



St. Andrew's
Episcopal Church
Bryan, Texas



MUTUAL MINISTRY REVIEW

AUGUST 19-20

MEETING NOTES

Dates: Friday, August 19
Saturday, August 20

Attendees: Fr. Sean Cox, Jeannine Netterville, Cliff Tice, Kathleen Phillips, Alma Pruessner, Neville Clarke, Carol Yates, Jim Miller, Jim Kracht, Roland Searcy, Cindy Peaslee, Mike Mullen (Friday night only)

Absent: Steven Carr and Chuck Glenewinkel

Facilitator: Betsy Aylin, PhD

Purpose: Review the overall ministries of St. Andrew's to identify what is valued, what is needed, a vision for the future, and a plan to get there.

Desired Outcomes:

- Build a sense of community among vestry and staff
- Build understanding of the current status of ministries of St. Andrew's, including what is valued and where gaps exist
- Create a future Vision for ministry of St. Andrew's, including new or revitalized ministries
- Identify areas of focus representing priorities for the ministry over the next 2-3 years
- Create high level work plans to advance ministry
- Celebrate the vision for the future of the church

Location: Friday night at St. Andrew's Church, Parish Hall
Saturday, Sterling House, Hospice Brazos Valley

FRIDAY, August 19, 6:00pm to 9:00pm

Gather and Dinner

The group met and enjoyed a delicious dinner provided by the La Salle Hotel and Cindy Peaslee.

INTRODUCTIONS AND OVERVIEW OF MUTUAL MINISTRY REVIEW

Prayer and Welcome

Sean welcomed the group and Betsy opened with a prayer for the work the group was undertaking.

Introductions

After brief introductions, the group engaged in a paired exercise in which they told their life's story in one minute.

Meeting Outcomes, Agenda, Guidelines, and Expectations

Betsy review the purpose and outcomes expected for the meeting as outlined above and noted that the retreat is the central part of the mutual ministries review, an ongoing process which is part of the overall development of the St. Andrew's strategic plan. The review was facilitated by Betsy Aylin. It involved presentation and discussion of the results of the recently completed parish survey, discussion of strategic objectives and directions, and action planning to provide a description, consensus and time table for initial steps in implementing agreed actions. The results of this review will lead the vestry and parish towards the longer range and more comprehensive strategy which is scheduled for completion in December 2011.

She also recommended the following meeting guidelines:

- Be curious
- Read and listen objectively
- Say what's on your mind
- Look for common ground and differences
- Allow yourself and your views to be changed
- Read with eyes of faith
- Seek meaning
- One conversation at a time
- HAVE FUN!!!

The group then described what they hope to get out of the Mutual Ministry Review meeting, as follows:

- What we do and don't do to guide strategy - understanding
- What doing right and what doing wrong to meet our stated goals – focus on effectiveness
- Learn thinking of parish on how we are doing, especially on future states – accomplishing the goals of the strategy

- Create energy and excitement about the future
- Look at future state descriptions and discuss their current meaning – are they valid or what changes are needed
- Figure out a document that lets individual members of the parish can see where they might fit and engage in ministries of the church
- Try to understand the perceptions of the parish members that are reflected in the results of the survey
- Fiscal requirements for achieving the goals
- Develop actionable agenda with means of measuring progress
- Suggested: “do the right things and do things right”

Overview of Mutual Ministry Review

Betsy then provided an overview of the MMR process, which is designed to address these questions listed below. For a full overview of the process, see the attached PowerPoint presentation.

- Perception of ministries
- Where are we strong
- Where are the gaps and hopes
- How well working together
- Where being led
- Priorities
- What will we do

CURRENT STATUS OF MINISTRIES

The group then reviewed the results of the survey. From a baseline of an average Sunday attendance of about 200, including about 50 youth and children, there were a total of 117 responses. There were 99 on line responses and 18 mail-ins. Roughly 60% of the total parish average Sunday attendees (ASA) responded and 78% of adult ASA responded to the survey. This is a very good result compared overall to similar surveys and provides confidence that the results of the survey would represent the congregation at large. There was a good representation of members across age groups in the responses, with a slightly higher proportion of responses in the age group over 65 years.

