

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church
Parish Growth Committee
April 20, 2011
Meeting Notes

Ron Tiller, Karen Murphy, Eunice Converse, Deirdre Toeller-Novak, and Beth Smith.

Committee members discussed various articles about church growth and agreed to focus for the time being on two:

1. "FACTS on Episcopal Church Growth" (Hadaway): The article examines the dynamics of growth and decline in Episcopal parishes based on the 2005 Faith Communities Today (FACT) survey conducted in 4,100 congregations.
2. "Church Planting and Congregational Growth" (Howard): published in 2009, Howard conducts a review of research (most within the past decade) on church planting and growth.

The articles seem to be comprehensive, relatively current, and the underlying research included Episcopal Church participation.

Homework (!): Committee members are asked to read through the articles before the next meeting. On May 5 we will begin to identify and prioritize the items that seem most relevant to the work of parish growth at Holy Trinity. At the moment, we envision a final report that will contain three parts:

1. A statement of the relevant research
2. A "sense" of Holy Trinity's position relative to the research
3. Recommendations for next steps

Karen reported on her research about a successful church in Plano TX which appears to be a very large, corporate-plus type church. She thought that their experiences may be less relevant to a church the size of HT.

Bill sent word that a book he reviewed suggested that HT should consider conducting a survey of members in order to develop a profile of who we are at this point in time—as well as to determine members' thoughts about growth. The book offers model surveys that we could tailor to HT's needs. A survey would likely be the combined effort of the various vestry committees.

Beth, Ron, and Deirdre will visit with the pastor of a successful new congregation in Holland. Rev. Jim Foster is a friend of Fr. Jim's.

The mission statement of HT was reviewed and revised in the past year; the Special Assistant to the Senior Warden noted that it was time to review and seek parish consensus on a vision

statement for the parish. (check out: <http://www.samples-help.org.uk/mission-statements/church-vision-statements.htm>)

Other discussion:

- Membership packets should be reviewed and updated
- The gift of a welcome mug—with HT’s name and the Episcopal Church logo—filled with candy—may be appreciated by visitors (as done by Grace Holland)
- A email request column should be added to the visitor registration book
- The potential for increasing growth through HT member participation in community activities (in Wyoming and in communities where HT members live) has been mentioned frequently and is affirmed as an effective growth strategy
- It was noted that the HT web site will be enhanced and regularly updated; 21% of those looking for a church conduct a web search (as of 2008)
- We may want to equip members with “invitations” that they can give to potential visitors (business cards with HT contact and service information)

Next Meeting: Thursday, May 5, 6:00 p.m.

