



Open Meeting/Discussion with Vestry and Others

Led by The Reverend Dan Crawford
Christ's Church, Greensburg
January 14, 2012

Participants:

Bob Wicker
Howard Finney
Bob Plummer
Tim Moore
Bill Armstrong
Jim Smith

Karen Artuso
Ken Mock
Larry Knotts
Gordon Graham
Jeff Simpson
Steve Swencki

Following Morning Prayer, we assembled in the church Undercroft and Dan advised that the meeting and discussion was to be positive in nature, **NO NEGATIVE COMMENTS**, and would be in the form of an “Appreciative Inquiry”. Dan had prepared a list of thirteen (13) questions and we broke down into four groups of three to respond to the questions. The inquiry questions and responses follow:

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

1. What is most important to me about Christ's Church?

Answers: God's Word; family atmosphere; warmth of the people (welcome feeling); Liturgy/Worship; spiritual family; God's Truth; deeper grounding in Christ; personal conversion.

2. What does it look like when it is at its best? When is it most alive, engaged, and committed?

Answers: Goal to work toward (Faith Alive) and other goals; good worship; Outreach (foreign missions, local shelters, Samaritan's Purse, Food for the Poor); support and encouragement of new Deacon; shut-in communion ministry; scholarship fund; church full of fellow worshipers – especially Christian Ed and Ordination; nursing home ministry; multi-generational connections (the 'family tree' attends); inter-generational connections – parish family gatherings; Joy and smiling faces.

3. In the years I have been a member, what are its most important achievements?

Answers: Knowledge of the Bible; leaving ECUSA to be faithful to Christ; maintaining

relationships in congregation and community; Outreach – local and global missionaries; 'Happening' in South Africa; support of new Deacon; small groups; choir; home based Bible studies; progressive dinners; continued growth of children beyond Confirmation; the church family helps people through difficult times; people who come to faith in Christ; Ecumenical Bible studies (“Women's Day Out”).

4. When have I felt most alive and effective as a member of Christ's Church?

Answers: Lots of parish involvement; Feeding at Shepherd's Heart; Salad Bar participation; Vestry – participation in maintenance of property; participation in Outreach; purchase of C.E. Building; spiritual growth – leading Bible studies; Lay Reader; when prayers are answered; when serving (in any capacity); special worship services (Christmas, Holy Weeks and Easter, Funerals) + Music; gathering and learning who Christ is; helping the needy; Alpha.

5. What do I perceive as a source of Vitality and Effectiveness?

Answers: The Word of God; joining with others to serve; Jesus and the Holy Spirit; example of Rector during wife's illness; Christ's love for this church; the entire congregation – initial leadership, clergy, vestry, commission leaders; people's willingness to serve; Liturgy with all participating; Biblical teaching; congregational commitment; Christ centered; explicit and effective acknowledgment of acceptance of Christ; LOVE.

6. How do I see God active and present in the congregation?

Answers: Willingness to serve; worship; growth (in number and personal growth in the Bible); sermons that touch me; response of congregation to needs of others; internal and external programs (Altar Guild, Bible studies, etc.); people are happy; guidance in facing challenges; miraculous healings.

7. What is the life-giving center from which our best thinking and contributions emerge?

Answers: Christ and coming to know Him; the Bible; Christ's love and the promise of eternal life; presence of the Holy Spirit; emphasis on prayer; Outreach and working together; desire to serve.

8. What are this church's most courageous dreams?

Answers: Unknown; the children leaving church with a faith that will grow and they will be prepared to share; ability to repair and or restore all buildings; an overflowing

church – especially young families; a new location; sufficient economic stability to accomplish all Outreach goals, all internal programs, salaries, etc; ample parking; active Evangelism; Christian music concert in football stadium; spiritual growth.

9. What brought me to this congregation?

Answers: Sister-in-law; personal growth; God (Jesus); “The Call”; unhappy previous church; Love of worship service; warm welcome; energized by service and fellowship; Sermons; interest of Rector in our family; raised in this church (cradle Episcopalian).

10. What is it like when I and others are treated well here?

Answers: Feeling of togetherness and belonging; happy and excited; accepted and loved; warmth and God's peace; at home and at peace; gratifying; confidence that God is alive and His Word is received; calming; affirmed; family relationships.

11. What is the most important thing that being a member of this church has contributed to my life?

Answers: Gave me an opportunity to serve and revealed who I am; spiritual growth in prayer and marriage through education and bible study; a feeling of sharing Christ's love and personal acceptance; growth in faith; closer walk and commitment with others; strength and revitalization; 'pew fodder' to servant; feeling of belonging to something worthwhile; true understanding of Christ to raise children with.

12. What is my view of the Core Value of Christ's Church?

Answers: Worship and Evangelism; Outreach and Godly Love (Mission statement); personal and communal spiritual growth; focus on Christ and the Gospel; Christ centered; love of Jesus and letting others know (also Mission statement); following God's Word; Social Club; extended Christian family to grow in Christ; solid foundation.

13. If I had three wishes for my church, they would be:

Answers: Unity, Constancy, and Peace; become more evangelical, growth, a new faith-based spiritual leader; overflowing spirit filled membership, sufficient money to accomplish Outreach goals, find a priest that meets our needs; continue the mission of Christ's Church, financial stability, become an important center of the community; continued growth in faith, strong and active congregation, dynamic Outreach; more support for the youth programs, continued growth in numbers and maturity, willingness to serve when asked; radical conversion, life changing faith, reformation; contemporary worship service, systematic bible study (reading tools - Alpha-like progression), placing

Jesus first – understanding that forgiveness and salvation go hand in hand and therefore - practice forgiveness.

Following a lunch break, a discussion ensued, with Dan offering most of the comments. Larry was not present for this portion of the afternoon.

Discussion Comments

What do we want to achieve from this “Inquiry”??

- ⤴ Do not allow “problems” to swamp the good.
- ⤴ Focus on the good – not the problems.
- ⤴ Look at every aspect of the church's strengths and activities.
 - ⤴ Take the strengths and enhance upon them
- ⤴ We have sacraments – tradition of the church through the centuries
 - ⤴ Paul did not rely on “gimmicks”
- ⤴ Keep in the back of our minds – do not worry about those that leave – focus on strength and improvement of weak areas
- ⤴ Live in the strength of the Holy Spirit – reward WILL come
- ⤴ Three elements of Stewardship
 - Stewardship of presence (be here on Sunday – even when it's tough!)
 - Time
 - Talent
- ⤴ The “old” prayer book says: **BOUNDEN DUTY** – that means “SHOW UP” !!
- ⤴ Vestry – lead by example

We then closed in prayer.