

St Luke's Episcopal Church
"Love God...Think for Yourself"

Vestry Special Task Force Meeting - April 28, 2009

Minutes taken by Fr. Charles

Present: Sandra Jones, Gary Baily, Mac Cover, Janet Van Hartesvelt, Ray Freer, the Rev. Claudia Giacoma, and Fr. Charles

Absent: Dick Miner

The meeting began with prayer and then members read Sandra's report. (There is a copy of the report attached to the end of these notes).

Mac suggested we start with the question: Why do we want to grow St. Luke's?

"A business that does not grow will eventually die. A church that does not grow cannot sustain itself long-term."

What's happening with the youth program? Jane Sullivan and some of the other parents have started having a once per month event for the 4th through 7th graders. This past Sunday evening, they went bowling. Sometimes they meet in someone's home. The hope is that the children that are currently in Church School will, in the years to come, become the St. Luke's youth group. Therefore, an effort is being made to help the children bond with one another now so that they may want to be a youth group in the future.

Are we focused on the correct target market? Who are the newcomers who move into the Park City area? What is the demographic of the growth in Summit County? There was an article in today's paper which said that 47% to 59% of adults change their religious affiliation.

Ray said he wants the church to grow because he sees the benefits of participating in our church. "I think we do have something to offer. I think the Chapel issue goes away if we grow the church and its mission potential." Mac noted that the Diocese had indicated that the Chapel will definitely be sold if there is not a clear mission operating out of it.

Sandra: Perhaps our target population should be thought of as progressives or religious liberals no matter their other demographic characteristics.

Mac: It's important that we are open and friendly. And corporate worship is still important to me.

Gary: Isn't growing the church a separate issue from keeping or selling the Chapel? The Chapel issue is essentially a business/financial decision. For the Diocese, it's a financial decision. If we are going to change their minds, our proposal has to be a financial one. Does it make more sense to keep it until the market turns around? You don't sell things at the bottom of the market. We don't want to put this off and have to deal with it again in two years.

Mac: I heard Dave and Steve say that the Chapel is gone unless it is a center for mission and ministry.

Gary: What is our goal for this group?

Ray: Speaking for the Chapel folks, if we can get a growth plan for the Church, perhaps the sale of the Chapel will become immaterial.

Janet: I think we owe it to Chapel people to listen to their plans to use the Chapel to reach out to the community and bring people into the parish community.

Mac: Where are the articles in the Park Record about what goes on at St. Luke's? Annie Cover knows how to do this and would be willing to teach someone else to do it. Some of our missions and activities will make wonderful articles.

Ray: I don't think we have enough of a mission in Park City. Why would the young people of Park Record come to St. Luke's. Is it possible for the people of St. Luke's to develop new local ministries that are operated out of one of our buildings? Mac mentioned an example of an annual fundraiser his parish did on behalf of parishes in the community.

We then discussed the list of local outreach ministries our congregation supports including weekly gather of food for the poor and supplies for Peace House. Arts-Kids and the mission to the local Latino community were also mentioned.

Gary: What did David and Steve actually say about what is required to keep the Chapel?

Charles: I strongly disagree with the way this is going. We need to look at the whole organization, determine our mission and ministries, where we want to go and then decide whether the Chapel is an essential aspect of reaching those goals. Sandra makes that point at the beginning of her report.

Mac: Our proposals have to be grounded in reality.

Ray: We should not make judgments about what the Diocese wants. We need to determine what we want to do and then present that to the Diocese.

Mac: We need to grow the income of this parish to do the things we want to do. \$3119 per year as a average pledge is pretty

good.

Ray: I think the Chapel really does support the overall mission of this church. There have been people who joined St. Luke's through the Chapel. I don't think we need the Chapel to grow the church, but I think it is a very nice adjunct.

Gary: Can we go to the Diocese and say to them we have some specific goals to grow the church?

Mac: If we say that, we have to present a specific plan of how we are going to do this.

Janet: I heard them say that if come up with such a plan, they will give us a chance to accomplish the plan.

Mac: The devil is in the details.

