

Vestry Leadership

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Leadership in Community...

BY GEOFFREY TRISTRAM, SSJ

... A Dance of Mutual Love

In the fourth chapter of the Rule of the Society of Saint John the Evangelist, we express how and why we understand that all human beings are called to live together in community: "In community we bear witness to the social nature of human life as willed by our Creator. Human beings bear the image of the triune God and are not meant to be separate and isolated." All of us, as human beings, are called to share in communities of one kind or another, because we have all been made in the image and likeness of God. And God is community: "The very being of God is community; the Father, Son and Spirit are One in reciprocal self-giving and love."

The theology used to express and explain God's divine, relational community actually has fascinating implications for [all] our

human communities. The Greek word "Perichoresis," which has been used in the Orthodox tradition to capture the dynamic relationship of love that is God's very essence, is theologically defined as the "co-indwelling" or "mutual interpenetration" of the three persons of the Trinity. It's often been understood imaginatively as a kind of divine dance: three persons moving rhythmically and dynamically, distinct and yet united in a shared dance of love.

An Invitation from God

This dynamic dance does not exist independently of our lives, a theological mystery we can simply ponder. No, Jesus came to invite us into that loving dance of Father, Son, and Spirit. In John 17, Jesus prays: "As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us." We are drawn into the dynamic relationship that the members of the Trinity

share. “I in them and you in me,” Jesus weaves us together, “that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” The instruction Jesus leaves us with is quite clear: the more we get drawn into God’s very being and are swept into its dance of love, the more we are called to share that same kind of dance with one another as members of the Body of Christ.

The model of Perichoresis opens up a wonderful freedom for how exactly we are invited to be with one another in our Christian communities. Surprisingly enough, it also offers a helpful answer to some of the discord and strife that such communities inevitably encounter. For whilst the three persons of the Trinity are united in a relationship of love, each person nevertheless remains quite distinct.

Learning to Value Difference

We invite you to consider this model. As a community of monks, we Brothers at SSJE try to apply this model directly to our shared life – its rewards as well as its challenges. In the case of one such reward, we recognize that SSJE’s ministry does not come just from the Brothers, but it emerges out the community’s relationships

with friends and advisors, with whom we share in a dance of mutual love. And for challenges within our community, we follow the model of Perichoresis as we strive to honor the distinctness of each Brother, as well as to appreciate one another’s individual gifts, an ideal that is not always met without difficulty. Our Rule again guides us: “We are given to one another by Christ,” we read, “and he calls us to accept one another as we are. By abiding in him we can unite in a mutual love that goes deeper than personal attraction.” When we understand every member as being called by Christ and formed by Christ, we can begin to relish those personal differences that might otherwise snag us as we struggle to work and live together. As the Rule puts it, “Mutual acceptance and love call us to value our differences of background, temperament, gifts, personality and style. Only when we recognize them as sources of vitality are we able to let go of competitiveness and jealousy.” As we abide in Christ, we begin to see those who are different from us through the eyes of love. And we recognize what others are contributing to the whole of the group, even (or perhaps especially!) if they have different gifts from us, because we know that we are part of a body with them, made richer by their presence alongside us. The good and the bad affect all of

us, because we’re bound together in this mutual love, one for the other, as Christ has called us to be.

Defining and Affirming Common Values

One practice that has helped our community as we strive, day by day, to meet this call, might have helpful implications for community leaders in other contexts: Every morning, we read a chapter of the Rule of Life aloud together. As we hear it afresh, we say, “Yes” again to how we want to live in community, which this shared document articulates for us. Reading it, we reaffirm our desire to live in the intentional community that it describes and helps to order. This Rule means that our common life is not just dependent on our moods and feelings. Instead, we have an external document that incarnates for us how we desire to live together.

For us Brothers, the Rule and the perichoretic dance are quite closely related. You might say that our Rule describes the steps of the dance we hope to share, and that, as we live by it and refer back to it, we become more adept at dancing together. At the very least, we become less likely to stand on each other’s toes! Without such a common understanding, there will always be the risk that everyone is doing a different dance, which

can only lead to a lot of bumping into one another, treading on toes, and falling over. The question every community needs to ask, then, is: How do we want to dance together? By laying down, as a community, the framework we mutually agree upon, we open up the freedom to love.

Br. Geoffrey Tristram, SSJE, is the superior of the Society of St. John the Evangelist (SSJE), an Episcopal religious community in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Brother Geoffrey was born in Wales and studied theology at Cambridge University before training to be a priest at Westcott House theological college. He came to the United States fifteen years ago to join SSJE and has pursued a ministry of teaching, spiritual direction, and retreat leading, and for three years he served as chaplain to the House of Bishops. Before coming to SSJE he served as a parish priest in the diocese of St. Albans, as well as the head of the department of theology at Oundle School, a large Anglican high school in the English Midlands.

Try This

Does your congregation or vestry have a shared document in which you've outlined the heart of how you want to live and love and work together? This document

would be not as legalistic as "by-laws," nor as practical as a meeting agenda. A Rule is the place where we can clarify our deepest values, our most important relationships, our most authentic hopes and dreams, our most meaningful work, our highest priorities. By outlining these priorities and setting concrete goals for meeting them, it allows us to live with intention and purpose in the present moment.

You might find it helpful, in your church leadership groups, to set down the common values that draw you together, as well as the hopes for how you will live and work together in that community. Remember, a Rule is not a series of rules that must be followed. Rather, it is descriptive: It articulates our intentions for the way we would like to live.

Once you have a Rule in place, you might see how reading and returning to it together, at set intervals, helps to shape your community life. Does it accurately reflect the way you live, as well as the struggles you face? We Brothers know firsthand that the process of revising a Rule, after some distance, can be just as useful as having one in the first place.

Resources

- Behavioral Covenants in Congregations: A Handbook for Honoring Differences by Gilbert R. Rendle <http://www.amazon.com/Behavioral-Covenants-Congregations-Handbook-Differences/dp/1566992095>
- "Covenants in Congregational Life" by Thomas Brackett, ECF Vital Practices' Vestry Papers, January 2011 <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers/healthy-practices/covenants-in-congregational-life/>
- Society of Saint John the Evangelist Rule of Life <http://ssje.org/ssje/category/rule-of-life/>

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Liderazgo en la Comunidad

POR GEOFFREY TRISTRAM, SSJE

Una Danza de Amor Mutuo Pericoreisis y nuestra vida juntos

En el cuarto capítulo de la Regla de la Sociedad de San Juan Evangelista expresamos cómo y por qué entendemos que todos los seres humanos estamos llamados a vivir juntos en comunidad: “En comunidad somos testigos de la naturaleza social de la vida humana como lo quiso nuestro Creador. Todo los seres humanos llevan consigo la imagen del Dios trino y no han sido creados para estar separados y asilados.” Todos nosotros, los seres humanos, estamos llamados a compartir en comunidades de diferentes índoles y todos hemos sido hechos a imagen y semejanza de Dios. Y Dios es comunidad: “El verdadero ser de Dios es comunidad: el Padre, el Hijo y el Espíritu son uno en el amor y el dar de sí mismos recíprocamente.”

La teología empleada para expresar y explicar la comunidad divina y relacional de Dios tiene repercusiones fascinantes para [todas] nuestras comunidades humanas. La palabra griega pericoreisis, que se ha empleado en la tradición ortodoxa para captar la relación

dinámica de amor que es la verdadera esencia de Dios, se define teológicamente como “interpenetración mutua” de las tres personas de la Trinidad. A menudo se ha interpretado imaginativamente como una especie de danza divina: tres personas que se mueven rítmica y dinámicamente, distintas pero unidas en una danza de amor compartida.

Una Invitación de Dios

Esta danza dinámica no existe independientemente de nuestras vidas ni es un misterio teológico en el que simplemente podemos cavilar. No, Jesús vino para invitarnos a estar *adentro* de esa danza llena de amor del Padre, Hijo y Espíritu. En San Juan 17, Jesús ora: “Para que como tú, Padre, estás en mí y yo en ti, que también ellos sean uno en nosotros”. Estamos atraídos hacia la relación dinámica que comparten los miembros de la Trinidad. “Yo en ellos y tú en mí”, Jesús nos entreteje juntos, “para que sean perfectos en unidad, para que el mundo conozca que tú me enviaste, y que los has amado a ellos como también a mí me has amado”. La instrucción que nos

da Jesús está clara: cuanto más atraídos estamos hacia ser de Dios y entramos en su danza de amor, más estamos llamados a compartir ese mismo tipo de danza los unos con los otros como miembros del Cuerpo de Cristo.

El modelo de pericoreisis abre una maravillosa libertad sobre cómo exactamente estamos invitados a estar los unos con los otros en nuestras comunidades cristianas. Sorprendentemente, también ofrece una respuesta útil a parte de la discordia y de los conflictos que inevitablemente encuentran esas comunidades. Porque si bien las tres personas de la Trinidad están unidas en una relación de amor, cada persona permanece distinta.

