

Notes from Q&A Meeting

Sunday, June 28th, 2020

Disclaimer: I did not read the Chat notes, so this is just from verbalizations. Also, my screen may not have held all the participants

Attending as seen on my screen by video or phone: Justin, Trish Braga, Mike & Kimberley Harris, Neal Engelman, Jeff? Decker, Bert & Jane Reiman, Jennie Vinski, Judy So, Jan Pritchard, Nancy Brubaker, Kevin Graves, Sharon Parham, Cara Schmidt, Cathy Botz, Kathy Connelly, Jane Jacobs, Clayton Arndt, Ivy Akogyeram, Harold and Barbara Solbrig, Lynn Lutz, Shanna Altrichter, Kit Muellner, Diane O'Mara, Gary and Debbie Whicker, Amy Caucutt, Doug Butler, by phone: Kay and Chris Batchelder, Mansfield's, McReynolds...who did I miss???

Justin ended his sermon with a 3-point vision for our future, because we are not what we used to be, and we need to find what we are now called to:

1. Build a new tradition of 1 service
2. Focus our outreach (many projects with 1 goal that invites transformation) with people at Sunset Terrace School
3. Nurture our own community by developing regular gatherings for social connection

Gary Whicker presented our 2020 financial challenge, adding that 60% of our costs are people and that the lawn mowers reduced our cost \$300/month and the garbage haulers cut us a break as well. We stopped the Diocesan Assessment after paying 5 months. We are stable if pledges continue until years' end

- a. **Q** from Doug Butler: Will we have to pay back Diocese if we survive?

A yes, it is in abeyance. Last time this happened to St. Luke's we settled at 50% payback.

Q do we have a payback plan?

A no, but looking at endowment.

Q how large is endowment and where is it?

A \$300K and held in pooled investment by Diocese. Kevin added that we will need additional steps in 2021

- b. **Q** from Sharon Parham: I thought taking federal PPP money meant no layoffs?

A PPP was an 8-week program so we are in compliance.

- c. **Q** from Jane Jacobs: what is our income picture? A \$18k/month, with many pledges paid in advance
- d. **Q** from Doug Butler: we have reduced costs. What about enhanced income (any quick fixes)?

A from Kevin rental opportunities vanished with COVID. Our facility worked for 150 congregants but we are half that number now.

A from Amy providing list of opportunities that are on hold (Joe Powers) or coming forward slowly (Joe Weis) and a request from church members to forward contacts and ideas to both Amy and Justin,

- e. **Q** from Jane Reiman about assessment

A from Gary and Kevin we are on the cusp between 11-13% of our income. It is a 2-year lag and the Diocesan council knows the problem with the lag but is slow to fix

- f. **Q** from Jane Jacobs: have we looked at membership growth?

A from Justin this is challenging. We need to reclaim ourselves as smaller. We are spread too thin. our structure is 40% larger than we use.

A Diane O'Mara is working with Diocese and Gary Whicker on a more vibrant website.

Discussion on “a period of mourning to return to normal (probably not) but an opportunity to create a new reality. Imagine something different”....this from Jane Jacobs who said she learned this from Cathy Botz as they try to implement this in their work areas at Mayo.

- a. Comment from Shanna that for 40 years, mainline Christianity has had shrinking membership.
- b. Comment from Justin that we are facing grief. We can't reclaim the past.
- c. Comment from Jane Jacobs. We have learned that in all areas in past few months. BUT our underlying values are still there. We need a different way to express those values.
- d. Comment from Cathy Botz we have all seen many difficult changes in our lives in past few months
- e. Comment by Lynn Lutz we need to go forward even though it breaks my heart not to be there. We must articulate those values
- f. Comment from Kay Batchelder We can do this! What we have is precious! She and Chris will help however they can
- g. Shanna agreed that we are making hard decisions but she is so fulfilled by relationships at St Luke's. We need a new strategy and eventually we will grow!

Questions on outreach and Values

- a. **Q** from Doug Butler: appreciate your 3 points, but want specifics on outreach and cutting back.

A from Justin St. Luke's has a big heart, but we have built programs that are too fragile. We will discern together if after talking to Sunset Terrace they are no longer interested we will find another school. Some programs like backpacks don't need church help any more as they have a different model with Channel 1.

A from Jane Jacobs, who mentors at John Marshall HS, recommends we do not approach schools until late August when personnel are back and they have some idea how school will go with COVID in September. Kay Batchelder as former school board member, added that schools will have a huge challenge this Fall..

- b. Comment from Amy: let's involve Paul, who is mentoring for the priesthood at St Luke's (free) for about 10 hours/week and is an elementary school principal, with any contacts made with Rochester schools as to their needs for our volunteer help
- c. Comment from Bert Reiman: can't just accept that a school program is dead because a school wants to work differently. We did Reach High at 1st with volunteer, Marcia Ray, not employee, Betsy.
- d. **Q** from Sharon Parham: couldn't we use the \$\$ spent for Rector's leadership training to keep Betsy? St. Luke's strongest value is outreach.

A from Justin: turns out that is only \$700 and comes from a \$1500 continuing education account not enough to pay Betsy.

A church our size just can't afford to pay someone for outreach. A Kevin wonderful volunteers must step in.

- e. Comment from Diane O'Mara that Barb Solbrig will be gathering a congregational Zoom meeting in July to discuss outreach now that we are w/out Betsy. Cathy Botz noted that she and Kathy Connelly have already signed up to lead small projects to keep them going. Sharon said we need to set a time to develop specifics on outreach.
- f. Cara Schmidt praised Justin for his focus message and realizing the need for change
- g. **Q** from Linda Mansfield: what happened to our parish assessment?

A from Kevin, that assessment is 3-4 years old but may still reinforce our underlying values, just like the weavers project (which he had hanging behind him on the Zoom meeting). THIS IS WHY WE ARE MEMBERS.

Questions on 1 service and building cohort social groups

- a. **Q** from Jan Pritchard: We have had changes before, ie to all communion. Describe the 1 service idea.

A Justin said he doesn't have specifics, but it will be a blend rather than 1st Sunday an 8 o'clock style and 2nd Sunday a 5 o'clock style. He said we have to develop a mindset of experimentation like no vestments. Don't mindlessly look to the past

- b. Comments by Cathy Botz and Jane Jacobs: zoom offers an intimacy we don't get at regular services. We have to learn to "talk to the duck" when recording a video for our website, an old tv/radio trick for people otherwise used to talking to a live audience.
- c. Comment by Nancy Brubaker: Let's develop greater unity like the Weaving project. She wants Big Events for us all to come together like we did for the 100+ group at the Thanksgiving dinner last year
- d. Comment from Sharon Parham about building new cohort groups like book club, bridge club TACO, choir. These groups need tools and support. Cathy Botz said she knows how to do this and would help.

Weenie roast idea from Doug Butler wove in and out of other discussions, with Doug always bringing us back to specifics

- a. Doug Butler suggested that St. Luke's should have a "socially distanced" weenie roast to help us "regroup"
- b. Justin commented that the Bishop has not defined the number allowed in small outdoor gatherings allowed starting in July. Justin is nervous about gathering even outdoors during COVID.
- c. Jan Pritchard said we should do this out front of our church at our fire pit
- d. Bert and Jane Reiman said outside is safer than inside
- e. Kevin suggested that since Amy Caucutt has looked into procedures for building reopening during COVID, she should gather info from Diocese and State of MN on how to do a small outside event
- f. Justin said there are still lots of steps that need to be taken and we must manage expectations.
- g. Doug and Amy will work together on specifics and present to rector and vestry

