



**MARBLE
COLLEGIATE
CHURCH**

Visioning Marble's Future: From Strength to Strength

August 2022





**Cover image was taken on Easter 2019*



**“Blessed are those whose strength is in you,
in whose heart are the highways to Zion.**

**As they go through the valley of Baca
they make it a place of springs;
the early rain also covers it with pools.**

**They go from strength to strength;
the God of gods will be seen in Zion.”**

Psalm 84:5-7

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A Message from the Marble Strategic Planning Leadership Team

To: Members and Friends of the Marble Community

This Strategic Plan presents a vision for a growing Marble Collegiate Church – growing in faith, growing in relationships, and growing in strength. The plan represents hundreds of hours of participation by members of the congregation, the staff, and the Board of Elders and Deacons.

Throughout, the process has been guided by our consultants, Jake Mulder and Dr. Yulee Lee, from the Leadership Formation Division of Fuller Seminary. We are grateful for their professional wisdom on leadership and planning; their skills in leading interviews, focus groups, and meetings; their knowledge of organizations and churches in particular; and vital to this effort – their faith in Christ.

This plan celebrates the strength of Marble’s 168 years that have preceded us. This plan also anticipates the additional strength we will develop, guided by our faith and our commitment to God and to Marble.

The Growing Priorities presented in this plan explore the opportunities you, our Marble Community, have identified. The plan also identifies our challenges, most significant of which is a new financial reality. This reality requires new reliance on the support of our own congregation and careful, healthy stewardship of Marble’s resources.

We are living into a new phase of Marble’s history. Over the next several months, five task forces will further refine the initiatives identified in each of the five growing priorities. In our continuing efforts to involve you in this process, we invite you to submit refined or new ideas by sharing them on Marble’s “From Strength to Strength” website (marblechurch.org/strength-to-strength/). In the fall we will have an open forum with the congregation to provide a comprehensive update on the growing priorities and the corresponding action plans.

In Christ,

G. Gregory Lozier, D.Ed., Co-Chair
Current Chair of the Marble Board of Elders and Deacons



Stephanie M. Bailey, Co-Chair
Former Chair of the Marble Board of Elders and Deacons



Dr. Michael Bos
Senior Minister



Rev. J. Elise Brown, Ph.D.
Executive Minister





Executive Summary

Our Mission

Our Vision

Executive Summary

For over 168 years, Marble Collegiate Church has embodied hope, inclusion, transformation, and thriving in New York City and beyond. Some aspects of Marble are non-negotiable and should never change. Our mission, for example, is unwavering: *We are a diverse, inclusive community of God's people led by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. We inspire everyone to become positive thinkers who make a difference in the world.*

While we have a consistent mission, we live in a fast-changing world. Many aspects of Marble have changed significantly during our rich history, and will continue to adapt and evolve with the times. Our specific priorities, ministries, makeup of our congregation, and strategies for communication and engagement are up for reexamination. Said another way, Marble's core message will remain consistent...but our methods will adapt. An effective strategic plan must be dynamic and responsive to continuous change.

Finding the balance between what must remain the same and how and where we should embrace change and invest our limited time and financial resources requires wisdom and leadership. For the past several months we have been in a season of careful listening and discernment. Teams and committees have been intentionally formed. We have conducted interviews, focus groups, led vision sessions, and invited the entire congregation to complete an extensive survey and give feedback through several town hall meetings.



Executive Summary

(Continued)

As a result of this process, we are pleased to share this Strategic Plan. The first part of the plan addresses the foundations of Marble's identity, including our history, core beliefs, values, and commitments. The second part covers our current state, including our strengths, gaps and opportunities, and the current financial reality. The Marble Community includes people with so many gifts, and there are many strengths on which we can build. However, we must respond to current challenges such as financial sustainability and a lack of participants from younger generations.