Aprender a valorar las diferencias

Lo invitamos a que considere este modelo. Como comunidad de monjes, nosotros los hermanos en la Sociedad de San Juan Evangelista tratamos de aplicar este modelo directamente a nuestra vida compartida: tanto sus recompensas como sus retos. En el caso de una de esas

recompensas, reconocemos que el ministerio de la Sociedad de San Juan Evangelista no proviene solamente de los Hermanos, sino que emerge de nuestras relaciones en la comunidad con amigos y asesores, con los que compartimos una danza de amor mutuo. Y en cuanto a los retos en el seno de nuestra comunidad, seguimos el modelo de la pericoreisis al esforzarnos en honrar la individualidad de cada Hermano, así como en apreciar los dones individuales de cada uno de nosotros, un ideal que no siempre se alcanza sin dificultad. Nuestra Regla nuevamente nos indica: “Cristo nos ha dado los unos a los otros”, leemos, y nos llama a aceptarnos tal como somos. Al cumplir lo que nos pide, nos podemos unir en un amor mutuo que va mucho más profundamente que la atracción personal”. Cuando entendemos que cada miembro está siendo llamado por Cristo y formado por Cristo, podemos empezar a apreciar esas diferencias personales que de lo contrario afectarían adversamente nuestra lucha por trabajar y vivir juntos. Como dice la Regla, “La aceptación y el amor mutuos nos llaman a valorar nuestras diferencias de antecedentes, temperamento, dones, personalidad y estilo. Solamente cuando los reconocemos como fuente de vitalidad podemos dejar de lado la competitividad y

los celos”. Al cumplir con lo que nos pide Cristo, empezamos a ver a aquellos que son diferentes de nosotros a través de los ojos del amor. Y reconocemos que otros están contribuyendo al total del grupo, incluso (¡o tal vez especialmente!) si tienen dones diferentes de las nuestras, porque sabemos que son parte de un cuerpo con ellos, enriquecidos por su presencia junto a nosotros. Lo bueno y lo malo nos afectan a todos, porque estamos unidos en este amor mutuo el uno por el otro, como Cristo nos ha llamado a ser.

Definición y Afirmación de Valores Comunes

Una práctica que ha ayudado a nuestra comunidad en los esfuerzos diarios para cumplir con esta llamada, puede tener consecuencias útiles para líderes comunitarios en otros contextos: todas las mañanas leemos juntos en voz alta un capítulo de la Regla de Vida. Cuando lo oímos nuevamente, decimos “Sí” nuevamente a cómo deseamos vivir en comunidad, que este documento compartido expresa para nosotros. Al leerlo reafirmamos nuestro deseo de vivir en la comunidad intencional que describe y ayuda a ordenar. Esta Regla significa que nuestra vida en común no sólo depende de nuestro humor o de nuestros sentimientos. En

lugar de ello, tenemos un documento externo que encarna cómo deseamos vivir juntos.

Para nosotros Hermanos, la Regla y la danza pericorética están estrechamente relacionadas. Se podría decir que nuestra Regla describe los pasos de la danza que esperamos compartir y que, al vivir según ella y referirnos nuevamente a ella, bailamos juntos cada vez mejor. Por lo menos, tenemos una menor probabilidad de chocar los unos con los otros, pisarnos los pies y caernos. Entonces, la pregunta que todas las comunidades necesitan formularse es la siguiente: ¿Cómo queremos bailar juntos? Al sentar, como comunidad, el marco que acordamos mutuamente, nos abrimos a la libertad de amar.

El Hermano Geoffrey Tristram, de la Sociedad de San Juan Evangelista, es el superior de la Sociedad de San Juan Evangelista, una comunidad religiosa episcopal en Cambridge, Massachusetts. El hermano Geoffrey nació en Gales y estudió teología en la Universidad de Cambridge antes de capacitarse como sacerdote en la facultad de teología Westcott House. Vino a Estados Unidos hace 15 años para unirse a la Sociedad de San Juan Evangelista y se ha dedicado a un ministerio de enseñanza, dirección y guía espiritual y liderazgo de retiros, y por tres años ha sido

capellán de la Casa de Obispos.

Pruebe Esto

¿Tiene su feligresía un documento compartido en el que usted expresó el corazón de la manera en que desea vivir y amar y trabajar juntos? Este documento no sería tan legalista como los “estatutos” ni tan práctico como los puntos a tratarse en una reunión. Una Regla es el lugar en el que podemos aclarar nuestros valores más profundos, nuestras relaciones más importantes, nuestros más auténticos sueños y esperanzas, nuestro trabajo más significativo, nuestras prioridades principales. Al esbozar estas prioridades y fijar metas concretas para alcanzarlas, podemos vivir con intención y propósito en el momento presente.

Le puede resultar útil, en los grupos de liderazgo de su iglesia, sentar los valores comunes que los unen, así como las esperanzas por la manera en que vivirán y trabajarán juntos en esa comunidad. Recuerde que una Regla no es una serie de reglas que se tienen que seguir. Más bien es descriptiva: expresa nuestras intenciones para la manera en que nos gustaría vivir.

Una vez que tenga una Regla, probablemente podrá ver cómo

leerla y regresar a ella juntos, a intervalos prefijados, ayuda a moldear su vida comunitaria. ¿Refleja fielmente la manera en que usted vive, así como las luchas que enfrenta? Nosotros los Hermanos sabemos por experiencia propia que el proceso de modificar una Regla, después de una cierta distancia, puede ser tan útil como tener una en primer lugar.

Recursos

- Behavioral Covenants in Congregations: A Handbook for Honoring Differences by Gilbert R. Rendle <http://www.amazon.com/Behavioral-Covenants-Congregations-Handbook-Differences/dp/1566992095>
- “Covenants in Congregational Life” by Thomas Brackett, ECF Vital Practices’ Vestry Papers, January 2011 <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers/healthy-practices/covenants-in-congregational-life/>
- Society of Saint John the Evangelist Rule of Life <http://ssje.org/ssje/category/rule-of-life/>

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Editor's Letter

Welcome 2015!

For many congregations, January is the time for annual meetings and vestry elections. Changes in leadership teams bring opportunities to explore new ways of looking at the familiar challenges facing your congregation. As new vestries form, fresh perspectives emerge as the group begins their work together to discern what God is calling them to do.

To kick off the beginning of the new year, we invited experienced leaders from across our Church to share a leadership approach, experience, or strategy. Here are their stories:

- Being in community brings both rewards and challenges. In "Leadership in Community: A Dance of Mutual Love," Geoffrey Tristram, superior of the Society of Saint John the Evangelist explores the theology used to express and explain God's divine, relational community. He invites us to see Jesus' invitation into the divine dance of the Father, Son, and Spirit as a model for being with one another in our Christian communities. Also available in

Spanish.

- In "On Being a Senior Warden," Robert Harris shares some of his experiences as senior warden in two congregations. Having worked with a number of rectors with varying levels of experience and characteristics, his advice ranges from the value of being adaptable to the need to be ready for the unexpected and the importance of developing relationships of mutual trust and respect.
- Sometimes we get stuck in our thinking. Potential solutions can be constrained by the ways we define the challenges we face. What would happen if we changed our definitions? "The Gift of Holy Imagination" by Miguel Angel Escobar invites congregational leaders to consider 'generative leadership,' a model that challenges us to rethink the way we approach problem solving by opening up our thinking about the nature of the problem. He describes three practices congregational leaders can use to create an environment in which new, creative strategies are able to emerge.

- Being part of a diverse congregation, Anna Olson is accustomed to ministering to people with a wide range of personalities, cultural backgrounds, work experiences, educational preparation, and familiarity with The Episcopal Church. In "Lift Every Voice," Anna shares some of the strategies and practices the St. Mary's vestry and congregation use to help people who might otherwise remain silent become more comfortable about adding their voice to the conversation or discussion. Also available in Spanish.
- In "Warden's Work," Neva Rae Fox lifts up the warden's role as evangelist, sharing stories from conversations with current and former wardens in the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles. Also available in Spanish.
- During the time of clergy transition, the senior warden is responsible for leading the congregation in their search for a new rector. In "Leading through Transition," senior warden Jan Henderson shares

the process she and her vestry developed in their recent search for an interim rector. Also available in Spanish.

- A key vestry role is to identify and support emerging leaders. What might that look like? In her “Leading from the Side” series, Elizabeth Magill, of The Mission Institute, shares steps individuals and congregational leaders might take to support emerging leaders. In this issue, we feature part one of this four part series.

Each Vestry Papers article includes a practical application related to the article that you might try at an upcoming vestry meeting. You’ll also find a list of the resources mentioned in the article as well as additional information related to the topic. If you have a resource you’d like to share, please email me with the link or add it to the site using the Your Turn feature.

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Faithfully,

Nancy
Nancy Davidge

PS: To make it easier to find the resources offered through *ECF Vital Practices*, please consider adding a link to ECF Vital Practices to your website. Here’s how: Using your websites ‘add a link’ tool, insert our full URL – <http://www.ecfvp.org/>.

PPS: Do you live in an area with limited Internet access? If you have a smart phone, consider browsing ECF Vital Practices from your mobile device; the site has been optimized for smart phones

which makes it easier to search for content.

On Being a Senior Warden

BY ROBERT HARRIS

In my 40 years in the Episcopal Church, I have served as bishop's warden or senior warden in two churches. One church was located in a small town and had been a mission for more than 35 years but became a parish while I was a member there. During its status as a mission, I served as bishop's warden with four different priests. After it became a parish, I served as senior warden for two priests. The second church was located in a mid-sized city and was described as a program size church. While worshipping there, I served as senior warden for three priests. My total service time as bishop's warden or senior warden was fifteen years.

During my years of service, there were a variety of experiences. Most of the time, the churches were healthy and vibrant. On other occasions, there was turmoil. In both churches, I served during times when the rector was called to another parish and our parish entered into a search process.

One of my proudest moments serving as a bishop's warden/senior warden occurred while serving with my third priest. He was a young priest in his third year serv-

ing in his first parish following ordination. I was an older and experienced bishop's warden who had served with two other priests in our small town parish that had been a mission for thirty-five years. Under the leadership of the young priest, the parish was admitted as a parish at our Diocesan Council. I had served as bishop's warden the two years leading up to the admission as a parish and was pleased to see God's hand working in the young priest. The next years were years of growth in our parish as we saw God using the talented young priest to lead a vibrant small church. With the mentoring of the young priest, three young men from the small church accepted God's call to go forward to serve as Youth Ministers with two of them now having been ordained as priests.

