

From: charles <pastor@stlukespc.org>
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Subject: from Charles+ re Vestry Meeting Thurs 5:30

StLuke's Episcopal Church

"Love God...Think for Yourself"

To: St. Luke's Vestry and Staff

re: May 21st Meeting

cc: Diocese of Utah

Dear Friends,
Here is the agenda thus far for our meeting Thursday evening, May 21st at 5:30.

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- + Opening prayer and meditation
 - + Approval of the minutes from our last meeting
 - + Beckie's finance report
 - + Formation of a stewardship team
- + PLANNING OUR FUTURE
- A. Developing a Strategic Plan
- a. Finding and hiring a church growth consultant
 - b. Taking the congregation through a self-reflective process
 - c. Developing a vision
 - d. Developing a strategic plan
 - e. Is the Chapel essential to the accomplishment of the strategic plan?
 - f. Submit report to the Standing Committee of the Diocese
- B. Parish-Rector Relationship
- a. Rector to attend CREDO June 15-22
 - b. Feeling pulled toward two things: the deepening of my prayer-life through a more disciplined meditation practice and doctoral work in the area of Christian spirituality (the interior journey) and the practice of spiritual direction.
 - c. Next winter, we should probably have an honest and open discussion about whether or not I have the necessary gifts and interests to help St. Luke's get to where the parish community wants to go.
 - d. February 2010 - New Letter of Agreement with the rector
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BECKIE'S FINANCE REPORT

Within the next couple of days, Beckie will hopefully have completed her work with the CPA to get our new accounting software fully accurate and functional. We will have a detailed financial statement for you and will do our best to get it to you in advance of the meeting to give you time to study it.

FORMATION OF A STEWARDSHIP TEAM

It's time to get serious about this. The St. Luke's Stewardship Team has two major responsibilities: (1) to develop and implement a year-round stewardship education program; and (2) to plan and implement the annual pledge campaign. Judy Hanley has chaired this team for several years and still wants to serve on the team, but it is now time for new leadership.

This is REALLY important. Who among us is willing to take a leadership role? Are there any in the parish community who will help? Any of the younger and/or newer members? We need energy and new ideas.

PLANNING OUR FUTURE

This discussion has two major sections: the development of a vision and strategic plan that answers the challenges of numeric and missional growth and, subsequently, the discernment of my role, if any, in the achievement of that new vision and plan.

A. Developing a Strategic Plan

The Vestry Special Task Force and I have successfully negotiated with the Diocese to:

- (1) delay any decision on the sale of the Chapel until the end of this year;
- (2) obtain diocesan help in finding and paying for an Episcopal church development consultant with resort community expertise who will come and work with us to develop our vision and strategic plan. St. Luke's and the Diocese will partner in the financial burden of this. We do not know how much expense is involved at this point. The Rev. Canon Dave Bailey is currently researching this on our behalf. I hope we will know something soon.
- (3) give us until mid-November to complete our visioning-planning process.
- (4) obtain the Diocese's partnership in the evaluation of our building and the repair of the stucco and any additional unseen damage. Steve Hutchinson agreed to talk to Steve Amoss about locating an expert in stucco and building repairs to perform an evaluation and estimate. If Steve A- doesn't know anyone, we may be asked to find someone reputable.

The sale or retention of the Old Town Chapel, while very important to some, cannot be the focus of our life as a parish community. As the saying goes, "We have much bigger fish to fry." As you all know, our worship attendance seems to have plateaued at around 15 to 20 at the Chapel and 70 to 100 (depending on the season) at the Church. This past Sunday, our worship attendance at Chapel = 20 and at the Church = 50. I feel anxious about my perception that we may be losing ground and trending downward in attendance.

While our mission organization has developed nicely, we are not reaching and welcoming many new members into our congregation. In fact, I am not sure we have enough new members joining us to compensate for the number who move away each year.

In my opinion, the Church has the most important mission or reason for existence of any organization on earth. We exist to help everyone and anyone interested to develop their conscious awareness of the God who lives in and through and all around them. Without this fundamental spiritual awareness, all of the earth and the human community are put at risk. No government or business can produce the kinds of fruits that

ultimately serve the human community without an awareness of our relationship with the Sacred.

AND, having become conscious of the Love of God, we are compelled to express our spiritual awareness by cooperating with God in God's mission to bring healing and reconciliation to the whole planet. We cannot be "conscious" without also being "active." Spiritual contemplation leads naturally to compassionate action.

The Church exists, therefore, as much for those who are NOT YET members as for those already in the congregation. It is our mission to reach as many individuals and families as possible to aid them in becoming more fully aware of the LOVE that lives in and through and all around them and to support them in living that LOVE each day.

