

**2021 Annual Report
of The Crossing
@ St Paul's Cathedral
Date: February 10, 2022**

Priest's Report

If I were to create a title for 2021 at The Crossing, what do you think it would be? I've thought of many as the months passed us by, but surprisingly to me, I would say it is this: 2021 - Living our Vision.

When I look back and think of all the things we did - all the hard conversations, all the waiting and wishing to be together again, all the patience it took with getting a hybrid worship we could be proud of, all the chances we took to gather, all the times we leaned in when running away could have easily been excused - all of those times were times that we were living into our vision that we set for ourselves in 2020.

The Crossing has always been a creative hotspot, a liturgical lab, a place where we can scrap everything and start again. That statement is so true that we often scrap good stuff with roots by accident (or intentionally) and start anew just because that's what we do. But in 2020 we set a vision for ourselves for 5 years. That's a long time in Crossing-time! So I wondered if we'd still be living this vision a year later. And we have.

Our vision is below my report, but in short, we dreamed a dream that The Crossing would be better known and more easily found, that we would be an example of a whole and healthy Christian community not falling to toxicity and cynicism, that we would be an anti-racist community and have that be real, true, and honest, and that we would be connected and strengthened by our relationships, that we would grow spiritually, through small groups and communications. That vision was alive in everything we did this past year.

We hired a media consultant to help us with our online reach so that people can find us and know us better. We fought for equitable pay for our musicians, engaged in spiritual practices, had hard conversations and leaned into one another rather than turning away because we wanted to be healthy and whole; we wanted to love each other and by doing so, show the wider church how we can do Christian community well. We built a relationship with Emmanuel Church as we collaborated in dialogue groups for the Sacred Ground curriculum for racial justice, the council spent time every meeting looking at our own patterns and dynamics at the crossing, we participated in the equity consultations with the larger cathedral team, and we listened to our community members of color share their experiences of racism in our community. And we spent hours, days, weeks, and months building back our relationships, broadening our communication structure, adding another worship service during the summer, meeting with newcomers and finding ways for every person at the crossing to stay connected. We lived this vision.

Sure, we still have ways we will continue to grow into this vision. We still cast a dream for who we wish The Crossing to be in the world. And we shed a light on the path forward. I pray our next year creates and collects more pieces of this vision. Thank you for being The Crossing.

Faithfully submitted by The Rev. Tamra Tucker (Priest/Lead Organizer)

Five-Year Vision @ the crossing

In September of 2020, The Crossing community met to envision our future. With a permanent priest and a renewed sense of grounding with the cathedral, we are ready to envision what and who the crossing seeks to be in the future. We created four 5-year goals and set smaller, achievable one-year goals that are attainable for a small congregation living in the midst of world-breaking pandemics. We believe our goals are specific to us, and complement our role as a congregation of the cathedral seeking to embrace brave change through reimagining our liturgy, building our relationships, and engaging our world.

Now one year (and some months) into our Five-Year Vision, we reflect on what we have accomplished, where our challenges are, and what (if anything) needs changing.

In 5 years:

We, the crossing, aim to:

1. Be known in the wider church and community as a church that works for justice and is a place of welcome for the marginalized. People don't have to look far to find us. We are a church on the margins.
2. Return to and deepen an expression of Christianity that is healthy and whole - we aim to be a model of Christianity that is a positive inspiration to others, a mender of the breach (not falling to toxicity and cynicism).
3. Be able to proclaim ourselves as an anti-racist congregation and have it be true and real and honest, with an emphasis on
 - strong mutual aid, and
 - more explicit conversations of money and resources - (i.e. reparations).
4. Create a thriving community culture with a strong network/ways to connect, building community (including through small groups) and growing spiritually.

Our one-year goals (by September 2021) for the congregation, council, and priest are as follows:

1) Be known in the wider church and community as a church that works for justice and is a place of welcome for the marginalized. People don't have to look far to find us.

The congregation's goal this year is: to show up collectively for a justice-focused event in the coming year. Participation includes praying, showing up in body, sending invitations, providing materials and resources for others to attend, and other ways.

The council's goal this year is: to facilitate - identify event, get congregational involvement.

The priest's goal this year is: connect with six new religious leaders/communities in the next year and support the council in identifying potential events for the congregation.

2)Returning to and deepening an expression of Christianity that is healthy and whole - we aim to be a model of Christianity that is a positive inspiration to others, a mender of the breach.

The congregation's goal this year is: Taking on some practice during Advent to explore the meaning of being a eucharistic community, find healing, hold space for grief, etc.

The council's goal this year is: 5 minutes of spiritual practice at each monthly meeting focusing on healthy and whole expressions of Christianity.