Leading During Times of Transition

One of the most difficult periods in which I served occurred several years later in a much larger parish in a different city. The parish had survived a difficult time following the dismissal of the rector by the bishop. The new rector

was in the second year of his service. I had just retired from my secular career and was looking forward to a retirement of leisure and travel. The rector asked me if I would serve as senior warden. With much prayer and with the blessing of my wife who said, "Maybe this is God's way of easing you into retirement," I accepted. One week later, the rector advised me that he was going to resign and would leave in three weeks. Selecting an interim rector and leading the search for a new rector made the following nine months a very exciting but trying time. It was also a time of seeing God working in our parish. During that time we saw God raise up leaders who helped instill a new spirit in the parish.

During periods of transition, particularly if you do not have an interim rector, the senior warden becomes the face of the parish. This is a great time for a period of reflection on the part of the parish. It can be a time that leaders are discovered and the parish celebrates its strengths. As the senior warden, you should demonstrate a posture of calm and confidence. That posture comes

from the knowledge that God will provide.

The Ability to Adapt

The vicars and rectors that I served with had a range of characteristics. One was on his first assignment after graduation from seminary. Another was a retired priest serving as our interim who had been named rector emeritus of a large parish that he had founded. One was a female, the others male. One was very high church while another was more evangelical. Some were older than I while some were younger. I was blessed to serve with each of these priests and learned from each one.

In serving with a variety of rectors, the senior warden should be able to adapt his interaction with the rector just as he adapts his interaction to various family members, friends, parishioners, and co-workers. Everyone wants to be treated with respect, honesty, and dignity.

Cultivating a Relationship of Trust and Respect

The most important thing that I have learned is that as senior warden you must know your role and your relationship with your rector. You are the rector's warden. You are not the assistant rec-

tor. You are not in an employer/employee relationship. You serve as a partner in ministry with your rector but you are the junior partner. You are an advisor, an encourager, a supporter, and a confidante. It's my belief that when God calls a priest to serve as rector of a parish, God gives a vision to that priest. It is incumbent on the senior warden to assist the rector in accomplishing that vision. When you and your rector have a different opinion on a matter, you discuss it privately. Regardless of how the difference is resolved, afterwards you speak in a unified voice. You should encourage your rector to take care of his or her health—mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually and as well the health of her or his family.

If you respect your role as senior warden and if you maintain a healthy relationship with your rector, God will lead you through prayer to make the best decisions in whatever situations you encounter. At the end of your term, you will have been blessed by God and you will be a blessing to your rector and to your parish.

Robert Harris is an experienced senior warden and vestry member. During his 40 years as an Episcopalian, Robert has over 15 years experience as a senior warden, serving churches in the

Episcopal Diocese of Texas.

Try This

Our Episcopal churches are blessed to with the volunteer leadership provided by the wardens and other vestry members. The challenge is finding an appropriate balance between 'getting the work done' and maintaining a strong connection with the spiritual expression of your faith. In "Feeding Your Soul in the Small Church," Vestry Papers, September 2009, (<http://www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers/small-church-ministry/feeding-your-soul-in-the-small-church/>) Kevin Spears invites senior wardens to pay attention to these six practices:

- Focus on building an authentic relationship with the rector.
- Use this opportunity to work on your own personal productivity and time management skills.
- Get comfortable with unfinished business, incomplete projects, and slow progress.
- Pray for your congregation – out loud, in detail, at least weekly.

- Take every opportunity to express appreciation, encouragement, and gratitude to people who lead and serve.
- As often as possible, find a way to ask the question, “What are we really about in this congregation?”

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Resources

- Sample Vestry Job Description, The Episcopal Diocese of Georgia <http://gaepiscopal.org/docs/vestryjobdescription.pdf>
- The Warden's Handbook, The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland http://episcopalmaryland.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/wardens_manual.pdf
- Wardens of a Parish, An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church, A User Friendly Reference for Congregations, Church Publishing Incorporated. <http://library.episcopalchurch.org/glossary/wardens-parish>
- “You've a New Warden: Now What?” by Donald Romanik, ECF Vital Practices' Vestry Papers, January 2009 <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers/ministry-of-wardens/youre-a-new-warden-now-what/>

The Gifts of Holy Imagination

BY MIGUEL ANGEL ESCOBAR

In this season of Epiphany and the New Year, I'm reminded of the wide variety of gifts vestry members bring to the building up of God's Kingdom. In some respects, our Christian tradition favors the concrete: the Magi are described as having brought the tangible gifts of frankincense, gold, and myrrh, and then there's the familiar song of a drummer boy who brings his "pa rum pum pum pum." Annual stewardship campaigns often focus on members giving their time, talent, and treasure. Yet, how often do we think about the less tangible gifts of creativity and imagination? Are vestries and other leadership teams bringing these sorely needed gifts to bear when addressing the complex challenges congregations face today? What resources could we, as congregational leaders, use to create environments for our teams in which new, creative strategies are able to emerge?

Might the gift of holy imagination bring us to a new way of thinking?

In December, The Living Church featured an article (<http://www.livingchurch.org/learning-ask>) about an Episcopal congregation in New Jersey that is growing in many

respects – both in terms of people and programs – but is struggling to raise enough for its annual budget. The article notes:

"But when Monday arrives and budgetary constraints come to bear, St. George's has less to sing about. While more are worshipping, fewer are pledging — 20 percent fewer than five years ago. Traditional stewardship messages are not resonating with a younger generation. The task of coming up with more than \$300,000 yearly to run the church now falls to fewer than 100 pledging families. 'We have to figure out what's going on here,' said Dan Austin, co-chair of St. George's stewardship committee. 'A lot of the new families are coming from other faith traditions, so this whole stewardship thing has them wondering: what is that?'"

The challenge facing St. George's goes beyond simply tweaking the annual stewardship campaign, finding a better fundraising theme, or improving 'the ask'. This is a big picture challenge, one that requires members first explore 'what's going on here' and then bring out-

of-the-box thinking to how we respond.

It's in these types of complex situations that generative practices are helpful. Generative leadership inserts a creative pause before any potential solutions are named, before any concrete plans are made, and well before any significant change is led. It's about the initial meeting(s) where a leadership team tries to understand a presenting challenge from a much broader perspective, actively questions the underlying assumptions about what has brought it about, and frames the challenge in such a way that opens new avenues for potential solutions.

Practice #1: Framing

But enough of theory. Let's get down to brass tacks here. There are many different ways to lead generative conversations in leadership meetings and so what follows is by no means an exhaustive list. These three are drawn from past Vestry Papers articles and from the excellent book *Governance as Leadership: Reframing the Work of Governing Boards* by Richard Chait, William Ryan, and Barbara Taylor.

The first practice is called ‘framing’ and it hinges on the fact that, to a surprising degree, whether or not a leadership team will be able to arrive at a creative solution largely depends on how a challenge is presented or described. At the most basic level, vestries should consider whether challenges are described as threats to the status quo or as an opportunity for learning and growth. But framing becomes more interesting as it becomes contextualized – that is, when teams strive to find a different starting point to their particular challenges.

In the Vestry Papers article *Seeds of Hope* about Grace Church in Biddeford, Maine, Shirley Bowen wrote about how longstanding, cyclical conversations about the ‘survival’ of their small parish in an impoverished and violence-ridden community finally shifted when their conversation began from a different starting point. The vestry of Grace Church first sought to understand the church’s role within the broader community and this led them to an alternative frame for discussions about their future: “For many years there had been conversations among congregations in Southern Maine regarding collaborations, mergers, and the like. Each time, the conversation ended with no substantive change. This time, the conversation focused not on our

survival, but on our ministry in our neighborhood and the community. From the very beginning, it felt different.”

This alternative frame began an entirely new direction for the parish. As a result, the formerly 15-person parish closed and became *Seeds of Hope* jubilee ministries, open four days a week and serving over 70-100 persons a day, offering free clothing and a staffed career center while continuing to offer sacramental opportunities in the Episcopal tradition.

Looking at our own congregations, many of us have had the experience of seeing the same set of issues brought up year after year, with similar ideas offered year after year, and no movement forward either way. A successful framing (or reframing as the case may be) breaks open this cyclical conversation, offering a different starting point from which to brainstorm new, creative solutions.

Practice #2: Exploring Cues and Clues

As the name would suggest, the practice of exploring cues and clues is investigative; its ultimate goal is to broaden team members’ understanding of the challenge at hand. ‘Cues and clues’ recognizes

that each congregation’s challenges are highly contextual, that any issue is the result of particular internal and external factors that need to be better understood prior to brainstorming potential solutions. To have team members explore cues and clues, therefore, means creating opportunities for members to learn more about the presenting challenge from a wide variety of angles, from both within the congregation (internal) and beyond the congregation (external).

What does this look like in practice? My favorite example of an externally focused exploration of cues and clues comes from St. Mary’s Episcopal in Los Angeles. This congregation began as a neighborhood church for the large Japanese immigrant population that lived in the Mariposa neighborhood prior to World War II. Since then the connection between the congregation and neighborhood has weakened as most of St. Mary’s long-time members now live in more suburban areas of greater LA and spend little time in the St. Mary’s neighborhood beyond Sunday service.