Ray: We should put a plan on growth together and then meet with the Rev. Mike Mayor as a consultant. Perhaps he could help us.

The group talked about our current financial situation which is not looking great. At the end of the first quarter, pledge and plate is below budget by about \$11,000. It looks like we are going to be facing financial challenges no matter what happens. Charles expressed his strong discomfort with the financial liabilities attached to Plan #1 proposed by the Diocese. "I just don't see how we can keep the Chapel and stay financially on track with mission and ministry under the current diocesan proposals."

Janet: It makes sense to spend some time studying the literature about how to grow a church in a resort community. According to the resort church power point presentation (that Claudia brought back from a conference in Colorado), we are meeting the needs of only one of the groups identified.

Claudia: Churches that grow have people who are excited about their faith and are willing to share their excitement with others. People come to church because someone they know has invited them. Friends bring friends to church. The resort community ministry presentation mentioned that we are consumer oriented.

Sandra: The problems we are facing are being faced by almost all churches in this country. We need to read the book on becoming a missional church.

Ray: Our focus then should be on the growth issue. We also must focus on mission as a part of that context.

Charles: I want to congratulate everyone for being willing to do some reading and research on church growth. It's a complicated issue and we need some professional consultation from outside of our parish community.

Janet: Is there any other open land in Park City that might like to have the Chapel building? The Diocese would see greater proceeds if the Chapel was moved and they sold the vacant lot. It cannot be moved out of the historic district.

Action Steps:

1. Janet will make a copy of the DVD on church growth in resort communities for all of the team members.
2. Everyone watches the DVD.
3. Charles will ask the Diocese to send us a consultant to help us develop a growth plan.
4. Attend the next meeting set for May 12th at 5:00. We will try to end by 6:30.
5. Members will communicate by email in between meetings to float ideas and proposals out to one another.

Sandra's Report: Agenda for 4/28/2009

"Thy will be done"

--Prayer
--Scribe
--Purpose of Our Task Force
--Current Growth Realities and Growth Potential
--St. Luke's Financial Realities
--Two Proposals from the Diocese and Some Questions to Consider
--Elephants in the Room

What is the purpose of our task force?

It is my understanding that we are to discern through prayer, study, research and discussion the mission, ministry and development realities and goals of our parish community which will allow us to develop a rational and achievable proposal for the Standing Committee. The retention or sale of the Chapel is one aspect of this endeavor. We need to focus on St. Luke's, not as church or Chapel but as a viable presence in Park City and Summit County. If we see our purpose only to devise a way to keep the Chapel, we will fail.

What are our current growth realities, and what is our growth potential?

In 2001, when Fr. Pat Finn was our rector, St. Luke's had three Sunday morning services with a total worship attendance of about 250. This was the peak of our attendance. When Fr. Pat left in 2002, attendance dropped to about 150. In 2003, with the ordination and consecration of Bishop Gene Robinson, our attendance experienced another drop; and when Fr. Charles arrived at St. Luke's we lost about another 50 families. St. Luke's experienced these losses for several reasons; Fr. Pat was very charismatic and when he left there were those who felt their reason for attending St. Luke's also left, when Bishop Gene Robinson was ordained and consecrated, St. Luke's, like some other Episcopal churches, lost its more conservative members, and with the arrival of Fr. Charles in 2004, those who were conservative but had hoped for a different out-come from St. Luke's search committee (a priest who was more of a biblical literalist) left to form St. John's Anglican Church. In addition, St. Luke's lost those who were tired of all of the in-fighting and conflict that had been experienced during Fr. Pat's tenure.

Over the past four years, we have seen a small rebound of worship attendance at the church. Our average worship attendance at the Chapel has remained relatively constant at about 20 each Sunday and the church as grown to an average of 80. For the past couple of years, average worship attendance has reached a plateau, as has our number of families willing to pledge their financial support. At this time, we are not growing numerically in either location. Most of our visitors during the year are tourists, with only a handful of people seeking a parish community to join.

What is our growth potential?

Nationally, membership in the Episcopal Church represents approximately 1% of the overall U.S. population. If we apply that same ratio to Summit County, we have a reasonable measure of the potential growth of St. Luke's. According to City-Data.com, the population of Summit County in 2007=36,000; 1% of 36,000=360.

