



## Strategic Planning During a Crisis

While there is a myriad of challenges and uncertainty in the midst of 2020, the Diocese took an opportunity to conduct a strategy planning session. This article is to highlight why this can be helpful and important to do. In March, the first thing on everyone's mind was, "how do we respond?" In times of crisis, responsiveness and flexibility are critical. But as a crisis drags on, crisis fatigue becomes very prevalent and challenging for anyone. The core questions become two fold, 1) how do we plan for a thriving future? and 2) how do we build resilient leaders in our congregations and community? Taking the overall approach can be helpful:



**RESPOND**



**PLAN**



**THRIVE**

Given that many of us are still in the response and planning phase, how do we take steps to thrive? There are many different approaches to having a strategic planning session. Many see strategic planning through the lens of 3-5-10 year plans for the future of an organization. However, it is also important to take a shorter view on the next year to lay a strong foundation for longer-term visioning efforts. An organization can't thrive if it can't learn, adapt, and grow from its current environment. If you are looking to plan a strategic planning session, consider the following questions:

- What is the current environment and challenges the organization faces?
- What is the tone of the organization?
- What does the organization want to accomplish in the next 6 months to a year?
- Who are the core stakeholders the organization should consider in its planning?

- What overall impact does the organization want?
- What development and funding opportunities are necessary?
- What can we learn from the crisis?
- What can we learn from our peers?
- What are the core activities we are doing now to respond and consider recovery?
- How do we plan for the other side of the crisis to create an opportunity to thrive?

An effective tool to guiding some of these questions is a SOAR (strengths, opportunities, aspirations, results) analysis. The SOAR analysis is rooted in the strength of the organization to lay the foundation for next steps and plans.



Leveraging a SOAR approach can help a congregation think through a roadmap with high-level recommendations to use the lessons learned from responding to the COVID 19 pandemic. Overall, the exercise supports the congregation brainstorm and bolster efforts in the organization, identify development opportunities, understand organization capacity, and continue sustainability of the organization's mission. While there are many unknowns, and plans may have to adapt quickly, this is great chance to engage leaders in your church to have a healthy dialogue about planning and aspirations in the congregation. For more information on how to conduct a planning session, please reach out to Canon Easterlin @ [keasterlin@gaepiscopal.org](mailto:keasterlin@gaepiscopal.org).