

Atlantic Convocation Clergy

Dwelling in the Word:

- We are pourous, try to be inclusive and are uncomfortable with any sense of exclusion. Multiple narratives. The new BCP and Hymnal are not needed, and the worst thing we did was tell people to throw out their old prayer books.
- People born in the 70s and 80s don't even know what the Episcopal Church is. Celebrate with enthusiasm, conviction and people will be attracted.
- We are in danger of loving the liturgy too much. This is how we've always done it. Example - the contemporary version of the Lord's Prayer was used and there was push back, it threw people off. Add a little something different and push back causes those who are interested in the new to feel excluded.
- Increased individualism vs. the interdependence of our parishes.

Vital Questions:

- Boring questions. We should be focused on other issues. 2/3 of our congregations are over 65. If the parish is in an area with all old people, they should buy a rectory where the young people are. Questions - what is the bishop's vision of his episcopate? We are called to be/make disciples. There are many places where there is no formation happening. We need to hear more about the bishop's experience in the hospitality industry.
- How do we provide resources that are particular to geographic regions? Like to see less retreat into "what are we going to do" mentality.
- The bishop has not brought anything to the diocese. (Way of St Paul?) Need to be taught by other than Old White Men.
- Some over 75 are still quite active! Holy Innocents did Way of St Paul and it was great because it got them out of the building. Eye opening. But when it was done it was put on the shelf, they need a way to keep it going. If we want to disciple people, we can no longer say anyone is too old.
- Lenten programs (From Church Next) have been tried regionally and been very successful (3-4 parishes.) People realizing things about each other.
- One congregation has 5 kids who know nothing about who Jesus is. How do you start? We need to have materials to start from scratch. We don't have enough manpower.
- Systemic problem - Better to run off the wrong cliff than not move. T Roosevelt: *"In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing."* Hanging around examining all the options will kill us. We need to try. It is different, we need to just hold our noses and jump.
- There is value to the institution.
- Not committed to the institution. The churches we allow to plod on, like Paulsboro. They do not want any help from the diocese so they pay no fair share. Why is that allowed to go on?
- Churches like Paulsboro are in hospice.
- There is passive aggressive behavior on the part of some clergy.
- Why are the ones not here (at the meeting) not here?
- Example - attended a conference where the Bishop of Argentina sent everyone home at night to pray about what their call as a diocese was. We don't try that. Convention is a set agenda, same old reports, never really talk about the Holy Spirit guiding us.
- Newark has dispensed with key note speaker and bishop's address to have conversation.
- Programs brought in then they go into a black hole.

- What is trustworthy? Why are the clergy out working so hard?
- People ask why we need a diocese. There is only one church. We need each other and the diocese is how we are connected. Why are the Generation X clergy not willing to sacrifice? Individuals don't understand that their presence is essential. There has to be consequences to clergy who don't show up.
- We have a diocese for community. We need to rely on each other. The bishop sees his episcopate in the Pauline model. We need to cut down buildings to increase our strength.
- Financials - congregations who are invested know what the diocesan staff does but are afraid that the bishop will come in and shut them down.
- Dreaming big - how the bishop relates to people are issues of management.
- Episcopal Charities? Need to identify concrete goals for success. There are 29 Jubilee centers. The Hispanic mission work - we need an atmosphere of being able to fail. Lutherans - plant a church and the whole synod supports for 5 years.
- Hearing from colleagues means a lot. There should be a call list. The more we hear from each other the better.
- Hispanic Minister is successful. We need to commit to regional things.
- Old people are not worth anything is how the seniors are feeling. Why do parishes not get deacons? Geographical.
- More intergenerational events?
- Somers Point became more connected through the Way of St Paul.
- Cooperative Youth events in regions. Needs to be approached at that level.

Why are people afraid?

(The attendees were then asked to email the bishop with 3 suggestions for what each one wants the September 12th discussion to be about.)