The following handouts were provided and are attached to these minutes.

- Overview of responses to the survey, including highest and least high rated items
- Overall mean and standard deviation scores for each of the rated items
- Comparison by demographic group with mean and standard deviation

Summary of scores:

- Overall average score for all questions = 3.83 out of a possible 5.0. The facilitator advised that this is a relatively high score compared to other surveys.
- She noted that an average score less than 3.5 for individual questions would be ground for a closer look.

- Standard deviations (SD) were provided for both the overall scores and for individual mean scores. A small SD score (<.9) indicates close agreement among survey takers on a given item and a larger spread (>1.5) indicates less agreement on an item. In the case of the later, mean scores are less reflective of views.
- In a few cases, there was some polarization of responses, with either high or low scores – strong disagreement. Where such uncertainty is evident, we have the possibility of looking further into the issue involved with additional focus groups. The most consistently low scores were related to assessment of current programs, including youth programs.
- Betsy also reported on Individual means scores, looking at the average of each individual. From that perspective, she noted that
 - 9 respondents had an overall mean at 4.5 or more (very happy campers)
 - 14 had means below 3.5 (not so happy campers)
 - Of those 14 below 3.5, 6 at 3.0 or below (unhappy campers)

Discussion:

- Standard deviation is an indicator of closeness of fit or variance from the mean – high SD means lack of coherence of opinion – general indicator only
- Communication is a transcending thematic need before, during, and after planning
- Minutes of the Vestry could be published – at least made available on the website
- Survey ratings were viewed by the group as good overall, and to some a pleasant surprise

REVIEW OF OPEN-ENDED ITEMS

We then broke into small groups to review the open ended items. Each group took one of the questions from the survey and were asked to identify the key themes, select some interest or revelatory quotes, and to pick a theme-song for the responses to the question assigned.

Group 1: What I value most about the ministry provided by the church is:

Themes:

- Community and fellowship
- Worship
- Clergy involvement
- Acceptance

Theme-song: The representative song: “where everybody knows your name”

Group 2: If I could change or add one thing to the church, it would be:

Themes:

- Increase hospitality to newcomers
- Welcome and greeting
- Music and the service – strong conflicting opinions
 - Example: I like using the prayer book service vs. avoid the “drone of reading the same words”

- Building-space and access – inadequacy and more accessibility
- Strife – dissention and better ways to settle differences
- Communication
 - Not mentioned specifically but overlying, seems to be a root cause of dissatisfaction – define what we are doing more transparency

Theme song: “Why don’t you love me like you used to do”

Group 3: When I think about the ministry of St. Andrew’s five years from now, what I hope we will be known for is: (plus Future State comments)

Themes:

- Serve community around us -poor and needy, downtown Bryan
- More welcoming to visitors and members
- More community involvement

Theme-song: We will be the “bridge over troubled water”

Future state comments in open comment space (NPC) (also from Group 3)

- Most see these statements being relevant in the future
- Clear lack of awareness of progress – shows faulty communication
- Diversity of opposing opinions
- Numerous thoughtful comments
- Importance of initial and ongoing feedback from the MMR and other planning
- Answers reflect need for more **ongoing** communication

Group 4: General comments

Themes:

- Love fest
- Cold tense place
- Communication challenges
- Those who love it really love it.
 - Quotes: lots of love for church and people
 - If this goes the way of other surveys, nothing will be done with it
 - Highly variable positive and negative
 - Is downtown a safe place to be?

Theme Song: “Love is in the air”

General points of discussion and questions that arose:

Throughout the evening, the following questions and issues were brought up (and noted by Nevilled) and were tabled for a later time in the meeting. Most were dealt with on Saturday. Remaining issues may be discussed in future meetings of the vestry or appropriate church leaders.

