

Summary: Vestry Strategic Planning Conversation Thursday, September 6, 2018

Present: Father Raymond, Wanda Dole, Cynthia Perrizo, DiAnne Walsh and guest Cheryl Peterson

We had a strong consensus regarding the following:

- Ascension is in need of strategic planning; it should become an increasingly important priority of the Vestry and all leadership.
- The PROCESS is as or more important than outcomes; ‘parking lot’ process provided a good model:
 - Leadership was transparent in both providing information and encouraging parishioner participation.
 - Many parishioners *did* participate.
 - Father Petite did an excellent job of facilitating the gatherings.
- Success in any strategic planning endeavor will rely on parishioner ‘buy-in’ and participation.
 - Small groups
 - Good facilitation
 - Topics that members care about
 - Timely, transparent and concise communications
- We can and should immediately begin identifying and picking ‘low-hanging fruit’ – endeavors that are needed and can be easily achieved – while also devoting time and attention to redeveloping our identity, mission and vision.
 - A rough draft list of ‘low-hanging fruit’ is found at the end of this document.
 - We should recognize ‘wins’ that we have already accomplished in the past few years.

For further conversation:

- Use of a consultant or consultants.
 - We clarified differences in roles between a consultant and a facilitator.
 - There are clearly some negative judgments of the consultants used in 2016 that need to be addressed before considering any further use of consultants now.
 - A next step will be for Father Raymond to get a time on Mother Andrea Mysen’s calendar for several of us to meet with her and to ask for her support on the consultant question.
- Thinking big – tackling more substantive long-term matters.
 - Work on vision, mission.
 - Develop and implement goals for all major areas of the parish, e.g. buildings and grounds/capital improvements, worship, outreach, family ministries, newcomers, leadership development.
 - S.W.O.T. Analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

Strategic Conversation Appendix: Low-Hanging Fruit – a DRAFT

Disclaimers: This is not a final plan and does not represent consensus or priorities. Some of these items are NOT low-hanging fruit and may require a ladder and more effort.

- Meet with Mother Andrea Mysen, diocesan Director of Ministries to discuss her thoughts about and various options for facilitators.
- Complete the Mutual Ministry Review already envisioned for fall 2018.
- Be proactive in identifying and recruiting to the 2019 Vestry members who may have expertise in strategic planning and/or other leadership skills and *new ideas*.
- Quarterly ‘town hall’ meetings in Wheeler Hall. Choose topics of interest to members. Have skilled facilitator.
- Two energizing events before the end of 2018, one of which will be the Michaelmas Celebration.
- Learn what other Episcopal congregations are doing for strategic planning.
- Reinvigorate the nursery and children’s ministries.
- Blessing of the animals/garden party for dogs.
- Weekday Bible study.
- Newcomer welcoming gatherings.
- Young couples gatherings – get support/advice from Deacon Broadbent.
- Engage gay members about changes in culture that may be impacting the perceptions and experiences of potential new Ascension members.