

IMAGINE

EMBRACING BRAVE CHANGE WITH GOD'S HELP

**Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts
Mission Strategy Discussion Guide
May 2017**

Our diocesan mission strategy document may be used in many ways by congregations. Use what resonates for your own congregation; there is no expectation or requirement to attempt everything. The following list is a small sample of suggested uses.

SERMONS AND BIBLE STUDIES (one or a series)

A preacher could reflect on any one of the major themes of our mission strategy (“Reimagining Our Congregations,” “Building Our Relationships,” “Engaging Our World”) and how it might have an impact on or inspire action in his/her particular congregation. In a Bible study, the facilitator could ask participants to reflect on the text in one of the three main areas (its Scripture, goals and actions) and then share how any of it speaks to them, as individuals and as a group. How do the goals and actions affect and/or inspire the group to further reflection or action?

A preacher could discuss possible meanings for the introductory phrase, “Engaging Brave Change,” asking questions about how relevant that phrase is within his/her congregation, and, if it is relevant, how the congregation might do that work. Similarly, in Bible study, the facilitator could invite reflection on the associated Scripture passage (I Corinthians 16:13-14) and ask what that passage brings up for the participants.

ADULT FORUMS (one or a series) or VESTRY AND PARISH RETREATS

The mission strategy document is a rich resource for congregations and groups that wish to use its various sections to help deepen relationships, identify shared values and make plans. Facilitators might build on any of the following questions in shaping adult forums or retreats:

- Where, in the mission strategy, do we see ourselves? What are our particular gifts or “charisms”?
- Are we called to “Embrace Brave Change” at this time in our history? Why or why not? What does “Embracing Brave Change” mean for us at this time in our lives?
- How can we, as a congregation, reimagine our call to discipleship in this time and place? Is Jesus calling our congregation into something different, better, or more? How, where and to what is Jesus calling us?
- Is Jesus calling our congregation to let go of something or some things that we currently are doing, in order to make space (or money or energy) for something new?

•Our diocesan mission strategy calls us to deepen our relationships with one another, by visiting other congregations and sharing our faith stories. Who could we visit? Who could we invite to visit us? What are our faith stories? How might we become more comfortable sharing them?

•Our diocesan mission strategy calls us to further develop our skills for mission and evangelism by participating in networks of individuals with shared ministry interests and collaborating with other congregations. What gifts and skills do we have in our congregation that might be shared with other congregations across the diocese?

•Our diocesan mission strategy calls us to engage in meaningful conversations about racism and creation care, and deepen our relationships with neighbors near and far. How might we, as a congregation and as individuals, engage more fully and deeply with our local community? How might we work to reconcile ourselves and all people to one another, as Christ calls us to do? How might we deepen our commitment and action to caring for God's creation?

•What action steps come out of our conversation? What further work is God giving us to do?

DEVELOPMENT OF A MISSION STRATEGY FOR A CONGREGATION

Congregations are encouraged to use our diocesan mission strategy to inform specific and contextual work on their own approaches to mission, either as they develop a new one or to review and refine an existing one. If the group has found useful concepts in the mission strategy or located their particular gifts as congregations within a particular theme or point, they may wish to adopt or adapt pieces of the mission strategy for themselves.

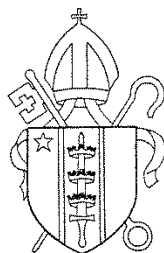
CONVERSATIONS WITHIN OR ACROSS GENERATIONS (one or a series)

Our diocesan mission strategy reminds us that each one of us brings particular energy and vision to our ministry together. The questions, above, can be adapted for use by any group: youth and young adults gathered for fellowship and formation, elders in a Bible study or by everyone on a parish retreat. Let's listen for all of our voices!

OFFER FEEDBACK THROUGH YOUR ELECTED DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVES

The clergy and Diocesan Convention delegates elected from all congregations are responsible for approving the annual multimillion-dollar diocesan budget each November. If you have suggestions about how our diocese should prioritize its spending, you can follow the development of the annual diocesan budget, available at www.diomass.org/inside/docs/diocesan-budget. More importantly, you can let some or all of your elected representatives, including your deanery representatives to Diocesan Council, know what you are thinking.

Learn more about our new diocesan mission strategy: www.diomass.org/new-mission-strategy.



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www.diomass.org