Seeking to reconnect to the neighborhood, rector Anna Olson devised a simple photo project that occurred during a one-day vestry retreat. Vestry members headed out in small groups into

the Mariposa neighborhood for an hour to take photos of anything they found interesting. Upon returning they created and narrated a slideshow of all that they had seen. This slideshow then showed on an endless loop as the vestry identified themes and practical follow-up. Olson writes, “The photo project was designed to give the vestry the opportunity to take a closer look at our neighborhood. It was not intended to lead directly into strategic planning, but rather to shift our perspective and open our eyes to creative possibilities and creative ways of looking for God at work in our neighborhood and God’s call to us as a parish.”

Whereas this is an example of a vestry exploring the external cues and clues surrounding an issue, an example of exploring the internal cues and clues might involve speaking to various stakeholder groups within the congregation about a more internally-focused challenge, such as the fundraising difficulties facing St. George’s, New Jersey that I referred to earlier. In both cases, cues and clues is about creating opportunities for vestry leaders to explore a challenge from a variety of angles and to develop their own perspective on the issue, all of which lays the groundwork for more robust and imaginative conversations about

potential solutions.

Practice #3: Retrospective Thinking

Many people are surprised when they see ‘retrospective thinking’ as a generative leadership practice. I’ve been asked, “Aren’t too many congregations already living in the past? Isn’t the fact that we’re so beholden to the so-called ‘glory days’ preventing us from real change?” While it’s true that many congregations either glorify or deny their past, and while it’s also true that traditional strategic thinking processes are almost exclusively focused on the future, ‘retrospective thinking’ recognizes that communities make meaning by reflecting on past events, and that this meaning directly influences a group’s ability to imagine a hopeful future. The authors of *Governance as Leadership* cite the work of leadership expert Rosabeth Kanter, who wrote, “In conceiving of a different future, innovators have to be historians as well.”

Retrospective thinking played an important role in the two congregations I’ve described above. At Grace Church, Biddeford, Maine, a key turning point was finding vestry meeting minutes from over half a century before that showed the congregation had been 1)

vexed by issues of survival since the local mill had closed in the late 50s and 2) had then committed itself to helping those who had been recently laid off. This created a narrative bridge to Grace’s future as Seeds of Hope. At St. Mary’s Episcopal in Los Angeles, it was their origins as a neighborhood parish that led this largely Japanese-American congregation to reconnect with a neighborhood that is now largely Korean and Latino/Hispanic.

Finally, I want to note that the fairly widespread practice of appreciative inquiry is an example of congregation-wide retrospective thinking. To give the abbreviated version, in appreciative inquiry, time is set aside for members of a congregation to reflect on their past experience of the congregation and then collectively identify areas of strengths. Questions like “tell us about a time that you were most inspired by the congregation” and “tell us a time you were most challenged” bring the past up in such a way that congregational leaders leave with a lot of material (oftentimes, many sheets of paper!) that serve as springboards for future strategic conversations.

The Practicality of a Holy Imagination

Given the very real organizational challenges facing Episcopal congregations today, it can be tempting to quickly jump from identifying a problem to immediately planning out practical solutions. Generative leadership is about inserting an imaginative pause between those two tasks. It recognizes that the language we use to describe a problem circumscribes whether we'll be open to finding new, creative solutions or whether we'll be trapped in the same cycle of conversations as always; it's about helping vestry members come to their own understanding of a presenting challenge so that later conversations are enriched by a diversity of perspectives; finally, it's about recognizing the way the past continues to have a hold on us and leverages this fact in hopeful ways. And in every way, generative leadership is about recognizing that the challenges facing congregations today will not come out of a box, but will instead be created and implemented at the local level, by vestries and other leadership teams who regularly practice imagining a different future.

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Program Director, to coordinate the Fellowship Partners Program, *ECF Vital Practices*, *ECF's many workshops and web conferences*, and *ECF Vital Teams*. Miguel is a lay member of The Episcopal Church, an MDiv graduate of Union Theological Seminary, and an amateur bread maker.

Resources

- "Appreciative Inquiry" by Ann Ditzler, *ECF Vital Practices' Your Turn* resource <http://www.ecfvp.org/yourturn/appreciative-inquiry-at-st-marys-manhattanville/>
- "A Snapshot of our Urban Neighborhood" by Anna Olson, *ECF Vital Practices' Vestry Papers*, January 2012 <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers/real-basics-for-vestries/a-snapshot-of-our-urban-neighborhood/>
- "Generative leadership: Nurturing innovation in complex systems" by Gita Surie and James K. Hazy, *E:CO Issue Volume 8 No. 4*, 2006 pp 13-26 [file:///Users/nancydavidge-1march142013/Downloads/Surie_HazyECO8\(4\)Proof%20\(1\).pdf](file:///Users/nancydavidge-1march142013/Downloads/Surie_HazyECO8(4)Proof%20(1).pdf)
- Generative leadership: Fundamental elements http://www.click4it.org/index.php/Generative_Leadership

www.click4it.org/index.php/Generative_Leadership

- Governance as Leadership: Reframing the Work of Governing Boards by Richard Chait, William Ryan, and Barbara Taylor <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/pro-ductCd-0471684201.html>
- "Learning to Ask" by G. Jeffrey MacDonald, *The Living Church*, December 19, 2014 <http://www.livingchurch.org/learning-ask>
- "Seeds of Hope" by Shirley Bowen, *ECF Vital Practices' Vestry Papers*, July 2013 <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers/vision-planning/seeds-of-hope/>

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Lift Every Voice

BY ANNA OLSON

Vestry meetings can be a challenge in diverse congregations. People vary widely in personality, cultural background, work experience, educational preparation, and familiarity with The Episcopal Church. Some features of our experience make it likely that we will be comfortable speaking up in vestry meetings. Others make us likely to remain silent, even when we have something to add.

As congregational leaders, how might we help people who might otherwise remain silent feel more comfortable about adding their voice to the conversation or discussion? Here are some things that I've learned in the 15 years I've worked with vestries as a priest serving diverse congregations.

Lift Every Voice

Start the meeting with an exercise that involves hearing from everyone at the table. Reflection on a short Bible passage is a great way to do this. At St. Mary's, we use mutual invitation to make sure that we hear from everyone in the room. The meeting chair invites someone to start the

sharing, then that person invites someone else, and so on. http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/2007-05_Kaleidoscope_newsletter_final.pdf

Opening with Bible study that calls on every voice gets people in the habit of both speaking and listening at meetings, and sets the baseline expectation that every voice will be heard.

Keeping the "every voice" spirit going when you get down to business can be a little harder. The best vestry meetings identify one issue that's important enough to hear every member's perspective. Sometimes that's not possible. But if you find yourself with many meetings without anything that important on the agenda, you may have a deeper problem.

Ideally, you let people know what the "every voice" issue is in advance, giving them time to think about this issue and what they might contribute. Not everyone thinks well on their feet. Mutual invitation works here too, although you may need to offer a second round for anyone who wants to respond to what some-

one else has said.

Beware the Spreadsheet

In my experience there's nothing quite like a spreadsheet to sap the confidence of even the most intrepid vestry member. There is a great divide between people who handle spreadsheets in daily life and people who don't. When we pass out spreadsheets in vestry meetings with little or no explanation, we have just silenced half the room or more. If you don't know what to do with a spreadsheet, it's hard to know what questions to ask. Vital information about the church's resources and obligations remain locked in those intimidating columns of numbers, leaving the people elected to steward those resources and meet those obligations without a clear way forward.

My vestry uses spreadsheets. A well-designed spreadsheet really is the best and easiest way to track and display financial information. But we try never to assume that it is obvious how to use them. We pay special attention to labeling columns. We use as few columns as possible,

and select for the most useful information. We try to have one column that can be scanned quickly to identify where attention is needed. The most useful column may be the one that shows year-to-date expenditure as a percentage of year-to-date budget. While some members of the vestry would be hard-pressed to make that calculation, they can all scan the column and circle the numbers that are far off from 100. That gives us a place to start in reviewing expenditures and income sources that are not what we expected them to be.

At least once a year, we do spreadsheet “de-mystification” training. We walk people through the rows and the columns, explaining what information they contain. We practice finding and interpreting various figures together. We set the expectation that no question is too basic, and that we are all in this together. It’s a good opportunity to recognize the gifts of those who do bring the skills to manage our resources from a numbers perspective, but also to recognize that numbers are only one piece of what the vestry is called to do.

Prepare the Way

When I send the vestry agenda each month, I prepare notes, usually about two pages for a typical two-hour meeting. They are unof-

ficial and written in my rector’s voice (as opposed to representing an official vestry perspective). I describe each agenda item in a brief paragraph, which answers some or all of the following questions. Why are we talking about this? What is the key background information? What do you, the vestry member, need to do to prepare for this part of the discussion? How important is this? Have we talked about it before? Where did we leave things in the previous discussion? Do we need to make a decision at this meeting?

I started doing these notes to help vestry meetings move faster. The notes help a little with that, especially when we remember not to rehash what’s in them. What they really help with is giving everyone a fighting chance at participation. For people who have had to miss meetings, there’s a quick catch-up on ongoing conversations. For non-native English speakers there is key context that gives a head start in understanding fast-moving conversations. For someone who is not sure they understand what an issue is about, there’s a chance to ask discreetly before the meeting, and get some clarification. The notes give us a chance to start with a shared set of basic information.

Our Episcopal structures -- and the materials that the Church pro-

vides to support those structures -- tend to make a lot of assumptions about shared culture and experience. If your congregation is made up of anyone who is not already spending a lot of time in a boardroom during the week, you will need to find ways to supplement those structures and materials. You will find that it is worth it, as important perspectives emerge and people feel free to bring their gifts to the table.

