



The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany

Introduction

The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany believes that Jesus Christ shows forth God's love for all people, and that we are called to share by our words and actions the good news of God's grace and love as Jesus shares it with us.

We are committed to Christian outreach, working together to serve others as Christ served.

We believe that we are all ministers by virtue of our baptism and share that ministry and leadership between the clergy and the laity and respect each other's opinions.

We will be diligent in worship and the practice of God's teaching, especially that God is Love.

We have a strong reverence for the Episcopal expression of the Christian faith, based on the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer.

We believe that we are called to live by these principles. We know that we cannot achieve them by ourselves but only through the Grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who forgives us and gives us strength.

Report from the Priest in Charge - The Reverend Donna Foughty

Wow! It has been some year for all of us. Just a year ago I came among you as your priest and pastor and to be honest I had no idea what I would find. I had good stories from one quarter, bad stories from another, confused stories from a third and the fourth well they just did not know you all were still here.

The parish was, understandably, in a bit of a dilemma. Three priests had preceded me in a very short period of time. There was still some grieving that needed to be done with that issue and also with the issue of the real angst you suffered before the split. So, even as I was just getting to know you, at the suggestion of Bishop Jones a consultant was hired who helped all of us move toward refocusing the sustainability of the parish. In the end it was agreed to continue on as a parish.

This was a very important decision; this was a life changing decision. Hiring me was also a life changing decision. You were asked not just to keep your sleeves rolled up after two long years of hard work but you were also asked to accept and trust a new member of the family as pastor, priest, and friend. Either of these would be taxing but it was decided to forge ahead and I am so very glad you did.

I know that there were great expectations of a renewed decision and a new priest.

The decision to hire me meant you were being asked to trust again, to trust I would not find some other job and bail out, the trust that I was not some radical from either side of the aisle, the trust that I might be the one to help you transform yourselves, the trust that I could become your pastor, your priest and a part of your family.

It was for me a life changing time also. I was asked, not just by you but by Bishop Jones to see if I could be that leader that stayed, the pastor that led and the priest that was a fellow traveler on the journey and, God willing, part of your family. I knew it would not be easy. Parishes need to trust their priests and you had been hurt by some of yours, I live a piece away from you all, though I would really rather live out here, and I was being hired part time which, if one follows the diocesan guidelines for travel and sermon prep etcetera meant I could have very little actual time here. (By the way when it comes to hours and particulars the diocesan and guidelines are meant to be bent or nothing would get done) I also had no office per se, public and visible so that people on the street could see the representative of the physical presence of the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany.

The first year for priest and congregation is often a time of feeling each other out. Relationships do not happen overnight, or a week or even six months. They take time and it is often said that if the priest and parish can just get to know each other the first year that is a major step. I have gotten to know all of you better and I hope for that to continue, I hope you have all gotten to know me better. I have done a lot of listening this last year and I have learned a lot, there is always more to learn and I pray you will keep talking to me. I don't bite and hope that I will have the chance to visit each of you individually to get to know you even better.

For you all the decision to go ahead meant there was no time to sit and rest, no time to think about how tired you were. There was only time to see how you could grow and become a more viable congregation. The hope as I understood it was to set out to grow from the small stable group you are to a larger one capable of doing more, having a youth program, Christian Education, maybe even a rented place of Epiphany's own. The feeling seemed to be that you could not survive if you did not grow. And that feeling was not just expressed by you but by the diocese as well. But believe me when I say sized does not really matter; heart and love matters.

If Epiphany has little in the way of buildings, programs and fewer people than most people might consider viable

it makes up for it in love. There is a sense of family, not unlike the early church where small groups, extended families, small villages and tiny communities within big cities were the foundations upon which the church was built.

Last year when I went to Hawaii I learned one or two words in Hawaiian. There was one that stuck out for me. It is "Ohana." Ohana means family; Hawaiians believe that we are all part of an extended family. Everyone in your ohana is accepted and loved. Epiphany exudes that, - are we perfect at it? Well I have never seen a group perfect at it but there is the energy here to do it, to accept everyone, the small and the tall, the sick and the well, the friend and stranger, outcast and prisoner.