According to Beckie, we currently have 120 households in our parish community. If each family has an average of 3 members, 120 x 3 = 360, we seem to have reached the 1% ratio. We are up against demographics, however, it shouldn't deter us from our desire to grow, but it should cause us to realistically look at our growth potential. Can we reasonably expect to grow 10% a year?

Several years ago we held several marketing meetings and we determined we wanted to target women, especially mothers, in their 30's and 40's for two reasons: (1) we recognize the future of the church depends upon effectively reaching families with children; and (2) mothers tend to make the decisions within their families about church attendance. Are women/mothers still our target group? If they are, what kinds of programs and staffing do we need to provide to reach them? Or, do we want to change our target profile? Should we get some professional help in determining this?

St. Luke's financial realities.

- St. Luke's has an annual operating budget of \$374,000 for 2009 with \$250,000 in pledges.
- St. Luke's is will accept \$47,000 in financial support of our operating budget from the Diocese this year.
- We failed to reach our 2009 pledge goals by approximately, \$32,000 and were unable to provide staff cost of living adjustments while the Youth Director's position.
- Our missions funding currently represents 4% of our total operating budget.
- Our Church School was funded for 2009 out of Angels in Autumn funds, left over from two years ago. This is \$2000, which will have to be raised from pledges in 2010.
- The amount of the average pledge has increased dramatically from \$1850 in 2004 to \$3119 in 2008 & 2009, but it seems to have reached a plateau.
- The number of households willing to financially pledge has remained in the 72 to 83 range over the past four years.
- To effectively reach the target demographics we have said we want to reach, we should plan to add at least part-time paid staff in the areas of children's ministry and youth ministries, \$40,000/year.

The two proposals from the Diocese.

- Our financial liability in regard to our operating grants is effectively the same under both plans. Both plans require we decrease the amount of our operating grant request \$10,000 (Plan 2) or \$11,600 (Plan 1) per year every year until we no longer receive any money for our operational budget.
- St. Luke's biggest liabilities come under the heading of present and future capital expenses. If we propose to keep the Chapel, we receive 50% of the funding for our current stucco problems, no further help with Chapel or church building issues and we forfeit the \$100,000 from the sale of the lot. This puts our liability at a minimum of \$150,000.
- If we agree to the sale of the Chapel, we are spared any expense with respect to our current stucco problems (which could add up to \$150,000 or more), we are free to ask for additional financial help with capital repairs in the future, and we receive \$100,000 when the lot is sold.

Questions to consider.

- If we propose to keep the Chapel, how will we fund the repairs to the external part of the church (the stucco problems)? If we handle these repairs through a capital campaign, how confident are we that people will not "compensate" for their capital pledges with a reduction in their operating budget pledges?
- How can we conduct a significant and successful capital campaign and reach the goals necessary for our operating budget (fund the staffing and programs) that will support our growth?
- If we decide to promote an advertising campaign to reach the people of Summit County, similar to the campaign being used by All

Saints, where do the funds (approximately \$12,000/year) come from?

Elephants In the Room

How would you access the desire and commitment of the members of St. Luke's to share the Good News of God's love with the people of Summit County? Do we really have the desire and the commitment to grow St. Luke's? Since the proposed sale of the Chapel, many who attended the Chapel during the years when the church building was being planned and built have stated they would only support the building of the church if they could keep the Chapel. Contributions to the capital campaign would not have been made if there was any idea the Chapel would be sold, either at that time or in the future.

These comments have lead to a question of the desire on the part of St. Luke's, at that time, to want to grow. Why was the priority on keeping the Chapel and not growing St. Luke's, which necessitated a larger building with educational space and parking? This is an observation, right or wrong, from attending various meetings and talking with some of those involved with St. Luke's during this time.

So, if we want to grow St. Luke's, why do we want to grow St. Luke's? What are our motives? Are we looking at growth as "what can those who come through our doors do for us?" or "what do we have to offer those who come through our doors?".

Thank you for your help.

Sandra