- How do we discuss comments on the church leadership – including the Rector? We should reflect that these were considered and the way forward
- How much of the MMR results do we put on the website?
- How do we condense and make interesting the vestry activities?
- How is the best way to communicate the results of the MMR to the parish?
- Can we get the summary slides used in the retreat for possible use with the parish in briefing them on results?
- Have we adequately considered the comments on Future Vision?
- How to organize and execute a more vigorous internal evangelism?
- To what extent does a small group of long term members drive the agenda for the church and how do we get more fresh participation?
- Movement from a pastoral to a program oriented paradigm may have contributed to a loss of connectedness and perceived discontinuity
- Changing demographics in the BSC area – we might learn from a comparison of the new census data with that of ten years ago
- Note that overall Diocesan church attendance is down over recent years.

Preparation for Saturday and Compline

Betsy reminded people about Saturday's meeting time and the location was provided. The group then said Compline and departed.

SATURDAY, August 20, 9am to 4pm

WELCOME BACK AND INTRODUCTION

The morning session began with Morning Prayer and a lovely breakfast provided by La Salle, and various team members, including a carrot cake from Alma. Betsy gave an overview of the days agenda and then got the group moving with some morning stretches.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The group reviewed some demographics from the church, which is the number of members in each age group, and they also looked at the "LOBSTER" report which provides a 10 year demographic trends for key factors, including ASA, pledge numbers and average pledge amount (higher than the diocesan average), numbers added, and other Diocesan statistics.

CURRENT STATUS OF MINISTRIES – TAKING STOCK

The group then did a brainstorming session to take "STOCK" of where the church is with its overall ministry. People commented on strengths, trends, opportunities, challenges, key themes writing ideas on flip charts around the room. Their inputs are noted below. The second step in the process was to put "stickie" dots by those items that they thought most important to the future ministry of St. Andrew's. Red dots represented a high priority and are shown below with an R and blue/green dots a secondary priority, shown below as bg. The numbers shown in parenthesis below are the number of dots given.

Strengths

- Traditions
- Strong financial support from members (1 R, 1 BG)
- Music –most are satisfied, especially 11:15 (1 R)
- Strong loyalty from those satisfied with ministries
- Spiritual growth (1R)
- Focus on youth groups
- Love and friendliness
- Emphasis on hospitality (1R. 1BG)
- Worship opportunities
- Educational programs
- Outreach (1BG)
- This place, building, ambiance, atmosphere (1BG)
- Strong active, committed core of people

Trends

- Significant increase in CRAB
- Age skewed towards older
- Substitute for parts of service – prayers of people
- Diversity of service
- Diversity of membership
- Wrestling with scripture, tradition, reason (3 R)
- Interest in spiritual formation (3 BG)
- From traditional to contemporary? (2BG)

Opportunities

- Communications- electronic to young adults
- Ministry/activities/ outreach (2 BG)
- Attract and build younger membership (3R)
- Publish summary of vestry minutes (3BG)

- Suggestion box – questions and answers (6 BG)
- Pull in more participation and outreach programs (1R)
- Pull in more participation in outreach programs in Bryan community
- More participation in ministries
- Add followers to existing leadership
- Making certain we are all welcome (2 BG)
- Neighborly to our neighbors (1 R)
- More people in pews (1R, 1 BG)
- Communication – lots
- Cross communication with boxes
- Singles ministry (1GB)
- Gay, lesbian, transgender (GLTG) (1R)
- Support fund for congregations
- Recognize gifts of members and develop ways they are comfortable in contributing
- Cut down more hay than we can bale
- Work on ways to task members for their skills and allow them to focus without being overcome
- Stress the importance of inviting people to “do things”
- Approach with faith – seek God’s guidance
- How do you encounter Christ – distinguish us from the other non-profits 4
- Removing barriers to meeting Christ in encounters with new people (1R)
- Music should enhance the communications (too loud) – Sean – music is part of the liturgy (1R)
- Outreach to downtown community (1R, 1 BG)
- Talk to people after church, including Fr. Sean (1R, 3BG)
- Ministry to the Latino community

Key Themes

- What does tradition mean to you
- Importance of community (1 R)
- Transparency and communication 8 R, 3 BG)
- New ministries
- Multiple ministries – something for almost everyone (1 BG)