The priest's goal this year is: (listen, track unhealthy patterns that we can change to work toward healthy and whole. Talk to council about the health of the community as a part of monthly check-ins and find and provide tools to council to help track patterns through learning more systems.

3)Be able to proclaim ourselves as an anti-racist congregation and have it be true and real and honest, providing strong mutual aid and more explicit conversations of money and resources - reparations.

The congregation's goal this year is: (in connection with community circle) - refocus commitment to radical welcome in an online space, expanding upon what has already been developed (e.g. how this is done during worship; radical welcome re-education through an anti-racist lens) (still needs to be more specific; Steph Speller's Radical Welcome training?)

The council's goal this year is: Include a racial justice check-in at every council meeting. Find and host an anti-bias training for leaders in the community and include antiracist values in our bylaws

The priest's goal this year is: Commit to sharing my own work through reflections, e-blasts, small groups, and conversation and continuing the work of moving the conversation of reparations on the diocesan level - sit on reparations committee for diocese.

4)Create a thriving community culture with a strong network of events/ways to connect, building community (including through small groups), and growing spiritually

The congregation's goal this year is: try out 3 new small groups, create a liturgy of welcome for our newest little ones!

The council's goal this year is: Investigate communication options for two-way connections throughout congregation and present to community, identify and raise up new leaders, and commit to having one 1-to-1 conversation per month with some member of the community

The priest's goal this year is: Provide 1 co-facilitation training for new leaders and follow up with council to identify and raise up new leaders.

How did we do?! What do we want our next year's goals to be? What do we want to change/improve?

Council

2021 was a very unusual year for the Crossing Council, along with everyone else. At the start of the year, the Council consisted of Autumn Cutting (Worship Circle rep), Michael Zahniser (Treasurer class of 2021), Penny Wilhelm (At Large class of 2023), Tamra (Priest and Lead Organizer), Michaye Ledford (At Large class of 2022), and Ken Farmer (Chapter representative). The Council was meeting monthly remotely on Zoom and worship was occurring weekly on Zoom. The Council was feeling the weight and disconnect of fully remote contact and hoped for a return to being together in person.

Much of the Council's work this year either focused directly on our response to the continuing pandemic of Covid-19, or functioned under its shadow. Early in the year, the Council focused on hopes for regathering in person, both for in-person Council Meetings and Worship on Thursday evenings. In June, the Council met in-person for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic. A big focus at that meeting, and the next several meetings, was the goal of the return to worshipping in person. That goal was realized in September when there was a "squishy" launch of hybrid in-person and remote worship, a model which has continued since.

Burnout was a major issue that the Council had to work through this year. We took a pause on the work to create a set of by-laws, as the momentum for the work had dwindled and we felt that the work itself had value in its current form. The Crossing turned 15 years old this year, but celebrating seemed difficult.

One thing we absolutely found the energy to celebrate was endorsing Rowan Larson for their ordination.

The Music Team needed extra care from the Council this year. We worked with the Cathedral on an equitable compensation analysis of the pay scale for the music team, including Music Director. As a result of this review, the Music Director and musicians all received raises to bring their compensation in line with similar positions of other congregations at the Cathedral and elsewhere. Also, Kevin Vetiach, our long time Music Director, stepped down and we worked quickly to hire a replacement, Jimmy Lim.

We engaged in a Mutual Ministry Review during which we explored our wonderings and our goals. This was a new way to do a performance type review in a deeper and more leaning-in way.

We continued our work toward being an anti-racist church, and being able to sincerely and authentically claim that title. We have been using the Racial Justice Audit of Episcopal Leadership as the starting point for our conversations. Many of the conversations have been very intense and the Council is strongly committed to this work.

We hired a Media Consultant and worked with her to create a new logo, branding identity, and website in the hopes that we will be more easily found by those people looking for a church like the Crossing. We had several meetings with the consultant and went through multiple options of branding concepts. It was difficult work, as feelings around the brand, and therefore public-facing identity of the Crossing, touches a lot of elements that each felt personally and strongly about.

We continued our deepening relationship with the Cathedral. We met with representatives from Chapter and had a conversation that several members of Council were dreading. The conversation seemed largely positive, though, and we left the conversation feeling hopeful about the direction of our place as one of the valued congregations of the Cathedral.

Submitted by council member, Penny Larson Wilhelm

Chapter Representative Report

The pandemic continued to impact the Cathedral in general and Chapter in particular during 2021, though it felt less chaotic than it did in 2020. Chapter business continued to be conducted mostly on Zoom, though there was one in-person meeting in November that I missed due to being out of town.

