

Vestry All Souls Episcopal Church
2300 Cathedral Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20008

Dear Vestry of All Souls –

Thank you again for allowing us to work with you to begin your healing process. The conflict assessment was difficult, but we were guided by the Holy Spirit in working through the issues. In the follow-on work, we again must rely on prayer, our Christian values and our love of Christ to guide us to building a healthy parish and a bright future together.

The purpose of this letter is to put forth a simple proposal for next steps for All Souls. First, the team is introduced and then the tasks are described. The overarching objective is to help heal All Souls after a difficult period and to ready the parish for its next steps.

Note: This proposal puts forth four tasks. These are not necessarily sequential. In fact, they are deeply inter-related and inter-dependent. Therefore, you will see aspects of each task in all of the work.

Team

Leading the team will be Kim Fletcher who specializes in conflict resolution and congregational development. She will be supported by Reverend Adrien Dawson, Rector, All Saints Episcopal Church in Frederick, MD. Adrien specializes in the study of worship as a way to rejuvenate and invigorate our relationship to God. One of her areas of focus is how worship – its uniqueness for each parish – clarifies a parish’s identity. Kathleen Otto-Schotto is a mid-year seminarian at Virginia Theological Seminary. She has held every position possible in parish life and, called to holy vows, she is focusing on healing and reconciliation in diverse parishes.

Tasks:

Prayer, Healing and Reconciliation

The objective of this work is to help All Souls move past the conflict of the past and understand better how to deal with conflicts that will arise.

- Establish norms for conversations about truth, healing, and reconciling
 - Create space and atmosphere for honest conversation
- Name and discuss the conflict and issues occurring in the parish
 - Seek to find common ground, admit fault, change behavior and rebuild relationships
- Story Telling as a way to hear and appreciate all perspectives

- Create prayer traditions for All Souls that support healing and reconciliation
 - Develop formation of prayer groups
 - Parish-wide conversation on how All Souls prays as a community
 - Working with the Prayer Team on developing a prayer-writing workshop
- January – February 2021

Eucharistic Competence and “How All Souls does High Church”

The objective of work on Eucharistic Competence is to ensure that parishioners understand why and how the liturgy can be transformative.

- This series of seminars will walk through the Canonical requirements for the Eucharist and then move to how a parish “does church.”
 - Training for the entire Parish on parish community, confession, Eucharist, Canonical requirements, mass variations, Rite 1, Rite 2, Morning Prayer, Compline, Daily Office, etc.
 - Small group conversations about services and Rites and potential additional services
- February - March 2021

Honest Communications and Trustworthiness

The objective of this task is to understand ourselves and to build trust amongst parishioners

- Using the FIRO-B (optional) and the Trust Equation parish-wide to ascertain both the individual and the collective approaches to affection, control, trust, reliability, credibility, connection and self-interest (FIRO-B instrument has cost per person)
- Training for all parish members on communications styles and active listening
- Zoom conversation in small groups and all parish settings to discuss communications
- March – April 2021

Mission Focus and Ministries

The objective of this task is to help All Souls develop the concept of “who we want to be” and find where God is calling All Souls to focus its gifts and talents. This will help an interim priest do the work to help All Souls be ready for a new Rector.

- By telling the stories of All Souls and its current ministries, the parish will be able to discern a broad, common mission focus and related ministries/activities.
- March-May 2021

All Souls Reconciliation Initiative Partial Schedule as of January 12, 2021

December 2020

- Reflection and Meditations

January 2021

- Theme for January is truth, reconciliation, and forgiveness
- Objective: Make space for people to hear and respect the experiences of others in order to reconcile and forgive:
 - People don't realize that others are hurt by outcomes that pleased them
 - Story telling is a good way to share our experiences
 - Identify how people experience conflict: everyone experiences it differently
 - Types of conflict styles – everybody has a favorite
 - Relationship models in parish life
- January 17 – All Parish Meeting
 - How Do I Experience Conflict? We will discuss the ways we react to conflict: emotionally, physiologically
 - We will share examples
 - Define Reconciliation – what will reconciliation and forgiveness look like at All Souls?
 - Discuss readiness for reconciliation
 - Homework
- January 18 – 29 - Small Group Zoom Workshops
 - Readiness for reconciliation and forgiveness
 - Story Telling – how to tell our stories. We will learn about a model to use in developing our stories
 - Barriers to reconciliation: what barriers am I holding? Are there organizational barriers we should identify and discuss?
 - Small group workshops will be scheduled during a variety of times during the week in order to accommodate as many people as possible
- January 24 – All Parish Meeting
 - Using information from the workshops we will summarize readiness and barriers and discuss ways to overcome them
 - Briefly review how to use story telling process and techniques
 - Story telling commences
- January 31 – All Parish Meeting
 - Sharing stories

February 2021

- Theme for February is reconciliation and liturgy as a transformative experience
- Objective: to continue the reconciliation and prayer processes and begin the exploration of how All Souls can experience the liturgy more fully.
- Prayer writing workshop (Date TBD)
 - Meet with the Prayer team to develop the prayer writing workshop
 - The focus of this workshop is on writing prayers for the reconciliation process
- February 13 All Parish Meeting (Time TBD, 90 minutes)
 - We will present the Relationship cycle and conflict modes/preferences
 - Discussion on how individual views of relationships and preferences for handling conflict handling style have impact on our ability to forgive and reconcile
- February 14-21 Small group meetings
 - Discuss individual modes/preferences and how these preferences impacted the conflict at All Souls
- All Parish Meeting - Eucharistic Competence – Introduction (Date TBD)
 - What is Eucharistic Competence and Why Do We Need It?
 - Each parishioner thinks he/she/they are the expert in liturgy, and in many ways that is true because it matters deeply to each of us how we worship
 - A parish that has “critical mass” of people who have a common view of how to “do” liturgy means that the Sunday worship reflects the parish and its social and historical perspectives. It brings fullness and community to our worship experience.
 - As we move into Lent, Eucharistic Competence becomes a way for us to focus on how the liturgy brings us closer to Christ.
- Eucharistic Competence Workshops (Dates TBD)
 - We will walk through the liturgy and build the common vision of how All Souls “does” the liturgy.
 - The discussions will encompass both the liturgical reasons for doing what we do in the liturgy, historical significance and tradition of the mass and where and how All Souls as a parish can be creative in making the liturgy more meaningful for the parish as a whole