The third part of the plan covers the Growing Priorities that are best positioned to move us into a bright future, as well as next steps for implementation. We have chosen to use Growing Priorities because we believe the future of Marble will be defined by growth. We must grow so more people can experience our diverse, inclusive community and be led by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. Our five top priorities are: Growing with 20s & 30s and Families; Growing in Mission and Justice; Growing Deeper Relationships; Growing in Our Neighborhoods; and Growing Financial Sustainability.

We believe what follows is a bold vision for the future of Marble, and something that will require each of us to lean in and contribute. As we continue on this journey, we take hope in the words of scripture, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).



Executive Summary

Our Mission

Our Vision

Our Mission

Marble Collegiate Church is a diverse, inclusive community of God's people led by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

We inspire everyone to become positive thinkers who make a difference in the world.

"My life has been completely and utterly transformed. I was broken, but Marble has been that place of resurrection and renewal I needed." - A congregant



Our Vision for the Future

MARBLE CHURCH – HERE FOR YOU

Marble Collegiate Church’s future is tethered to and propelled by its past. For over 168 years, we have been here on 5th Avenue, guided by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. But Marble is not just a building of brick and mortar. Marble is a movement and a message that exists to see individuals’ lives transformed. In other words, Marble is for you. As our inclusive congregation moves toward even greater vibrancy and ability to fulfill its mission for all generations, we invite you to imagine the future of Marble with us. Following is a snapshot of what we dream is possible in and through Marble five years from now:

Marble is a congregation consisting of a community of people from all ages, races and ethnicities, sexual orientations and gender identities, political views, socioeconomic statuses, and life experiences. Marble exemplifies the kind of faith community a divided society needs.

On Sunday, young people and older people, people from the neighborhood and people from great distances, gather expectantly and in greater numbers. Uplifting music represents Marble’s diversity and moves people more fully into the presence of God. Powerful and hope-filled preaching and teaching inspire people to follow the way of Jesus Christ and catalyze life transformation, empowering people to live an embodied faith in their relationships, schools, workplaces, and wider community.

Marble is as known for what it does during the week as it is for its Sunday Worship. Thousands from New York City, the US and the world participate in its online and in-person programs that facilitate relationships and help people grow in faith. Children, young adults, families, singles, and seniors come together in service to meet the needs of their neighbors and advocate for those who are forgotten and marginalized in society. Marble is the “go to” church in New York City to provide spiritual nourishment and is a leading lay-driven church in the city. Even people who do not attend Marble will know of Marble as a place of healing, help and hope.

Part I: Foundations of Marble's Identity

History, Core Beliefs, and Values



Marble's future strategies will build on the most important elements of our history, as well as our unchanging core beliefs and values.

"We need to look back in order to look forward. We need to take the best of Marble's history and figure out how that needs to be transformed for this moment."

- A congregant



Our History



Marble's identity and future is inextricably linked to our history and our past. Following is a glimpse of the history on which we are building:

Marble is part of The Collegiate Church of New York, which began in 1628 on the southern tip of Manhattan. This makes Marble part of the oldest Protestant church with continuous worship in America. The first worship service was held in Dutch and French in a community that spoke eighteen languages. In 1696, King William III granted a charter to The Collegiate Church making it the oldest corporation in America. As the population grew, new Collegiate Churches were started in the city. Today, there are four Collegiate Churches, with the other three being Middle Collegiate, West End Collegiate and Fort Washington Collegiate.



Our History



(Continued)



Marble was founded in 1854 and has a history of starting movements. In 1857, the Bank Panic occurred, and people lost their life-savings. It was during this time that Marble, along with the other Collegiate Churches, started the Fulton Street Prayer Meetings in lower Manhattan. These daily prayer meetings soon drew over 6,000 people and inspired other prayer meetings around the country. Over the course of one year, records state this revival drew one million people to the Christian faith.