***Anna Olson** lives and works in the diverse Koreatown neighborhood of Los Angeles, serving since 2011 as rector of Saint Mary’s Episcopal Church, <http://stmarys-la.org> Los Angeles’ only historic Japanese-American Episcopal church. Her interests and expertise in parish ministry include working with historic congregations to connect with the needs and gifts of new neighbors; developing models for multilingual and inculturated liturgy; liturgy in public spaces; and opening space for marginalized communities to reshape and revitalize the church. She has a partner and two daughters, is fluent in Spanish and holds a second-degree black belt in taekwondo.*

Try This

Sometimes in a group situation, when a few voices dominate a conversation or discussion, others can have a hard time breaking in, while the shyest among us may not even try. Mutual invitation is an easy to use process that ensures everyone who wants to has the opportunity to speak. This process works best in groups of no more than 12 people and when you have the time necessary for every person to speak.

The leader or designated person introduces the question or topic then invites someone else in the group to share. After the next person has spoken, that person is given the privilege to invite another to share. If you have something to say but are not ready yet, say “pass for now,” and then invite someone else to share. You will be invited again later. If you don’t want to say anything, simply say, “pass” and proceed to invite another to share. This continues until everyone has been invited and all who choose to have shared.

Key to this process is listening and not responding to another’s sharing immediately. There will be time to respond and ask clarifying questions after everyone has had an opportunity to share.

Eric H.F. Law offers a detailed description of this process in this three part series in the Kaleidoscope Institute Newsletter of May, June, and July 2007.

- May 2009 http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/2007-05_Kaleidoscope_newsletter_final.pdf
- June 2007 http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/2007-06_Kaleidoscope_newsletter_final.pdf
- July 2007 http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/2007-07_Kaleidoscope_newsletter.pdf

Resources

- “Asking the right question, allowing time to ponder” by Eric H.F. Law, Kaleidoscope Institute Newsletter, July 2007 http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/2007-07_Kaleidoscope_newsletter.pdf
- “How to introduce Mutual Invitation” by Eric H.F. Law, Kaleidoscope Institute Newsletter, June 2007 http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/2007-06_Kaleidoscope_newsletter_final.pdf
- “Mutual Invitation: A way to include everyone at the table”

by Eric H.F. Law, Kaleidoscope Institute Newsletter, May 2009 http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/2007-05_Kaleidoscope_newsletter_final.pdf

- Saint Mary’s Episcopal Church, Los Angeles <http://stmarys-la.org>
- Sample annotated vestry agenda http://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Sample_vestry_agenda.pdf

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Elevad Todas las Voces

POR ANNA OLSON

Las reuniones de la junta parroquial pueden ser difíciles en diversas feligresías. La gente vería mucho en personalidad, antecedentes culturales, experiencia de trabajo, preparación educativa y familiarización con la Iglesia Episcopal. Algunos elementos de nuestra experiencia hace que sea probable que algunos se sientan cómodos hablando en las reuniones de la junta parroquial, pero que otros probablemente permanezcan en silencio, incluso si tienen algo que añadir.

Como líderes de feligresías, ¿cómo podríamos ayudar a la gente que de lo contrario permanecería en silencio a sentirse más cómoda sobre añadir su voz a la conversación o a la discusión? A continuación, algunas de las cosas que aprendimos en los 15 años en que trabajé con juntas parroquiales como sacerdote a cargo de diversas feligresías.

Elevad todas las voces

Inicie la reunión con un ejercicio que requiera oír de todos los que se encuentren alrededor de la mesa. Una gran manera de hacerlo es reflexionar sobre un pasaje breve de la Biblia. En St. Mary's

empleamos invitación mutua para asegurar que oigamos de todos los que estén en el salón. La persona a cargo de presidir la reunión invita a alguien a que empiece a compartir, después esa persona invita a otra persona y así sucesivamente, http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/2007-05_Kaleidoscope_newsletter_final.pdf.

Iniciar la reunión con estudios de la Biblia que requieren que todos expresen sus ideas hace que la gente se acostumbre tanto a hablar como a escuchar en las reuniones y sienta la expectativa de que se oirán todas las voces.

Mantener vivo el espíritu de “todas las voces” cuando se empiezan a tratar temas específicos puede ser un poco más difícil. Las mejores reuniones de las juntas parroquiales identifican un tema suficientemente importante como para oír la perspectiva de todos los miembros. A veces eso no es posible, pero si se encuentra con muchas reuniones sin nada importante que añadir la agenda, es posible que tenga un problema mucho más profundo.

Idealmente, usted deja saber a la gente por adelantado lo que es

“todas las voces” y les da tiempo para pensar sobre este tema y lo que podría contribuir. No todos piensan bien en el instante, es por eso que la invitación mutua también funciona aquí, si bien es posible que tenga que ofrecer una segunda ronda a alguien que desee responder a algo que haya dicho otra persona.

Cuidado con la hoja electrónica

En mi experiencia, no hay nada como la hoja electrónica para hacer tambalear la confianza en sí mismo de hasta el miembro más intrépido de la junta. Hay una gran división entre las personas que manejan hojas electrónicas en la vida diaria y las personas que no lo hacen. Cuando distribuimos hojas electrónicas en reuniones de la junta parroquial con poca o ninguna explicación, hemos silenciado a la mitad de los presentes o a más. Si uno no sabe qué hacer con una hoja electrónica, es difícil que sepa qué preguntar. Información fundamental sobre los recursos y las obligaciones de la Iglesia permanece encerrada en estas intimidantes columnas de números, dejando a la gente elegida para ejercer mayor dominio sobre esos recursos y

cumplir con estas obligaciones sin una vía clara hacia el futuro.

Mi junta parroquial usa páginas electrónicas. Una hoja electrónica bien diseñada realmente es la manera mejor y más fácil de dar seguimiento a información financiera y de mostrarla. Pero tratamos de no suponer nunca que la manera de emplearls es evidente. Prestamos especial atención a los títulos de las columnas. Empleamos el menor número de columnas posible y elegimos la información más útil. Tratamos de tener una columna que se pueda ver rápidamente para identificar dónde se requiere atención. La columna más útil puede ser la que muestra los gastos hasta el momento como porcentaje del presupuesto hasta la fecha. Si bien a algunos miembros de la junta parroquial les puede resultar difícil hacer este cálculo, todos pueden mirar la columna y trazar un círculo de los números que están muy lejos de 100. Eso nos da un punto de partida para empezar a examinar los gastos y las fuentes de ingresos que no son lo que habíamos esperado que fueran.

Al menos una vez por año realizamos una capacitación para “desenmarañar” las hojas electrónicas. Examinamos las filas de las columnas con la gente explicando la información que

contienen. Practicamos encontrar e interpretar varias cifras juntos. Después sentamos la expectativa de que ninguna pregunta es demasiado básica y que esto es algo que hacemos todos en común. Es una buena oportunidad para reconocer los dones de los que ya cuentan con las destrezas necesarias para administrar nuestros recursos desde la perspectiva numérica, pero también para reconocer que los números no son la única tarea encomendada a la junta parroquial.

Prepare el terreno

Cuando envío la agenda de la junta parroquial todos los meses, preparo apuntes, por lo general de unas dos páginas, para una reunión típica de dos horas de duración. Son extraoficiales y están escritas en mi voz de rectora (en lugar de representar una perspectiva oficial de la junta parroquial). Describo todos los ítems en la agenda en un párrafo breve, que contesta algunas o todas de las siguientes preguntas. ¿Por qué estamos hablando sobre esto? ¿Cuál es la información más importante sobre este tema? ¿Qué necesita usted, como miembro de la junta parroquial, para prepararse para esta parte de la conversación? ¿Cuán importante es este tema? ¿Hemos hablado sobre esto anteriormente? ¿En qué quedamos anteriormente sobre

este tema? ¿Tenemos que tomar una decisión en esta reunión?

Empecé a hacer estos apuntes para ayudar a los miembros de la junta parroquial a avanzar más rápidamente. Los apuntes ayudan un poco con eso, especialmente para recordar no volver a hablar sobre lo que está en ellos. En lo que realmente ayudan es en darles a todos la posibilidad de participar. Para las personas que tuvieron que faltar alguna reunión, son una puesta al día breve. Para aquellos cuyo idioma natal no es el español, son un contexto de los puntos fundamentales que les ayuda a entender conversaciones en las que todos hablan rápidamente. Para alguien que no sepa con seguridad si entiende algún tema, son una oportunidad para hacer preguntas discretamente antes de la reunión y obtener aclaración. Los apuntes nos dan la oportunidad de iniciar la reunión con información básica compartida.

Nuestras estructuras episcopales -- y los materiales que la Iglesia proporciona para apoyar esas estructuras -- tienden a suponer muchas cosas sobre las culturas y experiencias compartidas. Si su feligresía está constituida por gente que no está pasando mucho tiempo en una sala de juntas durante la semana, tendrá que encontrar maneras de suplementar esas estructuras y materiales.

Hallará que bien vale la pena, porque surgen perspectivas importantes y la gente se siente en plena libertad de traer sus dones a la mesa.

Anna Olson vive y trabaja en el diverso barrio de Koreatown de Los Angeles, donde se ha desempeñado desde 2011 como rectora de Saint Mary's Episcopal Church la única iglesia episcopal japonesa-estadounidense histórica de Los Ángeles. Su interés y pericia en el ministerio parroquial incluye trabajar con feligresías históricas para conectar las necesidades y los dones de nuevos vecinos, crear modelos de liturgia multilingüe y enculturada; liturgia en espacios públicos y crear espacio para que las comunidades marginadas den nueva forma a la iglesia y la revitalicen. Tiene un compañero y dos hijas, domina el español y tiene un cinturón negro de segundo grado en taekwondo.

