

Watchung Convocation Lay

Reach out to communities we are in. Don't keep it a secret, let others see who we are.

There is an interdependence on each other and we are all in this together.

We sometimes get caught up in the negative - get tired, don't have the energy.

Survival/maintenance mode.

What is meant by culture? We have Hispanic, black, African all within our diocese. Dealing with so many difference, but we are all subject to consumer culture throughout.

Younger generations must be encouraged to decide to pick church over sports.

Generational difficulties and disconnects. Parents are to blame and we can't give up the fight against other activities scheduled on Sunday mornings.

One example - a daughter who is a pro soccer player and knows the tension of balancing sports and church. She uses her gifts as a Christian to support mission and the team she is on engages in prayer every day before practice and games. Found a way to be faithful outside of Sunday mornings, and the time spent in church was aimed at being quality time.

Fundamentally, people here because we care. How do we "get outside the Jews"? (From bible reading.)

Brainstorming - Some churches are in places where there is more need. Look at the discipleship in those places. Camp at St. Mark's in Plainfield is an example. Food drives are done throughout the year. If there is no need in one area, can't that congregation help in other areas where there is need? Both financially and by showing up.

St. Bernard's in Bernardsville has only 50 pledgers but do lots of work in the community. We assume things about other congregations because of their location. We need more conversation and connection.

Youth are getting together in regions. This gives a lot more opportunities to do things together. What's Important?

- The church is not holding/attracting people. So how do we do church? We think if people are reciting prayers/creeds that they are getting the learning and spiritual growth they need.

- We need to find a way to develop programs (and maybe music) to have more upbeat atmosphere for youth. Services for youth? Evening services, especially Sundays. Make them more upbeat and responsive to the community.

- Way of St Paul - allows for experimentation and lets people take risks and adapt.

- When something new is tried and it works, let other people know!

- We need to strengthen and create relationships.

- Picnics - have one of the services in the park where you have a parish picnic. Do worship publicly. Go out into the communities and be seen.

- Christian formation is a priority. Basic - who is Jesus Christ to you? Too many churches have NO formation at all.

- Need to be more bible based churches. Have new themed bible studies like Women of the Bible. No children are included in parishes and very few men. We need to all know more about our history.

- Jazz Vespers?

- Bring a friend to church?

- We are a missional church. Go out and be Christians in the world.

- Will we all be talking to other lay people? We are not supporting our family and that is like putting a brother or sister out on the street. Can we get together for just social time and not

always business (convention)?

- Less and less clergy means more commitment/help needed from the laity.
- Social Justice Day on September 16th. In conjunction with the Lutheran church at Crossroads Retreat Center.

Anything you brought with you that you wanted to say?

- What will we be doing about the money issue? Is there value in supporting the larger community? Bishop needs to challenge those who can do better. We have not done a capital campaign since the 90s.
- How can we help people in the pews better understand Fair Share and how the parish itself operates? We cut that first because it's easiest.
- We are struggling with communications.
- We are in a society where we have shared communities. Can the diocesan staff be made up of part time clergy who work part time for the diocese as well? Can we look for commonality with other dioceses?
- What's happening with the youth? Theo's Cafe is great. The youth person should be a resource who organizes ministries throughout the diocese.