The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany is "ohana," a family. We know each other and we try (because good Episcopalian always are kind of shy) to be open to anyone and everyone who walks through the door and offer them hospitality, friendship and a safe place to be. We offer to adopt them into our family and if you think about that it is a pretty gutsy thing to do. How often do we, individually ask strangers into our nuclear families to be a part of an intimate piece of our lives, worship, and fellowship?

We may not have that building, or program or great numbers of people but you know what? It is OK. As St. Julian of Norwich said, "All is well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things

shall be well.” We have no idea what God has in mind for us, maybe we will grow great in numbers, maybe we will be the example of that small community church that just plainly gets things done. We don’t know, but what I do know is as long as we dwell less on huge numbers and more on what the Lord has set us off to do He will bless us.

Before I began writing this I reviewed what Bishop Johnston said in his pastoral address a couple of weeks ago. As you have heard me say he was incredibly enthusiastic, energetic, and to be frank ready to light a fire under the people of the diocese and his clergy. (Yes, there were some parts of his address that made me and more than a few other clergy squirm.)

What he said was nothing new, in fact it was as old as the church, perhaps even older. He reviewed the town hall meetings and told of five things that came out of those meetings as priorities - they are:

- Youth & Young Adult Formation
- Strengthen Existing Congregations
- Evangelism/Proclamation
- Including self-definition through media
- Multi-Cultural/Ethnic Ministries
- Mission Beyond Ourselves
- Local outreach; domestic & world mission.

These are quite a lot to tackle if you try to do it all at once. Bishop Johnston knows that cannot happen, people may hope and expect those miracles but he was clear it will take effort, energy, time, patience and a willingness to let go of the old ways. The Episcopal Church in the twenty-first century is not what the Episcopal Church was in the eighteenth, nineteenth, or even twentieth century. While the list I just shared is in what was the order of importance the bishop pointed out a few things that we may need to do first before we get to things like young adult ministry (something he did say and I agree we are very poor at), and missionary work outside of Virginia.

He shared some statistics that should disturb us all:

60 percent of the American population is unchurched. And it’s not just the unchurched who need to hear the proclamation of the faith and who need to be taught.

He went on to say in his travels and Sunday visitations (and I quote) “I’ve had many people (and I’m talking about full-fledged adult communicants, even leadership) confess or “joke” to me how little they actually know about the basic teachings of Christianity. Still others know more about the faith and what they value but are admittedly quite ignorant about the Episcopal Church itself and our ways. Surely, inadequacies of knowledge about faith and the Church are not the status quo that we want to hold for our life together. I’m calling on our clergy and our educators to re-evaluate the teaching you offer and the attendance you have, primarily for our adults, that’s as good a starting place as any. What I’m getting at is that there must be a place in church life where some ongoing and substantive “faith and Church 101” is both attractive and respected.

“And what shall we do about that statistical 60 percent of the population around us? Here, I don’t think that programming or expertise is the best answer. A few years ago, a study was done that examined a 10-year period in which unchurched persons became active in a congregation and lapsed members “came back” to church. The study showed that fully nine out of every 10 people came to church simply because someone they knew or had an association

with asked them. That's up to each and every one of us, and I hope you find it encouraging to know how much opportunity and how much power you have to make such a difference in someone's life.

"If mission is the "life-blood" of the Church then its heartbeat is worship, surely. As your bishop I can say nothing with more urgency and conviction. I implore this diocese to re-commit to the defining importance of the Sunday service. Simply put, Christians are not people who get up on Sunday and try to decide whether or not to go to worship. Being at worship on Sunday is at the very essence of what makes us who we are as those baptized in Christ.

"I emphasize this because I am rather shocked by what the numbers tell us. Since 1990, although the number of our communicants in good standing has grown from 53,000 to 64,000 (nearly 21 percent increase), our average Sunday attendance (which is the most telling statistic in the Church's ongoing life) has actually decreased by 19 percent. In other words, we're growing with people who support the Church but fewer and fewer people are actually attending worship with regularity. With a current Sunday attendance average of 24,200 and a 'good-standing' communicant strength of 63,900, we show a discouraging 37 percent of our people at worship on the Lord's Day. This is not mere bean counting because we're actually talking about prioritizing worship, and that goes to the heart of our discipleship of Jesus.