In 1932, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale became Marble's Senior Minister. During the Great Depression his message of faith and the power of positive thinking changed lives and lifted the spirits of millions. In 1984, Dr. Arthur Caliandro

followed as Senior Minister and incorporated hope and healing into messaging and programs. In 1987, Dr. Florence Pert became the first woman to be ordained in the 359-year history of The Collegiate Church. She and Dr. Caliandro introduced relationship-building programs including the 1992 launch of the GIFTS ministry – today's LGBTQ+ fellowship. In 2008, Dr. Michael Brown brought messages of Christian discipleship and cheer.

To be a part of Marble is to further develop its story that began four centuries ago and changed according to the needs of the people. Marble is part of God's design to inspire faith, positivity, hope, healing, relationships, discipleship and cheer.



Our Core Beliefs

■ God - The Center of Our Lives

- God's work of salvation is about healing and wholeness as our relationships are restored with God, others, and creation.
- We turn to God to infuse our relationships with love, grace, and forgiveness, forming the foundation of our life together.

■ Jesus Christ - Making God Known

- In the person of Jesus, we see the heart of God and a reflection of God's deep love for us.
- By following the way of Jesus, we deepen our relationship with God and one another.
- Through the resurrection of Jesus, we discover we can embrace new life, both now and forever.

■ The Holy Spirit - God on the Move

- The Holy Spirit leads us in an evolving experience and understanding of God, continually guiding us in the life-giving practices of Bible study, prayer, worship, and service to others.

■ The Bible - Our Guide for the Journey with God

- The Bible is the redemptive history of the people of Israel; a witness to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; and the story of the early church.
- The Bible gives us the foundation and framework for understanding our faith story and stands as the preeminent guide for the Christian faith and life.

Our Core Beliefs

(Continued)

■ The Church - God Calling Us to Community

- Though faith is highly individual, we find its fullness when lived in community.
- God calls us to gather in worship, which is at the heart of God's communication with us and how we commune with one another as we celebrate our faith.
- The church exists not only to nurture its members but also to join God's work in healing a hurting world through acts of justice and compassion.

■ Our Theological Heritage - Thinking about God

Our denominations, the Reformed Church in America and the United Church of Christ, have a rich theological heritage upon which we continue to build. The Reformed Tradition teaches that we are continuously being reformed according to the Word of God. Therefore, through the perspective of our growing experience and God's unfolding revelation in history, we are called to use discernment in the application of our heritage. This means we are not only tradition inheritors and bearers, but also tradition creators.

Our Values & Commitments

LOVE. DIVERSITY. COMMUNITY. ACTION.



LOVE: We strive to follow the way of Christ by choosing love rather than hate, grace rather than judgment, forgiveness rather than retaliation, acceptance rather than intolerance, and hope rather than despair.



DIVERSITY: Our gratitude for the marvelous mosaic of God's creation leads us to embrace diversity, value individuality, respect differences, and encourage creativity. In doing so, we provide the space and place for all to be seen and heard.



COMMUNITY: Faith is not only a personal experience; it's a call to community in which all generations and all stages of life are woven together in relationships and service to the world.



ACTION: We stand ready to partner with others who provide relief for those who suffer from poverty, disease, loneliness and oppression, and in doing so, we strive to create lasting change in our social fabric.

*"Wherever you are on your spiritual journey, there's a place for you at Marble."
- A congregant*

Part II: Our Current State



Marble's future strategies must be informed by, and proactively respond to, the opportunities and challenges we presently face.

"If Marble Church is to thrive, it must attract new, searching people who recognize a spiritual yearning within for more meaning in their lives. Knowing Marble's history of adaptability—I know this can be done." - A congregant

Our Strengths



Our strategic plan listening process revealed many strengths at Marble, building on a firm foundation of faith and vibrancy through the decades. Congregants and friends shared many strengths they believe are central to Marble. Those that rose to the top in terms of importance and frequency of mention by people include:

Celebrating the Past - Embracing the Present - Launching a Hope-Filled Future

Marble Collegiate Church has a vibrant history we embrace and will build upon. We are a congregation that draws from a wide geography, both close to and miles away from 29th Street and 5th Avenue. We have a robust livestream presence and a growing congregation of active participants all around the world.