The Cathedral made progress in 2021 toward living into their Strategic Plan, which The Crossing's own 5-year plan aligns with well. The Strategic Plan Implementation Committee met with The Crossing Council in December where we had a good, productive discussion.

All Cathedral congregations met with our Equity Consultants as part of the Cathedral's goal of becoming an anti-racist institution. The consultants presented their findings, and a report will be coming out soon.

One thing The Crossing can look forward to is we did commit to installing air conditioning in the sanctuary as well as Sproat Hall, hopefully in the not too distant future.

Submitting this report is my final act as your Chapter Representative. It has certainly been an interesting time to serve on Chapter, but I look forward to directing my time and energy elsewhere for now though I will certainly continue to attend The Crossing!

Submitted by Ken Farmer, chapter representative

Worship Circle

The Worship Circle helps guide The Crossing through the seasons of the church year in our Thursday Worship, summer House Church, and other liturgical events. We meet monthly to plan worship. We started the year with Rev. Tamra Tucker, Autumn Cutting, Kevin Vetiac, Dorie Goehring, and Rowan Larson. Tracy Bindel joined us in April.

During 2021, the Worship Circle team of Tamra, Kevin, Tracy, and Autumn faithfully led the community through multiple transitions. We also did some important group reflection about our own shared leadership model, values, and capacity.

The year began with a continuation of our entirely online Zoom worship, exploring the theme of Courage. For Ash Wednesday, Tamra mailed packets of consecrated ashes to Crossing members, and we spent Lent reflecting on the image of the Phoenix rising from the ashes.

This year during Holy Week, we had our first ever Crossing Maundy Thursday service, still completely online!

During Eastertide, we focused on planting seeds for the world we want to grow and mailed marigold seed packets to the community. In Pentecost we thought about the winds of change and the breath of life. The availability of vaccines and ability to be outdoors inspired us to begin conversations about how to begin comfortably re-gathering in person. It was decided that we would return to the Cathedral for indoor worship in September while we spent the summer getting used to being with each other again and the Cathedral worked on installing/upgrading technology & equipment so that we could continue offering a Zoom worship option.

To meet our longing to be together, we added a new service that we've not done before. Two Sundays a month we began an outdoor in-person compline service through the summer months. One week would be at the Crossing House and one week would be at Tamra's house. We could finally sing together and not be muted. Wow.

At one of those compline services we held an in-person/hybrid memorial service for Obama in August on the first anniversary of his death. We had people from many states and Puerto Rico join us online as we gathered in Tamra's back yard and remembered Obama as we said goodnight to the day and all its worries.

In August, we did different house church styles. We had a zoom gathering for fellowship, Jacky and Shanese hosted a crossing style worship service at their house with food and cross decorating, and the Crossing House had a self-care night with sugar scrub making and delicious dinner!

Our hybrid worship experiment got off to a rocky start in September with many technological challenges. We are eternally grateful for Sean Griffin's expertise, troubleshooting, and dedication to keeping us connected! In-person worship is different than it used to be, with changes in the seating arrangement and how we share the peace and do Eucharist, but it is wonderful to be able to sing together again, read communal prayers and share Eucharist at all. Throughout the fall, our theme explored what it means to "return," especially since many congregants remain online and for others who came to the community after March 2020, it was their first time worshipping in the Cathedral!

We also welcomed our seminarian and minister for community care, Chris Morris, from Boston University School of Theology. We are grateful to have extra support in worship as Chris fills in for leadership respite while he leans into what it means to be queer and Christian.

As Advent approached, we prepared for more transition: with Council's input, we decided to try worshipping upstairs in the Cathedral sanctuary rather than in Sproat Hall. We also began the search for a new Music Director as Kevin prepared to step down to move into a different role on their path to ordination. A December highlight was offering a blessing for two Crossing families who had babies in 2020: Tom & Tammy and Jessica & Trevor. We closed out the calendar year with The Crossing's first ever "Lessons & Carols" service on Dec. 23rd!

Submitted by Autumn Cutting (worship circle member)

Music Report

2021 was a very full year for the Music Team at the Crossing. We began the year making music remotely for Zoom worship. That meant each musician playing their parts separately and submitting the parts to the Music Director, Kevin Vetiac, for them to combine them into final mixes for the remote worship. As much as the results of those efforts were great, the band longed to play together in person, and so we started meeting at the Cathedral and playing live music for the Zoom service before the congregation returned to in-person worship. As we've played in person the broadcast to Zoom seems to have continually improved, and we're all happy for that. Toward the end of the year we received a bombshell announcement that our long-time Music Director, Kevin, would be stepping away from the Crossing. The Council embarked on a rapid search and found a replacement Music Director, Jimmy Lim. The makeup of the team remains in flux, as Jose has just announced his departure from the piano chair. However, Adam continues on guitar, Dana on bass and Penny on drum.