"These figures suggest to me that we are, as the Diocese of Virginia, something of a sleeping giant. The encouraging thing about this idea is that we can wake up! Consider that season ticket holders of sports or artistic events surely do much better attending what they are committed to. Well, don't forget that as a disciple of Jesus Christ you have a 'season ticket' and it's called eternal life. Don't neglect to show up for it! I love you and this diocese too much, and my responsibility as a bishop is too pointed, not to tell you that how we're doing now in diocesan life in attendance at worship, and it is alarming and it should be unacceptable to us all. Addressing this reality must be a major piece of the work we do together to strengthen existing congregations. To start, I call on our clergy and vestries to set a three-year goal of having 50 percent of communicant strength at worship on Sundays

"The mission of the Diocese of Virginia is to worship our Lord Jesus Christ, building up our unity even in diversity, and to serve the world in the power of the Gospel as a part of the Holy Catholic Church."

Now clearly we are in a bit of a different situation. Most of the time we have more than fifty percent of our congregation here on a Sunday, we give to the diocese and local and foreign programs. But that is not to say we are not part of that bigger somewhat disturbing picture.

I would challenge you to look through the catechism of the Book of Common Prayer and see what you don't know. It is always a revelation to me to learn how much lifelong Episcopalians have forgotten or perhaps never learned in the first place. I will use myself as the first example. I was born into the church, literally, and I mean literally teethered on the copies of the 1928 Book of Common Prayer in the pews of St. Clements's church. I was confirmed at the tender age of nine after memorizing, or trying to, the catechism in the back of the 1928 prayer book. I went to church religiously (pun intended), attended Sunday School, did youth group, was on the altar guild, taught 4th and 5th grade, did my work on the Girl Scout God and Country award, but when my loving husband asked me how he could become an Episcopalian I did not have a clue. To me you were just sort of born into it. Now this was 30 years ago and obviously I know a little more now but like anything else if we don't use it we lose it and that is some of what I believe we see with those people you joke about knowing so little about their faith.

So where does all this put us? Well, it puts us in a time of learning, planning, self defining, and going forward.

1. Sometime during April your vestry will be gone on retreat. During this time we will plan out what projects/programs we would like to do this year and pen them on the calendar. After that retreat you may find yourself being called based on the time and talent survey we did during the stewardship campaign. I hope that we can plan some programs that are very community and yet faith oriented. Right now the best way to be visible to those around us is to be outside and visible.

2. We will look at plans for the next two years. In essence two sets of plans.

a. What do we want to do if we remain here, that is, in a rented space? What programs we might like to do that are within our abilities, how do we reach not just the people on the block but get the news out to those who may have left both the Episcopal Church and CANA that we are exactly who we say we are a welcoming family that does not care where they have been or how long they have been gone, how do we better equip ourselves so we feel strong enough to go out and "bring a friend to Christ."

b. And what should we be prepared for if we are given the building back. On this part I want to be cautious. It now appears as if the court case will be heard in June, there are no promises, no guarantees, right now several other cases you may have heard about have gone the way of the Episcopal Church, but some are being challenged. At least one is going to try to go to the Supreme Court and while the Court does not like to be involved in internal faith issues they could surprise us or simply cause a long hold on everything. But whatever happens I do not want to see us scrambling around. I am hoping, and pushing, the diocese to do this also. I am absolutely strident on making sure that if there is some radical change Epiphany does not get left out in the cold again.

3. Following the bishop's challenge I want the vestry to be the point along with me to not just have at least fifty percent in church but 100%. This is the "scary" part because while it means a good web site, flyers, and signs it also means taking the lead in learning more about the faith and stepping out to share it. It can also mean picking someone up to get them here if the weather is bad, calling people if they are missed (and yes I can do this but it is nice also if one or the lay leaders calls also) and taking turns being greeters. As leaders we need to be the ones who lead by example.