So you see, it's just not okay for us to get comfortable with the status quo - with the fact that our congregation is not reaching more and more of the people of Summit and Wasatch counties with the Gospel. We are called by God to figure out how to change that.

I am not a church growth expert and St. Luke's needs some wise counsel from someone who understands how to develop a Christian community in a resort-recreation-oriented community. That's why we have asked the Diocese for help.

As soon as the consultant is on board, we can begin to design the process. I would like it to involve as close to 100% of our members as possible, at least in the beginning. I would like it to involve asking people to think about their personal commitment to their own spiritual growth as well as the mission of the Church. I would like it to be more than a Christmas wish-list of programs and things to buy and, instead, a statement of vision grounded in God's vision and our relationship to it. I would like it to be based upon an awareness of the cultural shift taking place from modernism to post-modernism and the rise of "Cultural Creatives" within the population. (PLEASE read the article on Cultural Creatives included in the "May 17th Weekly Bulletin" located at www.stlukespc.org)

When we have completed our vision statement and plan for growth, we will then turn our attention to the question of the Chapel. We will ask ourselves: "Is the Chapel an essential tool for the accomplishment of our stated vision and strategic plan or can the plan be accomplished without the retention of the Chapel?"

We will write a report of all our work and submit it to the Standing Committee. They, of course, will have the final authority with respect to the Chapel.

For all of this to be successful, the Vestry will have to take an active, public, visible interest in it. People will follow your lead if you help them to understand the process and the reasons for it. If the Vestry does not fully "buy in," people will know it and will be far less motivated to invest themselves.

B. THE PARISH-RECTOR RELATIONSHIP

While I continue to think that a long-term pastorate tends to provide the kind of continuity and stability required for lasting, authentic growth, I must be open to the possibility that my personality and strengths may not be a good match for the kind of leader you will need to grow the parish community and our ministries. I must be prepared to face the possibility that, at the end of the visioning-planning process, we may come to the realization that I need to get out of the way so you can get to where you want to go. I have never and still do not feel called to leave St. Luke's and I continue to hope I can stay with you until I retire 12 years from now, but I must acknowledge that "change is a normal part of life" and it may be best for me to leave sooner. We will discern this together.

In the meantime, I will be attending CREDO June 15 to 22 in Healdsburg, California. CREDO is a retreat offered to all Episcopal clergy every five to ten years. The purpose of the retreat is to take an honest look in the mirror to examine one's health-related habits, financial preparations, and career development. I hope to learn a great deal.

August 17 to 21 I will attend a course at Wisdom University in the Bay Area. The course is on the use of Jungian concepts in the practice of spiritual direction.

I am feeling drawn to do more in two areas of my life: the spiritual disciplines (prayer, meditation, etc.) and the academic study of Christian spirituality. I am attempting to develop a more disciplined meditation practice. I also hope to do more spiritual direction with members of the parish community as well as find a spiritual director for myself.

On the academic side, I am exploring the possibility of doctoral work with a couple of schools that have designed their programs for working adults. These doctoral study programs would not require me to resign my position to earn my degree. They assume that all or most of their students are working full-time in ministry or a related field. One school is Wisdom University in California. It offers a Ph.D. and D.Min. in Wisdom Studies (comparative religions). The other is a Roman Catholic school in Washington D.C. offering a D.Min. in Christian spirituality and spiritual direction.

I don't know what it will take to reach more people with the Good News of God's infinite, unconditional love and acceptance, but my heart and head both tell me that "going deeper" is the wise course of action. I don't think people are hungry for pretty packaging and more "shiny things" to chase after. I think people are deeply hungry for the deep things of the Spirit: deep wisdom, a deep reconnection with the Creation, with "Mother Earth," a deepening of commitment to the spiritual disciplines, a deeper vulnerability to the exploration of the interior life. These will require more of us and more of those with whom we hope to walk the spiritual path. Easy spirituality is an oxymoron, a short-term gimmick leading to disappointment.

Next February, if we conclude that my ministry among the people of St. Luke's is to continue, I will attempt to negotiate a Letter of Agreement with you that more clearly defines my role. I will likely request that all sabbatical monies be applied toward my doctoral work and the allocation of my time day-to-day will be at least 50% study and prayer.

I ask for your prayers as I am undisciplined in both prayer and study. Pray that I may be given the grace to change my habits and do the things I am called to do among you.

See you Thursday at 5:30.

Thanks & Blessings,

Charles+

The Rev. Charles Robinson, Rector
Email: pastor@stlukespc.org
Office: 435-649-4900 Ext. 11
Cell: 435-901-2131
Website: www.stlukespc.org