

**Parish Self-Assessment Report
We Walk By Faith**

**CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY
11000 Smoketree Drive
Richmond, Virginia 23236
January 8, 2007**

I. Introduction

Church of the Epiphany was established September, 1979. A history of the parish can be found at www.epiphanychurch.org.

The parish mission statement is as follows:

***Church of the Epiphany
Purpose and Mission Statement***

Eternal God, Heavenly Father, You have called us to be Epiphany people. Under the direction of Your Holy Spirit, we accept the responsibility, both individually and communally, to spread the Kingdom of Your Son, Jesus Christ, for Your honor and glory. It is our aim, through our living union with Christ, to proclaim the Word of Salvation to others and to better the temporal order through witness to Christ in our daily lives. We are a family in faith through Your unconditional Love, poured out by Your Holy Spirit. In the exercise of that faith, people shall see Christ. Each of us has the right, and also the duty, to use the unique spiritual, human, and material gifts You have given us, and to use them in both the Church and the world for the good of all humanity. We are members of one mystical body with Jesus Christ as its head. By living Your Word, in the light of our faith, we shall seek Your will in all things.

With this as our motivation, we resolve to:

Provide an atmosphere of warmth, hospitality and love to communicate the Word and Sacrament of God to a faith-filled community. This atmosphere will employ various forms of artistic and religious expression, to enhance the significance of the liturgy.

Share the richness of our Catholic faith with those of other faiths and grow in understanding of our common faith experiences, through joint prayer, worship and study, and a shared community action.

Increase awareness among community members of the need to respond generously to any of God's people who are suffering, whether it is from physical or emotional illness, deprivation of basic needs, loss of dignity, or separation from meaningful relationships.

Build a bond among members of our community by coming together, establishing personal relationships, and helping one another, as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Provide our youth and young adults with an environment conducive to Christian living, liturgical celebration, religious education, service to community and fellowship activities.

Provide continuing religious education programs in which the family and the parish will be coequally responsible for catechesis and for multi-generational sharing and growing in faith.

Create an awareness among members of the Community as to the needs, opportunities and rewards in pursuing church-oriented vocations.

Plan and serve the administrative requirements of the parish, keeping in mind the need to maintain its financial integrity and calling each community member to financial ownership.

All of this we pledge Father, with the commitment of our lives, through Your Son, Jesus Christ. For it is through Him, with Him, and in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is Yours, Almighty Father, now and forever, Amen.

The parish currently has approximately 1,900 families with nearly 6,000 members: 2,411 women, 1,800 men and 1,600 children. The current demographic as detailed in the Diocese of Richmond Annual report:

Children less than 13	985
Youth 13-17	555
Young Adults 18-30	1,228
Adults 31-59	2,143
Senior Adults 60+	695

From the results of the *We Walk by Faith Survey*, it is clear that “The Word of God is proclaimed in a way that helps parishioners to know and love Jesus.” With 1110 responses (the most in any category) 92% agree or strongly agreed.

The results also indicate that Epiphany is working in the right direction for the education of our youth and young adults. The responders to the survey agreed or strongly agreed by over 50% that the Christian Formation for our youth was working in the correct direction. It’s important to note that approximately 40% responded with “Don’t Know,” this high number can be attributed to number of parishioners that do not have children in Christian Formation. To summarize, of the individuals that did respond to Christian Formation, approximately 80% agree or strongly agree.

Epiphany was founded on four planks: Liturgy, Outreach, Education, and Fellowship. Based on those planks and the responses to the survey, Epiphany continues to focus and work in such a way that parishioners support the vast amount of outreach ministries, religious education programs, and fellowship opportunities while welcoming newcomers.

Is there work to be done? Yes.

II. Word Strengths

Parishioners indicated:

- Vast amount of educational programs (WINGS, RCIA, Thursday Morning Bible Study and many more) are offered at Epiphany
- Epiphany offers several Outreach programs (Week of Service, Work Camps, Mission trips and CARITAS) for members to be active disciples.
- The amount of library resources at Epiphany is very extensive, however this strength is mitigated by the fact they are not easily accessible and people are not aware of them.
- Epiphany continues to get more involvement from mothers and volunteers to meet the needs to have trained catechists. The Pathways program was slow to start but is gaining momentum. There has been a positive response to the Center for Ministry Development's Youth Ministry certificate program.

Needs

Parishioners indicated:

- We need more variety of programs and of times they are offered
- Need additional marriage support programs
- Need an alternative to St. Edward's condensed religious education program
- Epiphany needs to stress Time and Talent on a regular basis

III. Worship

Strengths

- Welcoming and warm hospitality
- Devices available for hearing-impaired to enjoy the worship
- Participation by all ages is encouraged and achieved in all aspects of weekly Masses
- Very visible tie between music and ministry
- Greater communication is being recognized and appreciated (comments in the survey)

Needs

- Need to recognize and grow Epiphany's cultural diversity
- Need to consider alternatives for access for individuals with disabilities
- Encourage the inclusion of younger children and youth in the Music Ministry
- Encourage more variety in musical selections

IV. Community

Strengths

- Fellowship opportunities are offered on a regular basis throughout the year
- Inclusion of the parishioners in all Sacramental celebrations
- Outreach to the sick, poor and homebound
- Generosity of parishioners in giving of their time and talent to the parish

Needs

- The parish demographics are changing and we need to adjust our programs to meet the needs of our parishioners
- The need for greater exposure of our Church in the local Community

- Increase ecumenical interaction in the local community
- Continued need to explore alternative communication methods

V. Service Strengths

- Our Outreach is diverse, broad and wide. Many people donate generously to Outreach in addition to their regular stewardship
- Always open to new possibilities and ministries. (Week of Service, Praying Hands Ministry, Woodland Crossing Ministry and many more)
- In excess of 500 parishioners are actively involved in Outreach ministries. There are many more volunteers in other parish ministries also
- The parish financially supports multiple Outreach efforts through grants and donations

Needs

- Increase awareness of social justice issues from the pulpit
- Integrate/invite more cultural diversity in worship / art / environment
 - Partner with another parish?
- Continued need to explore alternative communication methods

VI. Plans for renewal and meeting parish needs For the next year

- In the next sixty days take into consideration the strengths and needs as outlined in this document to develop a one year and five year action plan.

VII. Diocesan Support

What diocesan support does the parish need to meet its stated needs?

- Have the Diocesan staff visit with the Pastoral Council and give us an overview of the services and expertise that is available to Epiphany.

VIII. Conclusion

In conclusion we have learned from our parish Self Assessment that we are rich in the areas of; Hospitality, Community Service, Outreach, Fellowship, Pastoral Leadership and appreciation for the extensive amount time our members of the community give on a weekly basis.

We have identified a few areas of opportunity within our parish which includes increased awareness of cultural diversity, the need for additional handicapped accessibility and a wider variety of musical options. We also recognize that over time complacency can affect the quality of our ministries.

We will use the results of this self assessment to develop specific goals and actions plans to make Church of Epiphany a stronger Parish.