4. You have noticed some changes in how we do worship in the last few months and while there will be no radical changes I will continue to work with Art and Suzanne to make worship a meaningful spiritual time easily accessible to all who come to visit us. As my old liturgics professor used to say, liturgy should be done so well and seamlessly that the Martian in the back row would understand the meaning.

a. As part of this I hope we can learn to be a little bolder in our singing. Last week at the club in a smaller venue we really sounded pretty good, especially we really did not know well. That shows me that we can do it. Maybe we need to hire a choir director to come and give us technical pointers and practices for a few weeks but whatever we need to do we should do it. Everyone loves to sing in church.

b. I want to get an acolyte group up and running. There is no age limit here, adults can do it too, just so you don't think we are going to pick on the few young people we have. Not just carrying the cross but serving at the table.

This brings up that the worship committee has been discussing a processional cross. We have looked at several and found one that has an Epiphany type star imposed on a regular cross. Please talk to Suzanne if you would like to make a donation toward its purchase either straight out or in memory of someone.

c. We have only two "official" lay Eucharistic ministers (LEMs), Liz and Art. God willing Liz will leave us for seminary in August, so we will need to have some of you join us. It is a very easy task, on Sundays, but the idea of LEM's is a bit more than up here for five minutes. LEM's are trained to bring communion to shut ins, of course this is one of the primary things the priest does so I am not in any way trying to give that piece of my ministry over but I for one like to have at least one parishioner accompany me and if for some reason (I'm on vacation or whatever) I cannot bring someone communion, a Lay Eucharistic Minister can. LEM's can also lead morning and evening prayer, and compline. This is a very rewarding ministry and really anyone can do it.

5. Until she leaves for seminary I will be working with Liz and hopefully one other vestry person on a long range education program. Christianity 101 as Bishop Johnston put it, something right now that we can all learn from, intergenerational as they say, that will help make us more comfortable in the knowledge of our faith and the Episcopal Church so that not knowing what to say becomes one of our least evangelistic concerns.

This is a fairly ambitious plan, I am not sure we will be able to accomplish all of it but while our goals should be out there the time table needs to be fluid we never know what will pop up or try to get into our way. We are on a journey, not unlike those early pioneers who set off on the Oklahoma trail in their wagons. They had few belonging, they had a goal but sometimes the weather held them up, their horses got sick, the Indians attacked or they strayed off the trail but always at a slow steady pace they would pick themselves up, dust off, and keep on keeping on.

On a final but most important note for me. I want to thank all of you for your welcome and your patience with my beginning time here. In many ways what we are doing here has not been done in the Episcopal Church in a very, very long time, if ever. It has been a learning and growth experience for me and one that has shored up my faith in community as well. It is both an honor and very humbling to be here as your priest. God bless you all.

Report from the Senior Warden - Scott Meyer

This past year has been an eventful year for The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany. We started the year with supply clergy while we sought out a priest who would replace the Reverend David Kendrick, who left us to answer a call from a parish in Alabama. Our hope was to find someone that would bring us leadership and stability. In February The Reverend Donna Foughty came to us on the recommendation of Bishop Jones. After being with us for several weeks, Reverend Foughty agreed to accept the position Priest in Charge.

During Lent last year, the parish family participated in a discernment process over the period of a several weeks. Liz Ward met with us and facilitated the process. At the end of the session, parish members committed to continue as a parish and to work to grow the size of the

congregation. We culminated the discernment process with a special service officiated by Bishop Jones at which time Reverend Foughty was formally installed as Priest in Charge.

In the fall, we formally changed our name from The Church of the Epiphany, Episcopal to The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany. We did this for a couple of reasons. The first was to put the emphasis on "Episcopal." The second was to make it easier for people looking an Episcopal church to find us.

Along with the new name, we have changed our logo, improved our web site, and started a program of sending flyers throughout the neighborhoods. We are doing this to spread the word that an Episcopal church still exists in the Chantilly area.

As we move into 2010, we pray that God will bless our efforts, that we will keep our focus on sharing God's grace, and that we can grow as a parish in numbers, in our devotion to God's calling, and in our spirituality.

Report from the Junior Warden - Bob Otten

No report submitted

Finance - Richard Fichter - Treasurer's Duties

The Treasurer shall deposit all funds in an accredited bank insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. The Treasurer shall pay all bills and shall keep an itemized account of all expenditures and income, providing a report at each Vestry meeting and Annual meeting.