- Enhancing communications to all
- Senior ministry (2 R, 5 BG) ** 3
- Ministries for singles (4 R, 2 BG) **
- Need for increased participation and engagement (1 R, 2 BG)
- Be more welcoming (1 R)

Other ministry topics

- Assess gifts of people and empower them to use gifts (2 BG)
- Communication about small group activity
- Encourage everyone to be involved in one thing
- Invite people individually to participate (2 R)
- Approach with faith and seek God's guidance (1 BG)
- Encounter Christ (3 R, 1 G)
- Acceptance important (1R, 1G)
- Clergy involvement (1 BG)
- Like using the prayer book (1 red)

A VISION FOR MINISTRY (SCRIPTURE)

As a way to gain a deeper sense of what the call for St. Andrew's ministry is in the future, Betsy led the group through a *lectio divina* meditation of Romans 12: 4 – 18, reading a segment of the passage 4 times for people to silently listen and reflect on the passage. After a brief period of sharing, the group then divided into small groups to discuss the passage and what they heard in the reading. It was after this discussion that the topics identified in taking STOCK were discussed and the voting took place. The general sense was that the notion of ministry was deepened and the thinking and work became more spiritual after that reading and discussion.

Key Areas of Focus for Ministry

Out of the dot voting and discussion, the group discerned 4 areas that they felt should be a focus going forward. These became the focus of a large part of the remaining time together and were:

1. Communication
2. Ministry for singles and seniors
3. Spiritual Formation
4. "Adaptive" ministries to new groups

It was agreed that the need to increase involvement and the goal of making all feel welcome would be embedded in each area.

ENVISIONING THE FUTURE OF MINISTRY

The group was then asked to envision the future of ministry for St. Andrew's thinking several years into the future. They were asked to individually note what was working well, what the church was doing, what people were saying, and what characterized the ministry of St. Andrew's. After listing individual ideas, they talk in pairs and then brainstormed with the whole group. Comments on the spirit underlying the ministries of the church included these:

- Ministry is caring, comprehensive, effective, and spiritual
- Theme song should be "Jesus knows me this I love"
- Willing to be led by the spirit into the unknown
- Encounter with Christ
- Find and maintain the path to Christ
- Accomplish the goals set out today
- Know Christ and make him known
- Improving ministries in five years
- Engage holy habits- prayer, hospitality, tithing, Sabbath keeping, study, and worship (Fr. Sean)
- Understanding each other – work out differences
- Would like to see "pews of many colors"
- Attractive name tags

From this discussion, the group narrowed the vision to a few key ideas that form a kind of vision for ministry for the church are these:

Vision for Ministry

- Ministry builds "holy habits" of those who participate in it.
- Our ministry is spirit-filled and spirit led.
- Through the church's ministry, all people are welcomed.
- Through engagement with each other in ministry, we come to understand and accept each other.
- In our ministry, we work together in inter-dependence to live out the mission of the church.

Additional work is needed to put these phrases into a single vision statement, but there was agreement that these are the important elements to a vision for ministry and they are clear and workable as a desired future for the ministry of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. These elements of vision provide a touchstone that can be revisited periodically to see how well the vision is being fulfilled.

IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING—BRINGING THE VISION TO LIFE

The group then began the work of planning how to carry out ministry in the 5 areas they set as points of focus. They began by brainstorming actions for these areas as a whole group, listing individually first, and then pairing up and listing items on large sticky notes. These actions were clustered by topic, leading to separating out welcome as a separate and 5th area of focus.

The group then divided up into the five areas of ministry and began work on building an action plan for each area. They were given the ideas generated in the brainstorming exercise just mentioned but were asked to add as needed. The groups for action planning are shown below.

