

In January we held our vestry retreat and the subject of the retreat was “How are we doing with moving into the program church model?”

Three years ago, Canon Jim did yoeman’s work transitioning St Philip’s from Pastoral Model to Program Model church.

Short basic review of Pastoral and Program church models:

Pastoral church model - the rector is in on everything, making the decisions about everything, managing everything. For example: the ECW is having a lunch, the rector knows when, where, who is going, who is organizing, how long it will last, what’s on the menu...you get the picture.

Vestry serves in many ways as an assistant manager to the rector, they too are involved in many ways managing each major ministry, by vestry appointment in many cases.

This is the default manner in which smaller churches work (less than 150). There are not enough active lay members to make everything happen, and so to ensure it is happening the vestry and rector manage it...

Leadership in a pastoral church is often a vacuum, meaning, activities and liturgical seasons drive the events, and the rector and vestry manage those events.

Program church model - is the model for a larger church (roughly 200 and up). Big changes take place here:

1. Rector needs let go, equip and allow the laity to walk in their baptismal gifts and calling.
2. The laity become the primary ministers of the church!
3. Vestry must delegate and “encourage” the ministry leaders as well

Rector and vestry now become the leaders of the church, looking to the future, planning to meet needs and establish goals for good of the parish.

Rector and Vestry are no longer involved in managing ministry, this becomes the mission of the laity - of the ministers themselves. Remember, you are the ministers of the church! You are the managers of your ministry! You have a unique ministry...and your unique ministries are gathered together like a family - we called them ministry boards...and there are 6 at St Philip’s. O/R, F&F, FF, PL, PC, and W. These 6 boards comprise over 50 ministries!

You can see why the pastoral model would not work in a program church. A priest simply can’t be involved, up to speed, know all the details, and manage 50+ ministries...nor can a vestry. - not effectively.

And so, this is what you did with Canon Jim...Rector and Vestry became leadership, looking and planning for the future good of the parish,

MBs and ministries became the day-to-day managers of every ministry that takes place at St Philip’s!

That’s a snapshot of where we are.

Here’s where we needed to grow as a parish into program model.

- Communication
- Support
- Leadership planning

All of that begins with the vestry

Communication: In short, it simply was a void. The job of MB communicators was never to provide personal comm to the vestry or for the vestry to work with each MB comm.

The only means by which communication was taking place was by each of you reading the vestry minutes for the month, and for each of the vestry members to be reading MB minutes each month. Something had to change.

Support: A primary charge to the vestry in a program church is to support and provide ministry to each Ministry Board Chair...so that they are not alone, overwhelmed, frustrated, or otherwise. You may not know this, but the only formal interaction the vestry had with our Ministry Board Chairs was once each year at the Vestry Retreat, the chairs were invited to share with the vestry for one hour total about how they are doing. That was it. Something needed to change.

Leadership Planing: We revised how we are going to be planning and setting goals for the future of our parish. The guiding principal will be our Parish Vision. Our old Parish Vision was cumbersome and forgetful, and really unknown to parish (unless you looked it up). The vestry has adopted a new parish vision - one that should inform every ministry and everything we don. Knowing the vision should become as familiar to each of us as our own breathing! Here is the new parish vision as adopted by the vestry:

We at St Philip's church strive to love God and love others in all we do.

And so, after reviewing Notes from several people as well as Canon Jim's notes regarding the restructure of our parish to program model, and after having most of last year to think, research references, and pray, the vestry has reorganized into three sections.

1. There are several who make up an Executive Committee to handle ongoing, and time critical events between vestry meetings or after disasters.
2. There are vestry who make up our planning and goal setting that I just talked about.
3. And the remainder of the vestry have been formed into Chaplains.

Specifically, Chaplains to the Ministry Boards and Chairs.

A member of Vestry is assigned to each Ministry Board. *The role of the chaplain is NOT - as a manager, a micromanager or a vestry rep trying to run any ministry or ministry board - that is absolutely NOT the role of the Chaplain.* Let me repeat this: *The role of the chaplain is NOT to be a manager, a micromanager or a vestry rep trying to run any ministry or ministry board*

Their first charge is to build relationship with the Board Chair, to support and encourage the Chair. AND their second charge is to provide timely communication between the vestry and the board...between the board and the vestry.

One of the most critical things in a program church is communication. Comm comm comm, without comm, there is no energy, no passion, no enthusiasm, but there is confusion, disappointment, and many times frustration and even failure.

And so, a dedicated chaplain from vestry will attend each ministry board meeting, The chaplain will communicate important information from the vestry and in turn will communicate to the vestry important information from the Ministry Board. The chaplain is there to support and encourage the MB Chair as well as each of you. Remember, you are the ministers of the church! You are the managers of your ministry! You have a unique ministry...and your unique ministries are gathered together like a family in this Ministry Board.