A Diverse Congregation That Cares about All People

Marble celebrates the diversity of God's good creation. We are a community that strives to welcome and reflect the full diversity of humankind. This diversity includes race, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic class, immigration status, political affiliation and any other category the world uses to silence or divide people. We have active, long-term members who generously give of their time and spiritual gifts to nurture a faith-filled congregation. We also ask the question: who is not here yet? as a core element of our growth and outreach efforts.

Our Strengths

(Continued)

A Generous and Giving Congregation That Rises Together to Challenges

Marble has a beautiful, well-maintained physical property which, while reduced in square footage from previous eras in the life of the church, is still abundant by New York City standards. Our congregation gives generously to any cause where there is a need. This generosity extends to the increased support given to Marble during the COVID-19 pandemic. We believe Marble will rise with hope and action to respond to the shared financial challenges we face.

A Congregation of Excellence

Our Worship and music is filled with spiritual uplift and inspiration. We value excellence at every level of our life together and maintain a high standard for our ministry and programs. We strive to always be and do better in every way we can.

A Highly Capable and Appreciated Staff

The Marble Community affirms the guidance and support the staff provides for the spiritual life of our congregation. In all facets of their work they exemplify Jesus' call to serve.



Our Gaps & Opportunities

While the many strengths of Marble are both appreciated and celebrated, there are several areas where Marble needs to grow. These gap areas are opportunities for Marble to become a stronger congregation for decades to come. Some of the central challenges Marble is currently facing include:

Financial Sustainability and Property Needs

Marble has benefited tremendously from strong financial support from the Collegiate Church Corporation. Since 2020 the financial foundation of Collegiate has shifted significantly, resulting in the removal of the support Marble has relied upon for decades. This has also directly impacted the physical space Marble has in which to do ministry. Marble will move through this time of challenge with hope and grit. Marble will rise to this shared challenge and commit to finding a way forward that is healthy and productive for all.

Increased Lay Leadership and Re-Engaging Congregation Post-COVID

Marble has a wonderful staff that received significant affirmation from the congregation during the listening process. We are grateful for this support and simultaneously acknowledge the gifted, dedicated congregational members ready to serve God and each other in meaningful ways. As such, Marble will work toward a more lay-driven model of ministry leadership. The COVID pandemic has had a large impact on our in-person congregation. Marble will dedicate efforts to reach out and rebuild the in-person congregation.

Our Gaps & Opportunities

(Continued)

Transparency and Communication

Marble leadership needs to improve transparency and communication with the congregation in all areas important to the health and well-being of the congregation. This includes financial and governance information and processes around decision-making.

20s & 30s and Families and Intergenerational Ministries

Marble noticeably lacks 20s & 30s and Families. Marble has focused on ministries built around life affinities such as PrimeTime (55+), GIFTS: LGBTQ Fellowship, Women's Ministry, and the Arts Ministry. Marble recognizes the need to specifically focus attention on building the 20s & 30s and Families populations, acknowledging they are different populations requiring different kinds of outreach. These groups also represent the future of Marble or other churches near where they may subsequently live. In addition, Marble celebrates our strong population of seasoned, long-time members who have much to offer younger generations through focused attention on intergenerational ministries.

Outreach to Local Communities

While Maintaining Robust Online Presence

As the area directly around Marble becomes more residential, a concerted effort will be made to reach new populations, including 20s & 30s and Families. In addition, the strong online community fostered and grown through the pandemic must be maintained. Marble recognizes these are very different communities to reach but we are committed to building our efforts for both of these vital communities.

A New Financial Reality

Introduction

Marble’s current financial situation has fundamentally changed because of a significant reduction in financial assistance from the Collegiate Corporation. However, even with the loss of that source of annual funding, Marble’s long-term financial condition remains strong. Although the near-term challenges we face to align expenses and revenues are real, Marble Church, with the help of the congregation, has a well-established foundation of resources and vibrant ministries to ensure a bright future.