Pruebe lo Siguiente

A veces en una situación de grupo, en la que unas pocas voces dominan la conversación y la discusión, a otros les puede costar trabajo hablar, mientras que los más tímidos entre nosotros tal vez ni siquiera lo intentan. La invitación mutua es una manera fácil de emplear un proceso que asegura que todos los que deseen hacerlo tengan la oportunidad de hablar.

Este proceso funciona mejor en grupos de no más de 12 personas y cuando se tiene el tiempo necesario para permitir que todos hablen.

El líder o la persona designada presentan la pregunta o el tema y después invita a otra persona del grupo a que comparta. Después de que la próxima persona haya hablado, esa persona tiene el privilegio de invitar a otra persona a que comparta. Si esa persona tiene algo que decir, pero todavía no está lista, dice “paso por ahora”, y después invita a otro a que comparta. Eso sigue hasta que todos hayan sido invitados y que todos los que deseaban hacerlo hayan hablado.

La clave de este proceso es escuchar y no responder inmediatamente a lo que otro esté diciendo. Habrá tiempo para responder y hacer preguntas aclaratorias después de que todos hayan tenido la oportunidad de compartir.

Eric H.F. Law ofrece una descripción detallada de este proceso en su serie de tres partes en los boletines de mayo, junio y julio de 2007 del Kaleidoscope Institute.

Recursos

- “Asking the right question, allowing time to ponder” by

Eric H.F. Law, Kaleidoscope Institute Newsletter, July 2007
http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/2007-07_Kaleidoscope_newsletter.pdf

- “How to introduce Mutual Invitation” by Eric H.F. Law, Kaleidoscope Institute Newsletter, June 2007 http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/2007-06_Kaleidoscope_newsletter_final.pdf
- “Mutual Invitation: A way to include everyone at the table” by Eric H.F. Law, Kaleidoscope Institute Newsletter, May 2009 http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/2007-05_Kaleidoscope_newsletter_final.pdf
- Saint Mary's Episcopal Church, Los Angeles <http://stmarys-la.org>
- Sample annotated vestry agenda http://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Sample_vestry_agenda.pdf

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Wardens' Work

BY NEVA RAE FOX

During a recent visit to the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, I was invited to a church's annual luncheon, during which everyone stood and introduced him or herself. Those who had served, or were currently serving, as wardens expressed their service in deeply dedicated terms: "honored"; "a privilege to serve"; "looking forward to the next year"; "I had fun."

I was gratified to hear those sentiments expressed so freely, rather than the somewhat-usual grumblings. Serving as a warden should be a joyful experience, filled with spirit and dedication. Serving as a warden is a way of conveying the work of Our Lord. Serving as a warden is a form of evangelism.

Evangelism and prayer

I surveyed current and former wardens, asking them for advice they would like to share and what elements added to their dedication and accomplishments during their tenure.

Not surprisingly, all started by citing the most crucial element: prayer.

Ron commented, "Churches too often have vestry members functioning as a manager, or advocates for a particular project or committee, rather than as a spiritual leader called to focus on the mission of the church..... the big picture. Wardens are about the business of making disciples and engaging in discipleship. Wardens mentor others."

Wardens are evangelists.

Know your congregation

It is good to know your congregation before you agree to serve. It is difficult to be effective if you don't know the heartbeat of the parish. As a start, you might consider identifying 2-3 major issues facing the parish so you are not surprised when elected. This helps to determine what is important and what is not.

Keith advised, "Define your expectations ahead of time. Don't ask people to run and tell them 'it won't take much of your time,' because it will."

Judy enjoyed her two terms as a warden. But, she offered wise advice:

"Make sure you have the time. Being a warden is rewarding but you must commit to it."

Practical steps

Many who were surveyed offered similar practical tools, such as worshipping at your church's different services at some point. As an affirmed 8 o'clocker, I am thankful when I see my wardens attend the early service on occasion. Another suggestion heard frequently was the value of wardens meeting with the rector and/or all clergy on a regular basis.

Here is an idea that can bridge the ongoing ministry on all parish levels: conduct wardens' meetings with the leadership of congregational organizations – Altar Guild, Men's Club, ECW, choir, etc. Add to that periodic wardens' meetings with the entire congregation, and communications becomes open and transparent.

Most stressed that communication is foundational for being a successful warden. Keith advised, "Keep no secrets (except for pastoral issues)."

Paula recommended, “An effective warden should be visible - at parish events (as many as possible), weekly church services, coffee hour, funerals of church members, etc. By being visible, one can have one’s finger on the pulse of the parish and know what’s going on.”

Judy noted that working with others is key. “Be willing to compromise. Sometimes this is hard if you feel you are right. But if something is voted on and it isn’t your choice, you still need to put 100 percent into doing the job.”

Many reiterated Judy’s words: “Remember you can’t do it all yourself.”

Lisa said, “In relation to the sense of community that I feel, I am not a warden by myself. The leadership team working together helps me to be effective in my role.”

Lisa’s experience has been with a “rector, senior warden, and vestry that were committed, intelligent, respectful, and skilled at relationship- and team-building, which made me feel like I was working with colleagues who were invested in the well-being of our church.”

Sam was wistful. “A successful warden often has to find the common ground between clergy and laity by balancing the secular with

the spiritual. In my experience, many vestry members are professionals who see the church in terms of a business. The clergy, on the other hand, usually see things in a different light. A warden has to effectively communicate that balance.”

Wardens are evangelists.

Not always easy

Serving as a warden isn’t always easy and can try one’s patience. But there are steps you can take to diminish negative feelings and increase the positive effects of your service.

For example, a good way to begin is to be clear about what is important and what is not. Is there a hot topic going on at church? Does it concern the governance and operation of the church, or is it more of a personality spat? Take steps to avoid being pulled into unnecessary minutia. Mostly, don’t be used – it’s easy for wardens to find themselves involved in a situation that doesn’t really require a warden’s review. You are a warden, not Mommy/Daddy.

Additionally, if there is conflict within the congregation or with clergy – and there sometimes is – admit, name it, and work on a resolution. No one – the wardens, the clergy and especially the con-

gregation – can gain and grow by conflict being ignored.

To that point, problem solving should not necessarily center on the clergy person “handling” the difficulty; rather, it is often the warden’s role to facilitate creating a culture where necessary change can occur.

Sam continued: “A warden has to be comfortable being a mediator and an example for others. There will always be disagreements but as a faith community we need to address our differences differently than we do in the secular world.”

Wardens are evangelists.

Leadership development

A key role for any warden is to look to the future of the church by ensuring the successful passing-of-the-baton to the next warden.

Bob pointed out that leadership development is often overlooked. “Leadership development should always be close to your own leadership,” he noted. “Preparing for the next leaders helps in an easy transition, which helps the congregation, the vestry, the organizations, and the clergy.”

Ron summarized these points for a successful wardens’ ministry: “Work together; pay attention to

boundaries; be faithful; admit mistakes or short-comings; be accountable; be a bridge-builder; seek allies; value failure.”

Be joyful in your wardens’ work. Never forget that wardens are evangelists.

***Neva Rae Fox** is the public affairs officer for The Episcopal Church. The recipient of many awards, Neva Rae worked in Episcopal communications in two dioceses prior to joining the church wide staff. Always a communications professional, she also operated her own communications company, The Fox Group. She is active in her own Episcopal Church in the Diocese of New Jersey and is a member of many organizations and groups and has been elected to various offices in her church.*

Try This

As a warden – or vestry member - how do you keep your fingers on the pulse of what’s happening in your congregation? And, what processes do you have in place to share information and provide opportunities for discussion regarding your church’s mission and vision, programs, challenges, budgets, etc.? Whether your congregation is large or small, periodically scheduling time for wardens

to meet with the leaders of congregational organizations – Altar Guild, Men’s Club, ECW, choir, etc., in addition to wardens’ meetings with the entire congregation, and communications becomes open and transparent.

papers/ministry-of-wardens/youre-a-new-warden-now-what/

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Resources

- “Easier or More Meaningful?” by Miguel Escobar, ECF Vital Practices’ Vital Post, October 2012 <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/easier-or-more-meaningful/>
- “Feeding Your Soul in the Small Church” by Kevin Spears, Vestry Papers, September 2009 <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestry-papers/small-church-ministry/feeding-your-soul-in-the-small-church/>
- Sample job descriptions for officers, such as senior and junior wardens, see The Vestry Resource Guide, Episcopal Church Foundation 2007. <http://www.episcopalfoundation.org/programs/ecf-publications/vestry-resource-guide>
- “You’re a New Warden: Now What?” by Donald Romanik, Vestry Papers, January 2009 <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestry->

Los Coadjutores son Evangelistas

POR NEVA RAE FOX

Durante una visita reciente a la Diócesis Episcopal de Los Ángeles, me invitaron a un almuerzo anual de la iglesia durante el que todos se pusieron de pie y se presentaron. Los que habían sido o eran actualmente adjutores expresaron su labor en términos profundamente dedicados: “honrado,” “es un privilegio servir,” “estoy ansioso por empezar el próximo año,” “me divertí.”

Me gratificó oír esos sentimientos expresados tan libremente, en lugar de los refunfuños habituales. Ser coadjutor debe ser una experiencia gozosa, llena de espíritu y dedicación. Ser coadjutor es una manera de transmitir la labor de Nuestro Señor. Ser coadjutor es una forma de evangelismo.

Evangelismo y oración

Como parte de mi encuesta a coadjutores presentes y futuros les pregunté qué consejos desearían compartir y qué elementos habían ayudado a incrementar su dedicación y logros durante el tiempo en que se desempeñaron como coadjutores.

