

RAISING the ROOF

These are exciting times at St. Mark's by-the-Lake. For over 12 months this parish has been reflecting on its future through a task force known as Markus. This process culminated with a report to our Annual Vestry Meeting on February 11, 2007. Nearly 130 people came to engage in the process of discerning direction for this church community. The presentation made by the members of Markus was fantastic and outlined a host of new initiatives that will help us be stronger and a more accommodating as a community. Jesus implored the disciples to go and baptize and make disciples of the nations. We believe that means creating an open, inviting, and accepting community that does all that it can to welcome God's beloved into community.

To that end Markus has recommended and implemented (With Vestry Approval November 2006) a full time position of Parish Administrator to help manage office affairs and to act as a single point of contact for our community. This is an important initiative that has already begun to pay dividends as we have freed up the rector to do more liturgical and pastoral duties. This position has also allowed us as a parish to concentrate on getting the message out. It is early in the process but Markus, The Parish leadership Team and the Parish are confident that this position will help us seek and serve Christ in more diverse ways.

Markus has also recommended that we create a staff position of New Member Manager. This will be a volunteer position which will focus entirely on finding the best possible way to maintain the New Comers we have at the church and how we integrate them once they are here. This recommendation was accepted unanimously at the February 11, 2007 Vestry Meeting and the Wardens in consultation with the New Member Management Team are in the process of refining what that position will look like. The biggest Recommendation from Markus was relative to the church structure. If you have been attending St. Mark's in the past couple of years you no doubt have noticed that there has been a large increase in Sunday Attendance over a few years back. On most Sundays of the year we exceed 75% of our seating and on many weeks we are even higher. No this does NOT mean that we have no room at church. We are creatively always finding ways to make us all comfortable and will continue to do so as a short term solution. Long-term, however, is quite another story. If we want to continue to deliver the Good News of Jesus of Nazareth we need to address the issues we have with space in our church building. The over 45 people who got engaged in Markus identified many needs that this congregation has. They include but are not limited to; additional church seating, an equipped choir room, a welcome area and library, a larger kitchen, more Sunday school space, additional office space, adult Christian Education room, more parking, more storage, fellowship space fully accessible and open worship space, & better washroom facilities.

Early in the process, Markus found a friend in Dr. Norm Becker, an engineer with a huge heart and a generosity of spirit that is second to none. Norm donated his services (a gift equal to \$100 000) and developed concept drawings that allow us to add 7500 square feet to our church and hall that accomplishes all of what Markus was seeking while at the same time adding the benefit of making us more energy efficient, more accessible and more environmentally friendly. Norm attended Vestry and presented his plan and gave great excitement to all who were present. His Virtual pictures can be found on this page. The nearly 130 people present voted in favour of this proposal with no objections. We had a spirited and alive conversation which spoke well of the good excitement among the faithful for the gospel that we profess. The plan will cost \$1 Million. It is the hope of the Parish that we will secure a grant from the Diocese of Huron for \$400 000. Today we are working to get information to the parish to make our dream a reality. You can read the motion that passed at that meeting on this page.

Since that meeting in February we have visited our Diocesan Council and have had a motion passed that supports our project in principle and forges a partnership with our parish to see us through to our goal.

It is important now that we as a parish to all in our power to show our diocesan family what we can do here at the local level. You can see that motion on this page as well.
Keep your eyes and ears open for opportunities to make your commitment to this very exciting project.
There will be a exciting news soon about a big launch date for our RAISING The ROOF Campaign!