Background

As one of the four congregations of The Collegiate Churches of New York, Marble received financial support in the form of an annual “appropriation” and “subsidies” for capital expenditure and certain operating expenses, including security, major maintenance, and Senior Minister salaries. The appropriation was reflected in Marble’s budget while subsidies were covered by Collegiate.

Collegiate entered the 29th Street Real Estate Project to enhance the Collegiate endowment for ongoing ministries. That project failed in December of 2020 as a result of the pandemic and the overextension of the development partner. The impact of that failure and excessive draws on the Collegiate endowment over many years for both appropriations and major renovations of the sacred properties of all four churches combined to create an immediate financial crisis.

To address its financial crisis, the overall Collegiate Consistory voted this year to:

- Eliminate the annual appropriation to each church, and
- Substantially reduce the level of subsidies to each church

The combination of zero appropriation and a significant reduction of Collegiate subsidies created an immediate financial challenge for Marble.

| Annual Appropriations to Marble | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| FY 2023 (Current Year) | \$0 |
| FY 2022 (Last Year) | \$713,000 |
| FY 2021 | \$2,757,000 |

A New Financial Reality

(Continued)

Looking Ahead

Over the next several years, Marble's financial challenges will be met using the strengths we have built over time: our endowment, careful management of our expenses, and our generous congregation.

Marble has been blessed with a strong endowment resulting from gifts of all kinds over many years. As of June 30, 2022, Marble's endowment was valued at \$30 million. To reduce the impact of drastic program reductions, the Board agreed to temporarily increase the annual draw on Marble's endowment returning to a 5.5% draw by Fiscal Year 2025 and 5% thereafter.

Planned Draw on Marble Endowment

| | |
|----------------|------|
| FY 2022 Plan | 8.5% |
| FY 2022 Actual | 6.2% |
| FY 2023 | 7.5% |
| FY 2024 | 6.5% |
| FY 2025 | 5.5% |

The temporary increase in the endowment draw provides time to transition to a lower expense structure more smoothly. Over the past few years, we have already reduced our regular operating expenses by \$590,356 from FY 2020 to FY 2021 and have built in an additional decrease of \$612,660 in the FY 2023 budget compared to the FY 2022 budget.

Congregational Giving

| | |
|----------------|--------------|
| FY 2023 Budget | \$1,633,510* |
| FY 2022 Budget | \$1,548,510 |
| FY 2021 Actual | \$1,528,237 |
| FY 2020 Actual | \$1,548,510 |

In addition to temporary changes in the endowment draw and continued expense management, we anticipate continued generosity of the congregation's annual giving. Despite the limitations imposed by the pandemic, congregational generosity continues to be strong.

**The FY23 Congregational Giving budget number is based on forecasted actuals for FY22.*

A New Financial Reality

(Continued)

The New Financial Reality

Marble's new financial reality is plain: for the next several years, we must prayerfully and prudently manage our budget using a combination of increased revenue and decreased expenses to balance our budget and grow our ministries.

The Senior and Executive Ministers and the Board of Deacons and Elders assume that:

- Collegiate Corporation's appropriation will **not** be restored.
- Collegiate Corporation's subsidy will continue to decrease and may be eliminated.
- Marble will become self-sustaining by:
 - Prudently managing expenses,
 - Increasing congregational giving,
 - Launching a capital campaign to strengthen our financial foundation and invest in our strategic initiatives, and
 - Reducing the annual endowment draw to no more than five percent.

With God's help, congregational dialogue, and strong leadership, Marble's solid financial condition will be the foundation for improving our financial situation and providing a bright future for God's work through our beloved Marble Collegiate Church.

