

## Our Mission and Vision

This is the second in on-going series of publications to prepare us for welcoming our new rector.

We will follow up this newsletter with a discussion at coffee hour between the services this next Sunday, *March 27th*, or connect via Zoom (questions can be asked in the chat).

St Mary's is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81368548861?pwd=ZStOemdmSHhzYmU2YWpqRytDWElnUT09>

Meeting ID: 813 6854 8861 Passcode: 830294

In late December of 2020, a small group of Vestry and Transition Team members began to work together to synthesize all we'd learned about ourselves into some simple statements that articulate who we are, why we exist, and what we aspire to become.

This work was completed and approved by the Congregation in a Feb 21, 2021, congregation-wide Zoom meeting. It contained an agreed upon set of principles that guides everything we do as a community and formed the basis for how the Transition Team conducted our search process.

### **OUR IDENTITY: WHO WE ARE**

St. Mary's is a diverse, Christ-centered, resilient, and evolving community of devoted people with grace filled hearts, searching minds, loving hands, and peaceful souls.

### **OUR MISSION: WHY WE EXIST**

Saint Mary's **exists** to be a:

- **beacon** of Christ's love guiding us to discover and live our best lives
- **gathering place** for community where all will be welcomed at God's table
- **sanctuary** for all seeking comfort, guidance, refreshment, and renewal

### **OUR VISION: WHAT WE ASPIRE TO BECOME**

Saint Mary's aspires to be a church where:

*Faith Transforms*

*Worship Engages*

*Ministry Empowers*

*Tradition Grounds*

Through this process the Vestry then identified a set of core values – the things that we treasure and want to respect in each aspect of our spiritual life together. The Cottage Group Discussions in April and May of 2020 (which may have been the first Zoom experience for many of us!) clearly showed us that we are unaware of the wide diversity of perspectives in our

congregation. We are reluctant to talk about these differences because the louder voices in the room tend to mask those who are quieter. This work led the Vestry to create a [Parish Covenant](#) that spells out how we intend to follow through on our commitment to be true to our identity and live our mission:

*Saint Mary's Episcopal Church, Abingdon, aspires to be an intentional learning community that desires to practice what we preach. We seek spiritual transformation and evolution through the cultivation of open minds, hearts, and wills, and through our commitment to these spiritual practices:*

- *listening*
- *humility and grace*
- *loving kindness*
- *honest and loving speech*
- *generosity*
- *mercy and forgiveness*
- *hospitality and inclusivity*
- *healthy relationships*
- *accountability*
- *communication*
- *taking initiative*
- *creativity*

The next *Special Edition Messenger* will focus on the five priorities that the Vestry identified as essential to accomplish our mission. It will be published on April 4<sup>th</sup>, with the follow-up discussion on Sunday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, between services, or on zoom (link to come).

*For more detail on this topic, view the information originally published in our [Parish Profile](#), available under the new **Resources** tab on our website [here](#). You can also find past *Special Edition Messenger* issues in that location.*