



## **A VISION FOR THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS**

Our vision for the Church of the Holy Cross is that of a worshipping community dedicated to fulfilling the Great Commission by discerning, releasing, and deploying the gifts of its members for ministry.

### **Centered in Worship**

Undergirding all of our life together is the celebratory worship of Jesus Christ as Lord. We see our times of worship, especially our weekly gathering around the Lord's Table, as a spiritual oasis, providing an opportunity for personal encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ and spiritual refreshment in the power of the Holy Spirit, before the throne of God the Father. In the Book of Revelation, St. John paints a vivid picture of the river of the water of life, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. As this river flows through the center of the City of God, on either side, it waters the "tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit..." John observes that "the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." (Revelation 22:1-2) In the same way, we understand that worship is the vital center from which flows that "water of life," the precious gift of the Holy Spirit, which nurtures fruitfulness in every other area of ministry to which we may be called.

### **A Body in Ministry**

To the Corinthian Church, the Apostle Paul wrote, "Now you are the Body of Christ and individually members of it." (1 Corinthians 12:27) He likened the Church to a human body, in which each of the many parts has a vital and indispensable function to fulfill for the good of the whole. In the same way, we see the Church of the Holy Cross as a ministering body, in which the gifts of every member are valued, nurtured, and encouraged in the context of a loving Christian community.

### **Great Commission Opportunity**

At the heart of our vision is the desire to be fully obedient to the Great Commission, Christ's compelling command to go into all the world, making disciples out of every nation. (Matthew 28:19) We are aware that, in Raleigh, North Carolina, the Lord has planted us in the midst of an extraordinary missionary opportunity. It is quite likely that the population surrounding us will continue to expand dramatically, perhaps for several more decades. As our region literally draws multitudes from across our own nation and from around the world, we foresee that many will come hungering for a spiritually lively parish, in which their own gifts and talents for ministry may be released. Many more will come not ever having had the opportunity to embrace the claims of Christ. We perceive that the potential for a harvest around us is truly plenteous, and will become more so, yet the laborers are few. It is in the interest of multiplying the number of laborers being sent forth into the harvest that we envision a ministry dedicated to releasing the gifts of our members for ministry.

At the same time, we are aware that the Great Commission compels Christian concern and affection for those beyond the local community. We are driven by a sense of the urgency of the unfinished task of making disciples out of every nation and by the desperation of the cries of those who are perishing spiritually because they have yet to hear the claims of the Gospel. In the face of such great urgency and such great missionary opportunity, it is our vision that the only adequate response is that of a body in which all the gifts of all the members are fully released for significant service.

## Releasing our Gifts

Within our own congregation, we envision that the releasing of gifts for ministry will result in a proliferation of ministries, including those associated with discipling children, young people and adults; those associated with extending the merciful, caring, and healing ministries of Jesus to those who are hurting or in need; and those enriching the fellowship aspects of body life. We expect that such a release will also result in the revitalization of our Home Group ministries, as they are seen as places for the discovery and nurture of spiritual gifts and talents.

## Balanced Discipleship

In seeking to live into our vision of a body fully engaged in ministry, we embrace an understanding of Christian discipleship which includes the following essential elements: an invitation into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; a thorough grounding in the teachings of Holy Scripture; nurture in the context of Christian community; the opportunity for personal, life-transforming empowerment by the Holy Spirit; and the releasing of God-given gifts and talents for ministry.

In the process of releasing members of the body into ministry we will be guided by four fundamental precepts. We will seek to deploy our members into ministries which are

- **anointed:** Jesus admonished his disciples not to leave Jerusalem until they were first clothed with the “power from on high.” We seek to create an environment in which the person, work, gifts and experience of the Holy Spirit are fully-embraced, and we seek to release people into ministry who know themselves to be empowered by the anointing Grace of the Holy Spirit.
- **authentic:** We will seek to release people into ministries where their giftedness, their sense of call, and the Lord’s proper timing all come together.
- **competent:** Some ministries will require not only appropriate giftedness, anointing, and a sense of call, but also training in particular ministry skills. Where this is the case, we will seek to provide opportunities for acquiring the necessary instruction.
- **accountable:** We will seek to deploy ministries in which appropriate modes of evaluation are in place to ensure continuing fruitfulness.

## Growing in Love

As we live into this vision of a body in which the ministry of every member is valued and affirmed, we expect that our Lord will see fit to deploy many members in ministries within our local congregation. Others will be deployed in ministries beyond our parish walls. We expect that He will raise up some who are being called into ordained ministry and others who are being called into various forms of missionary service. In offering ourselves to Christ’s service, in whatever ways He chooses to deploy us, we share that vision articulated by the Apostle Paul when he wrote to the Ephesians. We seek “to grow up in every way into him who is the Head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love.” (Ephesians 4:15-16)

## A Rich Heritage and a Bold Witness

As we move toward the fulfillment of this vision, we are deeply appreciative of the vast richness of our Anglican heritage. We believe that God is calling us to uphold a faithful and uncompromising witness within the tradition in which He has chosen to plant us. In so doing, we believe that He would have us nurture strategic relationships with those who share our sense of urgency about the missionary claims of the Gospel.

Adopted September 1999.

Revised and affirmed unanimously by the Vestry of Church of the Holy Cross, Anglican - May 10, 2005.