Part III. Our Future & Growing Priorities



Growing Priorities

The following five Growing Priorities, reflecting much careful listening, reflection, and discussion, are designed to guide Marble from our current state into a bright and thriving future. Each of these priorities flows from Marble's mission: *To be a diverse, inclusive community of God's people led by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. We inspire everyone to become positive thinkers who make a difference in the world.* Steps to accomplish this mission are woven throughout the following five priorities²:

- **Growing with 20s & 30s and Families:** Grow Marble's leadership structures, ministries, activities, and overall culture to provide for a continuously flourishing and expanding community of 20s & 30s and Families.
- **Growing in Mission and Justice:** Strengthen Marble's role as a leader in promoting justice for all people through engagement in issues directly connected to our faith in Jesus Christ and Jesus' call to love one another.
- **Growing Deeper Relationships:** Develop stronger relationships, deeper connection, more intergenerational ministry and increased congregational diversity through Marble's in-person and online activities.
- **Growing in Our Neighborhoods:** Strengthen Marble's visibility in the surrounding neighborhoods and grow participation by area residents, people who work in the area, and visitors to New York City in Marble programs, activities, and worship.
- **Growing Financial Sustainability:** Change existing and create new processes and activities to achieve operational excellence, stronger congregational communication, and long-term financial sustainability.

² The process to arrive at these priorities involved clear consensus of leading themes identified in the congregational survey, refinement by 10 in-person working groups, and ongoing discussion with the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. For more information, see the Strategic Planning Participants and Process on page 32.

Growing with 20s & 30s and Families

Goal:

Grow Marble's leadership structures, ministries, activities, and overall culture to provide for a continuously flourishing and expanding community of 20s & 30s and Families.

20s & 30s and Families join Marble for its vibrant, diverse and welcoming community that values deep relationships; integrates them in leadership; and provides strong programming and spiritual development that meet their needs.

Potential initiative ideas generated:

- Develop multiple ways of engagement for parents and church leadership to have a regular, on-going partnership in decision-making and other work of the church.
- Create memorable, fun experiences and activities that regularly integrate children into worship service responsibilities and volunteering.
- Design activities for 20s & 30s that target people new to New York. Meet the needs of NYC newcomers with information resources (e.g. tips for housing, new job advice and resume writing).
- Develop relationships with leaders at area colleges and universities to determine where Marble can partner (e.g. with a theology class or helping students navigate through spiritual exploration and questioning).
- Strengthen church leadership with a comprehensive 20s & 30s pipeline into leadership that includes mentorship and increased representation on the Marble Board.
- Continue to provide a dedicated and dynamic minister and/or staff leader to anchor and guide the spiritual growth and participation of 20s & 30s and family members.

"I see families in the neighborhood. Lots of families. Of all different kinds."
- A congregant

Growing in Mission and Justice

Goal:

Strengthen Marble's role as a leader in promoting justice for all people through engagement in issues directly connected to our faith in Jesus Christ and Jesus' call to love one another.

As we have learned to do justice and love kindness, action is core to Marble's mission to make a difference in the world. Marble will build on the success of LGBTQ+ ministries to pursue additional justice priorities and increase efforts in racial justice. Other congregation-identified priorities include mental health, voting rights, gun control, and environment/climate change.

Potential initiative ideas generated:

- Increase the number of individuals participating in justice activities, including education, conversation, volunteering, and advocacy.
- Establish a Mission and Justice committee with ministerial and subject matter expertise to provide synergy for all justice activities including fundraising, external partnerships, and assessment.
- Develop guidelines to define Marble's distinctive ways of engaging in justice to provide cohesion around events and activities, a connection to worship, and encourage action.
- Incorporate mission and justice initiatives into the Women's Ministry, PrimeTime (55+), and other existing programs.
- Ensure existing justice programs, including GIFTS and Racial Justice, develop activities that advance other Growing Priorities such as 20s & 30s and Families.
- Consider ideas for Mental Health awareness, the next highest priority issue identified by the congregation.

"At Marble, we're not afraid to embrace social justice in all of its complexity. Jesus met people where they were, but didn't leave them where he met them."

- A congregant

Growing Deeper Relationships

Goal:

Develop stronger relationships, deeper connection, more intergenerational ministry and increased congregational diversity through Marble's in-person and online activities.