Submitted by Penny Larson Wilhelm

Kevin Vetiac, Music Director

Postulant's Report - From Dorie Goehring

Over the past year, I've continued growing in my ministry through working with Grace Episcopal Newton as a youth minister. I recently left to pursue CPE at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, and I'm happy to report that I'm learning a lot (even though it's only week 2!) I'm planning on applying for ordination to the diaconate this June, and I look forward to letting you know more about that when the time comes. I've missed the Crossing community terribly, and while I'm sad that I can't come to live worship due to my class schedule, I'm so grateful for the technology that allows me still to remain part of the community in some small way! Please continue to pray for me, and know that I'm praying for all of you, as well.

Community

This year, the Community Circle helped organize greeters and tech hosts for services during our time on Zoom. The Community Circle also ran events to help connect the community over Zoom and occasionally in person, including after-service Zoom pub nights and trivia nights. One of our goals was to revitalize the Crossing's small group culture. While a couple of small groups continue to run and we looked for leaders interested in offering more, no one stepped forward with the capacity to lead a new small group.

The Community Circle is currently on hiatus. The pandemic and the work of keeping a community connected across distance took a toll on organizer energy. It also made it difficult to assess the community's needs and to bring new organizers into the Community Circle's work. We

hope that a new iteration of the Community Circle will form to serve the Crossing's missions of welcoming, community, and hospitality.

Submitted by Kelsey Larson

Creché Report

Hello, The Crossing! It's been another wild pandemic year with complex difficulties, surprising mercies, unexpected plot twists, and more joys and heartaches than I can remember. What a year.

The biggest news, of course, is the unforeseen closure of The Crossing House. When we launched a few years ago, we did so knowing that the house would be sold in 2025, trusting that the intervening years would provide ample runway to launch the Crossing House into a permanent home. Unfortunately, Alice (a founding house member who also co-owns the house) needs to sell the house earlier than we'd planned.

With no affordable place to move the community and vacancies that haven't yet recovered from the pandemic, a collaborative team from both Creche and The Crossing decided that the best course of action was to let this incarnation of The Crossing House come to its end. There may be another Crossing House in the future, and maybe there won't - either way, we're proud of the incredible intentional community that faithfully lived into a vocation of prayer, joy, and service for 2.5 years, and we're grateful for ways it touched the lives of so many.

There's a lot to celebrate about The Crossing House, and we'll be gathering to pray, sing, and express our gratitude and grief on Sun, Feb 13, at 2pm. I hope you can join us.

In wider Creche news, I'm pleased to report that the Creche network has grown to include a new intentional community, this time in Newton Centre and focused on the particular needs of graduate students at Boston College. At our annual retreat this year, it was a joy to see The Crossing House offer mentorship and advice they've gained over the past years to this new household.

Creche has reached the point that one full-time staff person is just not enough to support four intentional communities while also continuing to grow, and I'm pleased to report that we have hired Jeffrey Edenberg to be our Program Manager. Jeff comes to us after five years as the Residency and Operations Director at the Beacon Hill Friends House, and brings a wealth of knowledge regarding faith-rooted cooperative living.

In a year when many housing cooperatives and intentional communities had to close up shop, the fact that Creche is still going is entirely due to partners like The Crossing who walk alongside us and share the vision for this work. Thank you so much - we couldn't persevere, let alone grow, without you, and I'm so, so grateful for this scrappy, unlikely band of pilgrims and heretics.

Much love to you all,
Isaac Everett
Executive Director, Creche

2021 Finance Update and Narrative Budget

Getting an accurate view of our finances has been difficult this year because the Cathedral has been in the process of moving to a new accounting system. At this point we still don't know for sure what our year-end income and expenses came out to. Because the Cathedral is legally responsible for the state of the accounting, not the Crossing, that's not as big a problem as it would be if we were an independent organization. But, it does mean budgeting for next year has been difficult.

Although we don't yet have the final numbers, giving during both years of the pandemic has been higher than at any other time in the Crossing's history. On the other hand, getting new grant income has been more difficult in recent years, and we've had to reduce our estimate for grants.

After years of not giving the musicians any cost of living increases, this year the Council looked at what musicians are paid in comparable gigs and increased salaries accordingly. Because of this, the music expenses will be higher next year. This makes our expenses significantly higher than our income, but that's true of all Cathedral ministries - the excess is paid by our share of the Cathedral's endowment and rental income.

Submitted by Michael Zahniser, Treasurer

To see the 2022 budget, [click here](#).

To fill out your pledge card for 2022, [click here](#)!