The Treasurer shall send a statement of donations each year and file necessary tax forms and statements. The Treasurer shall provide financial information for a budget prepared by the Financial Committee.

Worship - Art Buck, The Rev. Donna Foughty

Please see the section on Worship in the Priest in Charge's report.

In addition to that we have had regular Sunday services with an average 20 people attending. In addition to regular services we had an Ash Wednesday Service, A Maundy Thursday Service, and celebrated the Great Vigil of Easter in 2009.

Lay Readers and Lay Eucharistic Ministers - Liz Tomlinson

Epiphany has a roster of eight adult lay readers who assist in the Sunday morning service by reading the two lessons, the psalm, and the Prayers of the People.

There is a roster of two Lay Eucharistic Ministers who assist the priest in the distribution of the Holy Eucharist.

The Lay Readers and the Lay Eucharistic Ministers are scheduled to read on a regular basis. Two Readers and one Lay Eucharistic Minister are needed for each service. The schedule is prepared for a six month period.

Any baptized adult who regularly attends Sunday morning services and is interested in training to serve as a lay reader or as a Lay Eucharistic Minister should speak to the priest to arrange for training.

Communications - Art Buck

The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany stays in touch with its members, friends and community in a variety of ways. Our website, www.coe.org contains information on upcoming events, copies of recent sermons, our history, information on outreach, Christian education, and other ministries, and links to other Episcopal sites. Our primary means of communication with our membership is by email and by telephone for those who don't have access to email. We have recently begun distribution of flyers to the community, explaining who we are, where we meet, and highlighting our upcoming events. Please provide us with your email address and/or phone number so that we can stay in touch.

Outreach - Karen Buck

The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, Oak Hill, is dedicated to outreach, as expressed in its core values. In 2009 financial support included a variety of contributions to organizations such as FACETS, Episcopal Relief and Development, and Compassion International, as well as contributions to clergy discretionary funds. Other outreach efforts have included baking cookies for the Kairos ministry, monthly donations for food at the FACETS food bank, delivering food and gifts to the needy at Christmas, and mentoring students at Oak Hill Elementary School. In 2010, 10% of pledged income is earmarked to be spent on outreach.

Fellowship - Shirley Vaughn

In this report I have included events that could properly be included in the 2009 Fellowship report even though I was not appointed until October 19, 2009. Most likely, there are other events that also should be included.

Bob and Laura Otten and Shirley and Gene Vaughn continued in 2009 to provide Coffee Hour at morning services in alternate months. At various times during the year they were assisted by others, including Sally Savas, the Durkin family and Jiji, our organist.

Other activities during the year included coordinating and/or providing the following:

March - Lunch (2) after service during the Discernment process.

April 11 - Potluck meal after Easter Vigil service at St. Timothy's

April 15 - Reception for Bishop Jones at St. Timothy's

May 30 - Drinks and treats for Vestry Retreat at Scott Meyer's office

August 16 - Church picnic at the home of Sally Savas

September 20 - Desserts after Lutheran church service with members of the Belmont Ridge Church of the Resurrection (Lutheran)

September 30 - Welcome "Loaf of Bread" delivered to the Durkin Family

December 14 - Christmas Buffet meal prior to Vestry meeting

December 20 - Reception after Lessons and Carols Service (canceled due to snow)

Christian Education - Liz Tomlinson

The Christian Education program at Epiphany is an intergenerational one. The goal of this program is to increase the knowledge of scripture; to inspire individuals and the church as a whole to implement the message in the Word; and to continue to nourish the faith of all.

The education hour is immediately after the church service on Sunday mornings. In the fall, we began studying the book of Acts using Acts: Seeing God's Power in Action by Phyllis J. LePeau. The study guide is divided into 24 studies and is designed to help a new church establish parallels with the first church through an emphasis on the primary task of the church--- evangelism; a call to a vital experience with the Holy Spirit; and the forging a new sense of identity.

Special study sessions appropriate to the season are provided on Wednesday evenings during Lent and during Advent each year.

Old Business

Presentation of new By Laws and vote attachment

New Business

Presentation of 2010 Budget attachment

Closing

Adjournment and closing prayer and blessing