It is in our relationships we experience God's love, and it is through our relationships we grow in faith and friendship so together we can rise to any challenge.

Potential initiative ideas generated:

- Place emphasis on and create more opportunities for small group participation.
- Create intergenerational service projects.
- Develop relational opportunities that 20s & 30s desire to lead and be part of.
- Prioritize training people to connect with and guide new members and regular visitors (in-person and online) into deeper community and connection to the church.
- Build volunteerism and increase representation of diversity in the leadership of Marble and its programs.
- Promote greater awareness of ways to be involved at Marble through small groups, Bible study, and such programs as GIFTS (LGBTQ+ ministry), Prime Time (55+ ministry), Women's Ministry, and the Arts Ministry.

"There's nothing like a Marble hug." - A congregant

Growing in Our Neighborhoods

Goal:

Strengthen Marble's visibility in the surrounding neighborhoods and grow participation by area residents, people who work in the area, and visitors to New York City in Marble programs, activities, and worship.

Throughout the strategic planning process participants identified a wealth of opportunities for growing the Marble Community in the revitalized NoMad area surrounding Marble's physical location and beyond. Growth in this core area will expand participation, programs, relationships, outreach, involvement in other non-Marble Community activities, and support for the church overall.

Potential initiative ideas generated:

Marble is committed to developing and executing initiatives and programs designed to meet the faith and service needs of area residents² as well as workers and visitors who cross Marble's path throughout each week.

- Reexamine and expand current marketing strategies to increase Marble's visibility within the surrounding neighborhood, while remaining mindful of Marble's regional, national, and global online "neighborhoods."
- Offer programs that provide increased outdoor engagement and visible activities in the local area.
- Provide renewed emphasis in the areas of hospitality and welcome, particularly those who interact with worship and program participants and with the public more generally.
- Host events and activities that make better use of Marble's space throughout the week.
- Identify church members who live or work near the church to work with Marble lay leaders and staff to coordinate and deliver an expanded Marble presence.

"People new to New York are looking for something in their faith and spirituality that's authentic, real, practical, and relational." - A congregant

"There are so many gifts and talents in this church—I wonder how they can be used even more?" - A congregant

² Geographic areas include but are not limited to: NoMad, Peter Cooper Village, Stuyvesant Town, Lower Broadway, Gramercy Park, NYU, The New School, and "hospital row" on 1st Avenue.

Growing Financial Sustainability

Goal:

Change existing and create new processes and activities to achieve operational excellence, stronger congregational communication, and long-term financial sustainability.

The financial foundation of Marble has changed dramatically since 2020. After decades of strong financial support from the Collegiate Church Corporation, Marble is faced with the challenge of funding its own budget for the first time.

Marble is a giving congregation that believes giving is a spiritual commitment and an act of worship. Building on the strong foundation of generosity and hope that is Marble Collegiate Church, we will do the following.

Potential initiative ideas generated:

- Continue to learn about and grow together in the spiritual foundation of giving, tithing and why financial commitment is a central spiritual discipline of the Christian life.
- Develop a budget that reflects revenue only from the Marble Church Community and align personnel and non-personnel expenses with that budget.
- Increase communication to the congregation regarding Marble's finances, governance and decision-making.
- Explore strategies to increase congregational giving (e.g. sermon series on generosity, increased giving connected to increased church membership).
- Design strategies that can increase congregational ownership (by lay people, not paid staff) of ministry activities and progress on identified Growing Priorities.
- Determine the feasibility of a fundraising campaign focused on shoring up Marble's financial foundation for the long-term.

"We need to financially right-size the church. What size should we be? What is sustainable? Where might we need to simplify?" - A congregant

Next Steps for Implementation

It has been a significant undertaking to listen and reflect over the past months, as well as to create this strategic plan. However, this plan cannot simply sit on a shelf. It must move into active and intentional implementation.