1. Communication
 - Develop and execute an organized communications plan with innovative use of all social and communications media
 - Add to support for email and website communications
 - Enhance and expand website functionality
 - Decentralize communications
 - Use bulletin to elaborate on ministries

2. Singles and seniors encourage support system
 - Internal recruitment
 - Use bulletin board to elaborate ministries

3. Hospitality plan
 - Review and consolidate the hospitality activities into a coherent set of related activities with follow up and measured results
 - Have a once a month social engagement after the 9:00 for engagement only
 - Inquire about absent members
 - Name tags
 - “Andy to go” gatherings in parishioners homes
 - Rector coffee weekdays
 - Implementing welcoming new member liturgy

4. Encountering Christ
 - Area for quiet prayer
 - Continue regular spiritual retreats

5. Miscellaneous
 - Internal evangelism plan
 - Finish the basement
 - Consider a Sunday night Hispanic service

- Develop an plan for increasing active involvement in ministries by those not presently engaged (core group is hard to get into)
- Call to explore adaptive ministries

Out of this brainstorming and discussion it was decided to create a separate area for “adaptive” ministries to reach out to two new groups—Hispanic and the gay-lesbian-transgender communities

ACTION PLANNING

Small group work (Implementation area)

Each group then began work creating and action plan for their assigned area. The request was to identify the following

1. A clear title
2. 1 to 3 SMART goals – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound (SMART)
3. Define success – vision
4. Identify the first step
5. Identify other actions required
6. Map actions to 12-15 month calendar
7. Identify key resources who could lead in the area assigned (1 to 3 people)

The groups worked for about 30 minutes and then posted their results on a large wall calendar, and present it to the group. The calendar and actions is provided following. Further review and development is needed to ensure that all needed actions are identified and sequenced. This might occur at a vestry meeting.

1. Communication (Jim Miller, Neville Clarke)

Discussion.

Topic was much discussed through out the MMR retreat. Team felt that all relevant information should be communicated to appropriate audiences in a timely and effective manner. Team focused on process for improving communication and other members of the group were concerned about content. A separate subcommittee, already formed, will develop the strategy – objectives, components, implementation plan and schedule (see above). After that, consideration will be given to the implementation plan. Elements of the implementation plan may include:

1. Content and scope
2. Needs and skill assessment
3. Increase staffing and staff skills
4. Equipment needs assessment
5. Implementation

Goals:

- Develop and execute an organized communications plan with innovative use of all social and communications media by Dec. 1.

- Increase staffing and staff skills
- Increase and improve content
- Enhanced use of all website, email, facebook, messaging
- Resources available for implementation

Vision

- Increase staffing and staff skills – trained and experienced and able to use all tools using appropriate tools
- Increase and improve content – cross cutting plan that links various ministries in a coherent way – improve transparency and engagement
- Enhanced use of all website, email, facebook, messaging, tweets

2. Ministry for singles and seniors (Cindy, Carol, and Roland)

Goals:

- Establish recognized singles group
- Improve attendance of singles at services
- Establish friendships within the group

3. Spiritual Formation (Kathleen and Cliff)

Goal:

- Have spiritual formation events and offerings throughout the year

4. “Adaptive” ministries to new groups (Sean, Jim Kracht)

Goals:

- Integrate GLBT people into the congregation
- Explore options for Hispanic ministry

Vision of Success

We have enough information to determine the potential and future direction of these two areas of ministry.

5. Hospitality and welcome (Alma and Jeannine)

Goals:

- Identify and welcome visitors
- Improve communication, including with visitors and newcomers
- Acknowledge new members.

MINISTRY AREA	Sept. – Oct. 2011	Nov. – Dec. 2011	Jan. – Feb. 2012	Mar – Apr. 2012	May – June 2012	July – August 2012	Sept – August 2012	Potential Leaders
1. Communication	Kick off communication planning, identify scope and content of effort	Conduct a needs and skill assessment for staff	Identify equipment needed for current and future needs	Train staff with new skills and software	Implement use of new skills and equipment			Neville Clarke Jim Miller Cindy Beasley Chuck Glenwinkle
2. Welcome and hospitality	Re-establish use of nametags	Hold a chili cook-off for new members Start a new member coffee between services (to be held monthly)	Start rector's coffee on a regular basis on week-day mornings by invitation or open to all	Offer lunch in Lent for the Bryan community	Hold a parish picnic	Start small gift giving to newcomers identified and recognized as services (on-going)		Cliff Jennifer Lilliker Asandy Peory Linda Ford
3. Ministry to singles and seniors	Singles: Hold organizational meeting in a bar. Seniors: Hold an organization meeting at church or elsewhere.	Assess needs and interests of each group.	Identify and establish leaders for each group. Set agenda for group. Groups create a plan for future activities, including travel, education, spiritual journeys.					Erica Peasley Elizabeth Scott Bob Roepke John and Cathy Godfry