No sorprendentemente, todos empezaron citando el elemento

más crucial: oración.

Ron comentó “Las iglesias a menudo hacen que los miembros de la junta parroquial funcionen como administradores o defensores de un proyecto o de un comité específicos, en lugar de como líderes espirituales llamados a concentrarse en la misión de la iglesia... el panorama general. La labor de los coadjutores es hacer discípulos y participar en el discipulado. Los coadjutores son mentores de otros.”

Los coadjutores son evangelistas.

Conozca su feligresía

Es bueno que conozca su feligresía antes de acordar desempeñar su cargo. Es difícil ser efectivo si uno desconoce los latidos del corazón de la parroquia. Para empezar, puede considerar identificar 2 o 3 asuntos principales que enfrente la parroquia, para que no se sorprenda cuando lo elijan. Eso ayuda a determinar qué es importante y qué no lo es.

Keith aconsejó: “Defina sus expectativas con anterioridad. No le pida a la gente que corra y les diga

que ‘no les llevará mucho tiempo’, porque la realidad será todo lo contrario.”

Judy disfrutó sus dos plazos como coadjutora. Pero ofreció un consejo muy sabio: “Verifique que tenga el tiempo. Ser coadjutor es muy gratificante, pero requiere un compromiso.”

Pasos prácticos

Muchos de los encuestados ofrecieron herramientas prácticas similares, como rendir culto en diferentes servicios religiosos en sus iglesias en determinados momentos. Como constante asistente al de las 8 de la mañana, me siento agradecida cuando mis coadjutores asisten de vez en cuando al servicio religioso temprano. Otra sugerencia que se oyó frecuentemente fue reunirse regularmente con el rector y/o con todo el sacerdocio.

Aquí hay una idea que puede unir el ministerio en curso en todos los niveles de la parroquia: realizar reuniones con el liderazgo de las organizaciones de la feligresía, tales como la Cofradía del Altar, el Club de Hombres, ECW, el coro, etc. Añada a eso reuniones periódicas

de los coadjutores con toda la feligresía y las comunicaciones pasan a ser abiertas y transparentes.

La mayoría de ellos recalcó que la comunicación es fundamental para ser un buen coadjutor. Keith aconsejó: “No guarde ningún secreto (con la excepción de los temas pastorales).”

Paula recomendó: “Un coadjutor efectivo debe ser visible, en los eventos de la parroquia (en el mayor número posible), en los servicios religiosos semanales, en la hora del café, en los funerales de miembros de la iglesia, etc. Al ser visible, uno puede tener el dedo en el pulso de la parroquia y saber qué está ocurriendo.”

Judy notó que trabajar con otros es fundamental. “Esté dispuesto a ceder. A veces es difícil si uno cree que tiene razón, pero si se vota sobre algo que no es su opción, igual tiene que dedicarse de lleno a hacer el trabajo.”

Muchos reiteraron las palabras de Judy: “Recuerde que no puede hacer todo por sí solo.”

Lisa dijo: “En cuanto al sentido de comunidad que siento, no soy una coadjutora que trabaja independientemente. El trabajo unido del equipo de liderazgo me ayuda a ser efectiva en mi papel.”

La experiencia de Lisa ha sido trabajar con “un rector, un coadjutor senior y una junta parroquial dedicados, inteligentes, respetuosos y diestros en forjar relaciones y crear equipos, que me hacen sentir que estoy trabajando con colegas dedicados de lleno al bienestar de nuestra iglesia.”

Sam estaba nostálgico. “Un buen coadjutor a menudo tiene que encontrar terreno común entre el sacerdocio y el laicado equilibrando lo secular con lo espiritual. En mi experiencia, muchos miembros de la junta parroquial son profesionales que ven la iglesia en términos de empresa. El sacerdocio, por el otro lado, ve las cosas de una manera muy diferente. Un coadjutor tiene que comunicar ese equilibrio de manera efectiva.”

Los coadjutores son evangelistas.

No siempre es fácil

Ser coadjutor no siempre es fácil y requiere mucha paciencia. Pero hay cosas que usted puede hacer para disminuir los sentimientos negativos e incrementar los efectos positivos de su labor.

Por ejemplo, una buena manera de empezar es tener claro qué es importante y qué no lo es. ¿Hay algún tema candente en la iglesia? ¿Tiene que ver con la gobernanza y el funcionamiento de la

iglesia o es más bien una rencilla de personalidad? Tome medidas para evitar que lo envuelvan en nimiedades. Sobre todo, evite que lo usen: los coadjutores pueden encontrarse fácilmente en una situación que no requiere la revisión de un coadjutor. Usted es un(a) coadjutor(a), no un papá o una mamá.

Además, si hay en conflicto dentro de la feligresía o el sacerdocio – y a veces lo hay –, admítalo, nómbrelo y trabaje en una resolución. Nadie, ni los coadjutores ni el sacerdocio, y especialmente la feligresía, pueden progresar y crecer cuando hay un conflicto que no se trata.

Hasta ese punto, la resolución de problemas no se debe centrar en el integrante del sacerdocio que “maneje” la dificultad; en lugar de ello, a menudo es el coadjutor quien facilita crear una cultura receptiva a los cambios necesarios.

Sam continuó: “Los coadjutores tienen que sentirse cómodos siendo mediadores y ejemplos para los demás. Siempre habrá desacuerdos, pero como comunidad de fe debemos resolver nuestras diferencias de manera diferente a como lo hacemos en el mundo secular.”

Los coadjutores son evangelistas.

Desarrollo de liderazgo

Un papel fundamental para todo coadjutor es proteger el futuro de la iglesia asegurando que haya una buena transición hacia el próximo coadjutor.

Bob señaló que el desarrollo de liderazgo es algo que a menudo se pasa por alto. “El desarrollo del liderazgo siempre tiene que estar cercano a su propio liderazgo”, señaló. “Hacer preparativos para los próximos líderes ayuda a facilitar la transición, lo que a su vez ayuda a la feligresía, la junta parroquial, las organizaciones y el sacerdocio.”

Ron resumió estos puntos para un ministerio exitoso de los coadjutores: “Trabajen juntos, presten atención a los límites, sean fieles, admitan sus errores o deficiencias, responsabilícense por sus actos, formen puentes, busquen aliados, valoren los fracasos.”

Disfrute su labor de coadjutor. Jamás olvide que los coadjutores son evangelistas.

Neva Rae Fox es la funcionaria de asuntos públicos de la Iglesia Episcopal. Neva Rae, a quien confirieron numerosos premios, trabajó en comunicaciones episcopales en dos diócesis antes de unirse al personal de toda la

iglesia. Además, también estuvo a cargo de su propia empresa de comunicaciones, The Fox Group. Está activa en su propia iglesia episcopal en la diócesis de Nueva Jersey, es miembro de muchas organizaciones y grupos y ha sido elegida para ocupar varios cargos en su iglesia.

Pruebe lo Siguiente

Como coadjutor – o miembro de la junta parroquial - ¿cómo mantiene sus dedos en el pulso de lo que está ocurriendo en su feligresía? ¿Y qué procesos tiene establecidos para compartir información y proporcionar oportunidades para hablar sobre la misión y visión, los programas, los desafíos, presupuestos, etc. de su iglesia? Independientemente de si su feligresía es grande o pequeña, destinar tiempo periódicamente para que los coadjutores se reúnan con los líderes de las organizaciones de la feligresía, como la Cofradía del Altar, el Club de Hombres, ECW, coro, etc., además de las reuniones del coadjutor con toda la feligresía, hace que las comunicaciones pasen a ser abiertas y transparentes.

Recursos

- “Easier or More Meaningful?” by Miguel Escobar, ECF Vital

Practices’ Vital Post, October 2012 <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/easier-or-more-meaningful/>

- “Feeding Your Soul in the Small Church” by Kevin Spears, Vestry Papers, September 2009 <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestry-papers/small-church-ministry/feeding-your-soul-in-the-small-church/>
- Sample job descriptions for officers, such as senior and junior wardens, see The Vestry Resource Guide, Episcopal Church Foundation 2007. <http://www.episcopalfoundation.org/programs/ecf-publications/vestry-resource-guide>
- “You’re a New Warden: Now What?” by Donald Romanik, Vestry Papers, January 2009 http://www.ecfvp.org/vestry-papers/ministry-of-wardens/youre-a-new-warden-now-what/tiX_WNdJu6w

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Leading through Transition

BY JAN HENDERSON

St. John's Episcopal Church [Jackson Hole, Wyoming] is posed for the "next big thing." Why do I feel this way? As a congregation, we are engaged and have the heart, talent, and courage to make a big difference in our community by following Jesus' teachings.

What's in front of us now is the challenge –and opportunity – of calling a new rector. An important preface to this article is acknowledging how wonderful our vestry is. We were a cohesive and respectful group before the process of transition began; we have now grown into a truly loving family of faithful servants.

Sharing leadership

This process has given us the ability to share leadership and benefit from the various talents each vestry member brings – experience in recruiting/hiring practices, skill at logistics, a grounded perspective, spiritual gifts, to name a few. Like a family, we have differences, but know that that is healthy, and the very reason each of us has grown. No, this is not utopia – indeed, we are of many minds - but we are intentional about being of one

heart. I, for instance, am very much the Martha in the Biblical story of Mary and Martha, and am blessed to have several Mary's on the vestry who nurture me.

Being a part of this talented team has helped me be an effective leader during transition – one who can maintain a nonanxious presence by fostering leadership in others. In my experience in management, I have often used the metaphor of what lifts and keeps a kite in the air; the kite by itself will topple and fall without the ballast of the tail, and the tail by itself cannot become airborne. Soaring requires both.

