eucharist and the Imposition of Ashes
February 6 at the Church of the Good Shepherd (408 – 38th St. SW).



*Remember you are dust
And to dust you shall return*

“COTTAGE GROUPS” The other kind of building . .

As much as the front of the Newsletter lays out the process that Don McLeod will be leading us into this year, we can't just talk about building St. Martin's future without attention to building up the community. On Sunday, January 20 St. Martin's launched a network of community-based neighbourhood groups across the city, called "Cottage Groups." The intention is to foster connections between each other, provide a local means for welcoming new members to St. Martin's and discovering more and more our common life together.

The early church was recognized for the unique way of life it evolved and exhibited. The first Christians met in each other's homes and fashioned a way of community in Christ of mutual support, encouragement, fellowship and genuine concern for each other and others. And it spread across an Empire.

Urban life can be lonely and isolating – especially for those who are new to the community. At St. Martin's we put intentional emphasis on welcoming and including people into the life and ministry of the parish. There are Newcomer Parties, food and fellowship after Sunday worship, "greeters" at the door and an alertness in the community to watch for those who may be new or standing alone. But Sunday may not be enough to form and deepen the quality of Christian community we might otherwise discover together.

So, the parish has been divided into 17 geographical areas, with a person or household in each area who has volunteered to serve as the 'convener.' The intention is not that the groups meet regularly. A "cottage group" might meet two or three times a year; could meet in September after the summer holidays to re-connect, or in January to discuss Lenten resources, or meet to welcome a new household from their area who has become part of St. Martin's. The convener's role is to help facilitate connections in their area; make periodic contact, welcome newcomers and convene the gatherings. The hosting can be shared. The clergy offer support and resources to the conveners.

It's new for us. It's not particularly Anglican. But it seems worth a try. Who knows what will evolve. Each cottage group will find its own life.

A survey asked 400 people who left their churches why they had left. Over 75% of the respondents said, "I didn't feel anyone cared whether I was there or not."

Cottage Groups – a way to connect and care.

Blessings,

Christine Richard

PS : Planning is underway that each Cottage Group will meet once this Lent. Richard or Christine will try to be present at each one. See you then.