Over the next several months five task forces, one for each Growing Priority, will work to further refine (and determine ongoing feasibility of) the initiatives identified in each of the Growing Priorities. Each task force will include representatives from the Board, staff, and members of the congregation.

This vision for Marble and these initiatives, as for all plans, must be dynamic – characterized by energy, change, and emerging ideas that constantly build on the path we have set. We will face constraints and discover new opportunities. The one constant will be God's guidance.

We thank you for reading this document and invite you to pray for wisdom on the next steps in this process, and to consider ways in which you might be involved in the present and future of Marble Collegiate Church.



"Marble has been able to diversify and respond when there is a need. That is Marble's culture. This is an adaptable congregation, and you will find people are willing to move if you give them a good reason for it." - A congregant

Strategic Planning Participants and Process

We offer our sincere gratitude to the many participants of the Marble Collegiate Church Community who have participated in this strategic planning process. It has been an in-depth and collaborative process that has involved hundreds of hours of collective time and input.

The Leadership Team

The strategic planning process was guided by consultants Jake Mulder and Dr. Yulee Lee from the Leadership Formation Division of Fuller Seminary. They worked closely with a Strategic Planning Leadership team of G. Gregory Lozier (Co-Chair, Current Chair of the Marble Board of Elders and Deacons), Stephanie M. Bailey, (Co-Chair, Former Chair of the Marble Board of Elders and Deacons), Dr. Michael Bos (Senior Minister), and Rev. Dr. J. Elise Brown (Executive Minister).

Four Guiding Questions

The process lasted from January to July 2022 and engaged four key questions over various phases:

1. Where are we now?
2. Why are we here?
3. Where is God leading us?
4. How might we respond?

Strategic Planning Participants and Process

(Continued)



The Data Gathering Process

The process involved:

- 23 one-on-one interviews
- 14 in-depth focus groups (involving 118 people)
- Extensive church-wide survey with 441 total responses
- 10 working groups involving over 70 participants to review and narrow initiatives for the Growing Priorities
- 4 church-wide town hall meetings and 6 updates during the Sunday 10:00 O'Clock Hour involving 300-400 in-person participants and 4,404 total online views.
- Dozens of one-on-one and small group meetings for review of the process and conclusions along the way
- Feedback from other experts, including Dr. Steve Argue (a leading scholar in Youth and Young Adult Ministry) and Rev. Mike Park (pastor of Hope West Side Church, a church plant in New York City)

Strategic Planning Participants and Process

(Continued)

The Marble Board of Elders and Deacons

Marble's Board has provided regular review of this process and has adopted this Strategic Plan document. The Board consists of:

- Greg Lozier, Chair
- Barbara Sagan, Deacon, Vice-Chair
- Marcie Doll, Elder, Secretary
- Renier Van Aswegen, Deacon, Treasurer
- Eileen O'Connell, Elder, Church Master
- Deacons: Jeannette Aycok, John Hupalo, Tim Lee, Matthew Morse, Tomasita Sherer, Brenda Walker
- Elders: Trenesa Danuser, Sandy Diaz, Ted Gregory, Sheila Moses

Strategic Planning Participants and Process

(Continued)

The Strategic Planning Steering Committee

Marble's Strategic Planning Steering Committee has also provided critical input during each phase of the process. The Steering Committee consists of:

Co-Chairs:

Greg Lozier
Stephanie Bailey

Ministers:

Michael Bos
Elise Brown

Board Members:

Jeannette Aycok
Matthew Morse
Eileen O'Connell
Brenda Walker

Congregants:

Jenny Chan
Richard Davis
Win Jackson
Larry Schafer

20s & 30s Congregants:

Abigayle Erickson
Blaine McIndoe

Teenage Congregants:

Amanda Crewey
Walker McSween
Ella Niewood

Staff Members:

Baleta McKenzie
Christina Morano Keiser
Kim Sebastian-Ryan

Staff Support

Don Piper
Mike Thurlow

“See, I am doing a new thing. Now it springs up; do you not see it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the desert.”

Isaiah 43:19



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