



Sr. Warden's Address to the Annual Meeting of the Parish

Good evening,

We have certainly travelled an interesting and challenging path over the past few years, but God has been generous and merciful throughout. We are in a far better place, and all the glory and honor belong to Him.

It would be understandable if we chose to measure our success by what we have overcome, but it is far more meaningful to measure our success by what we seek to become. Now that our new Dean is officially in place, and we hope and pray that COVID remains a manageable issue, it is to the future of St. Peter's that we must turn if we are to fulfill our calling as a people of faith.

So, this evening I would like to identify three areas of strategic consideration that I plan on raising with the Vestry and the Finance Committee. Both organizations will be fully engaged in the planning process, developing specific responses to these initiatives. To the extent they may emerge as operational objectives, we will be updating the congregation on a regular basis.

1. Of utmost importance to the future of Anglicanism, especially in the United States, is the matter of raising up faithful, orthodox priests and deacons. The ACNA has not been around long enough to have built up a supply of trained and experienced priests that can grow into larger ecclesiastical roles or plant new churches. The demand is there, but the supply is not. The Charles Simeon Institute is uniquely qualified to address this situation. We know what CSI can do. We have enjoyed sponsoring young seminarians each summer, watching them grow in their faith and their confidence, and our Curates have become special people in the life of this congregation. Indeed, the graduates of the Simeon Institute are doing the Lord's work in parishes and missions across the country. But you may be surprised, as I was, that not even our presiding Archbishop was aware of the Institute or what it has accomplished. Therefore, the first order of business is to move the Simeon Institute closer to the center of St. Peter's parish life. Rather than being a separate organization with its own agenda, the resources that Fr. Michael has nurtured and developed should be assets available parish wide. This is not to supplant or diminish existing Cathedral programs, but to enhance them, to help leverage the talents, skills and resources of both CSI and St. Peter's, to the benefit of worship, spiritual growth and outreach. A case in point would be Adult Formation. Furthermore, these skills and resources should be readily available to Anglican churches throughout the country. This can take various forms: taped or recorded teachings and seminars; lesson plans for church development and management; structured internships for Anglican Seminaries specifically designed to supplement their curricula; an increased number of summer fellows and Curates; and greater support for local missions. The typical Anglican church is small, lacking the resources for multiple clergy or a robust staff. Providing precisely this type of support is what a Cathedral is for, and St. Peter's will continue to be blessed for encouraging and uplifting the faithful. These are bold, aggressive and far-reaching targets, but there is no reason why the Charles Simeon Institute at St. Peter's Anglican Cathedral Tallahassee should not be widely recognized as a center of excellence for orthodox, scripturally sound resources. The core is here; let us begin to leverage it for God's greater purposes.

2. The next matter for strategic consideration is space, particularly space for children's ministries, youth programs and young adult offerings. Closely related is the matter of more effective space for parish-wide activities, pastoral counseling and staffing. We can no longer afford to stymie the growth and development of this Cathedral because we lack the space. For too long, we have been focused exclusively on one, large multipurpose building that would address all these shortfalls. The last time I checked this was a \$7 million price tag, which I am sure will have increased substantially in the interim. And that vision need not be rejected or abandoned. We have the land and it may come in time. But we cannot be paralyzed by a grand vision to the detriment of our duties and responsibilities to the body of Christ today. So, I will shortly propose to the Vestry that we begin the process of looking at reasonable alternatives, with three immediate objectives in mind: maintaining the appeal of our current facilities, providing classroom and office space that is efficient and effective, and doing so within budget constraints that reflect our obligation to be good stewards of our resources. Having \$1.9 million sitting in a building fund at interest rates that are far lower than inflation is not a good use of resources. We have an obligation to manage the building fund in a manner more consistent with sound fiscal practices, and which meet legitimate Cathedral objectives.

3. Finally, by way of basic housekeeping, we have finalized an analysis of our risk profile, and acquired the services of capable and professional insurance partners. A new Property and Casualty policy is now in place which far more adequately addresses the financial risk to our property and physical assets. We have instituted increased and improved safeguarding practices that address risk to personnel, and we will continue to test our risk management assumptions to align with best practices. The next step is to assess facilities, training and staff development, to better prepare for whatever the post-COVID workplace requires to sustain our enterprise. The final piece is a thorough review of our bylaws and governing documents, again with an eye towards conformance with legal standards, sound financial management and Anglican canons.

The Vestry and the Finance Committee do not formally meet in July, but at the August meeting we will begin the process of carefully, prayerfully and diligently exploring these options. I will suggest that the Executive Committee create an ad hoc strategic planning study group, under the direction and discretion of the Dean, that will provide form and structure to these, and any other, strategic conversations. Ideas may be accepted, rejected or substantially modified, but we must define and embrace a Godly path forward.

These initiatives will require the prayers, commitment and continued financial support of the congregation, but they are all realistic and attainable. We are not called to be complacent or content. We know the promises of salvation, and we know the path to victory. St. Paul, in instructing the church in Corinth, speaks precisely to this point: "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."

Thank you.