MINISTRY AREA	Sept. – Oct. 2011	Nov. – Dec. 2011	Jan. – Feb. 2012	Mar – Apr. 2012	May – June 2012	July – August 2012	Sept – August 2012	Potential Leaders
4. Adaptive ministry to Hispanic and GLTG	Work with current GLBT to develop plan for safe supportive environment	“minister out” to GLBT community and invite them in Develop plan for inclusion of GLBT	Form team (parish and Hispanic community leaders) to assess needs of Hispanic community	Develop an action plan for Hispanic ministry within scope of the mission of the parish	Form teams to develop a plan and determine resources needed	Work on GLBT plan for the fall Work on Hispanic ministry plan for the fall	Work on GLBT plan for the fall	HR leaders in parish Contact within GLBT and Hispanic communities
6. Spiritual formation	Encourage no talking in nave prior to service. Notes in pew sheets. Encourage “pew groups” to follow-up with each other and missing members Start a week-day mediation time with instruction.	Request money for spiritual formation evens in 2012 Plan retreat themes for 2012	Contact retreat leaders	Host Lenten retreat	Host summer retreat		Host fall retreat Note: Host Advent retreat in December	Mary Lenn Kathleen Phillips Lonny Mandy

WRAP UP DISCUSSION

Communicating Results

The group was eager to plan for a way to tell the parish about the results of the survey and the work and outcomes of the MMR retreat. They agreed to the following:

- Review overview of the process – we heard you (provided by Betsy)
- Brief summary of results of numeric scores (in PowerPoint from Betsy)
- Include the work done on open ended questions in small group, including the songs
- Present results as a work in progress
- Acknowledge low areas and negative comments and describe follow-up actions, including in program areas
- This is not a discussion of the rector's performance

Other Discussion

Defer further action on the future state evaluation until the strategic planning process is further along – this may lead to revision of future state candidate statements. The members of the retreat thought all were relevant but could be modified. A thumbs up-thumbs down vote showed the group thought all were worthy of inclusion going forward.

FINAL AGREEMENTS AND ACTION PLANNING

1. A summary of vestry minutes published in several venues
2. Each presenter of the 5 areas of ministry will send a one-page description of that area to Neville Clarke for communication with the parish a summary of their Vision of Success, Goals, key actions and potential leaders.
3. Group agreed to make additional efforts in getting name tags used, including identifying “name tag couriers” who would distribute name tags on Sunday morning.
4. Follow up with focus groups to better understand the issues in the program areas – especially youth, children, and adults.
5. Hold a pot luck supper on September 14 with presentation of the MMR results 5:30 dinner – 6:00-7:00 program. (See attached PowerPoint as presentation starter). Highlight strengths and describe actions to be taken, mentioning criticism but without focusing on the negative.
6. Betsy will produce notes and send to Sean by Wednesday, to then be circulated to the group.

EVALUATION, WRAP UP, AND CLOSING LITURGY

The group reviewed the objectives set at the beginning of the meeting, and the expectations offered by the group. It was agreed that most were met. Vestry agreed that this process has been very useful and engaging and that it provides very useful insights from the survey and its interpretation by the facilitator and the outcomes of the discussions following.

Evaluative comments about the meeting included these:

- Candor without rancor
- Bonding among vestry
- Appreciated the spiritual side of the retreat
- Time phased goals
- Able to address complex emotionally charged issues
- Rewarding–
 - how engaging
 - how positive the results were
- Many kudos to Betsy for inspired leadership and skills

Closing Liturgy and Dismiss

The group read an excerpt from the Rule for a New Brother which talks about giving thanks for the brothers and sisters given to accompany us on our way. Then we departed.

Thanks to ALL!!!