We are also blessed to have a bishop and diocesan staff who are indispensable, smoothing our steps all along the way. I have never hesitated calling on Canon English, nor have I missed an opportunity to publicly and privately express our appreciation.

The process and rules

Following our dioceses' basic guidelines, *very early* in the process we outlined each step, identified desired outcomes, and established a set of rules. The

process, expectations, and rules were developed collaboratively, and therefore accepted by all members.

We shared the process with parishioners through our weekly newsletter, and encouraged them to contact any one of us with questions or concerns. Except for confidential candidate information, we communicated, communicated, communicated. Anxiety is a natural consequence of change, so occasionally impatience was expressed, to which my response was and is a (Mary-inspired) constant; "I am living into my faith in God's divine providence, and my prayer is that you will also." This has been a valuable reminder to practice what I preach.

Due to our initial candidate's change of circumstances, we were challenged to accelerate the timeline for calling an interim rector. Accepting that, we agreed that in order to cast a vote, a vestry member had to be physically present during every candidate's interview, which required an extraordinary commitment of time from vestry members. This was tough, but essential. Also

important was determining early on when a super-majority, and when a simple-majority vote was required.

We read through the ministry portfolios, met twice for thorough and prayerful discussion, drafted standard and individualized questions, conducted Skype interviews, met to determine who to invite for onsite interviews, and again drafted final, individualized questions, and some relevant scenarios. The 'Martha' in me then took over the logistics – the easy part.

Full-day interviews included a get-acquainted lunch; a facilities tour with me; a meeting with the junior warden and me about budget, organization, and long-range planning; and a Eucharist for the vestry in which the candidate preached and presided, followed by dinner during which we conducted the 'formal' interview. Hosting three candidates in one week was incredibly demanding, particularly since everyone's attendance was required for the Eucharist and dinner. Whew.

Make room for sadness

There is one consideration that is not included in any guidelines or rules or planning steps; that is the need to make room for sadness. By its nature, the role of

senior warden creates a bond, and for me, affection for the departing rector and his family. In a leadership role during this time of transition, holding onto that could easily be sacrificed in the busyness. There is work to do, and there is excitement and anxiety about the future, but there also is a deep sense of loss that should not be ignored. It is important to be vigilant in remaining sensitive to the needs and feelings of the departing rector, and sensitive to your own sorrow. Fortunately I have several sources of pastoral care, and wholeheartedly embrace it.

Along with other vestry members, I have and continue to grow spiritually through this process. While we are in the early phases of transition, still honoring our retiring rector and having just called an interim rector, my opinion is that continuing to mindfully cultivate and support every member of the vestry will be essential to realizing a successful end of transition and being open to greet a new purpose to which God may call our church and its leaders.

Jan Henderson has been in senior management positions for several decades. She holds a Master's degree from the Denver University's College of Law, was employed as Division Manager for the U.S. District Court in Tucson,

AZ, and retired in 2009 from the position of Teton County Executive in Jackson Hole, WY, with 350 employees and 14 department heads reporting to her. Jan has been on the vestry of St. John's Episcopal Church in Jackson Hole for 5 years, the last 2 as senior warden.

Try This

Transitions in ordained leadership usually produce great anxiety in congregations. There are suddenly many new questions: What will change? Who will replace the departing individual in both the short and long term? How long will it take to find a replacement? What kind of alterations will the new persons (including the interim) want to initiate?

Vestries leading in times of transition can take a few tips from Moses. Their first responsibility is to stay calm in the midst of change, keeping the congregation focused on its mission. After all, the church is still there even though the rector has departed.

There are some specific things vestries can do to ease the transition:

- Pray without ceasing for strength and guidance, and encourage the congregation to

do the same.

- Help the departing rector make a good “exit,” acknowledging the joint ministry that has taken place.
- Provide time to share the history of the congregation, identifying those things the congregation wants to carry forward into the future and those that can be left behind.
- Share their understanding of the differences between “change” and “transition” and prepare the congregation for the time it will take for things to seem “normal” again.
- Allow for experimentation — it will help the congregation prepare for the changes any new leader brings and may spark new ideas about ways of being “church.”
- At the same time, avoid unnecessary changes — too many changes raise the anxiety level.
- When the new rector arrives, plan time to mutually clarify roles and expectations and agree to a Mutual Ministry Review at the end of the first year.

Resources

- “A Warden’s Guide: Surviving the Process” by Anne Burns, Vestry Papers, January 2010 <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestry-papers/transition/a-wardens-guide-surviving-the-process/>
- “Leading Through a Clergy Transition” webinars, Part 1 <http://www.ecfvp.org/webinars/part-1-of-leading-through-a-clergy-transition/> and Part 2 <http://www.ecfvp.org/webinars/part-2-of-leading-through-a-clergy-transition/> Episcopal Church Foundation
- Material developed and used by the St. John’s vestry in their search for an interim rector:
Agenda for candidate’s visit and interview (pdf)
Interview questions (pdf)
Proposed selection process (pdf)
Voting protocol (pdf)
- “Navigating Transitions in Clergy Leadership,” Vestry Resource Guide, Episcopal Church Foundation <http://www.episcopalchurchfoundation.org/programs/ecf-publications/vestry-resource-guide>

- St. John’s Episcopal Church,

Jackson Hole, Wyoming <http://stjohnsjackson.diowy.org/Connect/im-new.html>

- Updates on the search process from the search committee to the congregation, from Revelations, the St. John’s weekly newsletter:

Getting Started: A letter from Canon Tristan English, Episcopal Diocese of Wyoming, September 21, 2014 (page 2 – feature) http://s3.amazonaws.com/dfc_attachments/public/documents/3196963/Sept21_Revelations.pdf

Update: number applicants, interview questions, where vestry is in the interview process, November 23, 2014 (page 2 – sidebar, the green box at the right) http://s3.amazonaws.com/dfc_attachments/public/documents/3199885/Nov23_Revelations.pdf

Update: brief report on the selection process and conversation with bishop, December 21 (scroll to page 3 – it’s the small green box text) http://s3.amazonaws.com/dfc_attachments/public/documents/3201009/Dec21_Revelations.pdf

Announcement of interim,
January 4, page 4 [http://
s3.amazonaws.com/
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Liderazgo a Través de la Transición

POR JAN HENDERSON

St. John's Episcopal Church [de Jackson Hole, Wyoming] está lista para la "próxima gran cosa." ¿Por qué me siento así? Como feligresía, estamos participando unidos y tenemos el corazón, el talento y la valentía para tener un gran impacto positivo en nuestra comunidad siguiendo las enseñanzas de Jesús.

Lo que tenemos por delante es el reto – y la oportunidad – de obtener un nuevo rector. Un prefacio importante de este artículo es lo maravillosa que es nuestra junta parroquial. Éramos un grupo unido y respetuoso antes de que empezara el proceso, pero ahora nos hemos convertido en una verdadera familia de fieles servidores llenos de amor.

Compartir el liderazgo

Este proceso nos ha conferido la habilidad de compartir el liderazgo y de beneficiarnos de los diversos talentos que aporta cada uno de los integrantes de la junta parroquial, tales como experiencia en prácticas de reclutamiento y contratación, conocimientos de logística, una perspectiva fundada, dones espirituales... por mencionar unos pocos. Como toda familia, tenemos

nuestras diferencias, pero sabemos que esa es una realidad y el motivo por el cual todos nosotros hemos crecido. No, esto no es una utopía, la realidad es que tenemos muchas opiniones diferentes, pero nos esforzamos en tener un solo corazón. Yo, por ejemplo, soy en gran medida como Marta en la historia bíblica y tengo la bendición de tener varias Marías en la junta parroquial que me instruyen e inspiran.

Ser parte de este grupo tan talentoso me ha ayudado a ser una líder efectiva durante la transición, una que puede mantener una presencia calma fomentando el liderazgo en otros. En mi experiencia gerencial, a menudo he empleado la metáfora de lo que hace que una cometa remonte el vuelo y se mantenga en el aire: la cometa por sí sola tambalearía y caería sin el lastre de la cola y la cola de por sí no podría volar. Remontar el vuelo requiere las dos cosas.

También tenemos la bendición de contar con un obispo y un personal diocesano indispensables que suavizan nuestros pasos por todo el recorrido. Nunca vacilé en llamar a nuestro canónigo ni perdí una

oportunidad de expresar nuestra apreciación tanto en público como en privado.

El proceso y las reglas

Fue importante emplear las reglas canónicas básicas desde muy al principio del proceso. Esbozamos cada paso, identificamos los resultados deseados y establecimos un conjunto de reglas. Las expectativas, las reglas y el proceso fueron elaborados colectivamente y, por ende, todos los miembros los aceptaron.

Compartimos el proceso con los parroquianos mediante nuestro boletín semanal y los estimulamos a que se pusieran en contacto con cualquiera de nosotros si tenían preguntas o inquietudes. Con la excepción de la información confidencial sobre los candidatos, comunicamos, comunicamos, comunicamos. La ansiedad es una consecuencia natural del cambio, de manera que de tanto en tanto algunos expresaron impaciencia. Mi reacción a ella (inspirada por María) fue y sigue siendo constante: "Estoy viviendo en mi fe en la divina providencia de Dios y oro por que ustedes también lo hagan."

Ese ha sido un recordatorio valioso de practicar lo que predico.

Debido al cambio de circunstancias de nuestro candidato inicial, nos vimos forzados a acelerar el plazo para llamar a un rector interino. Aceptando eso, acordamos que para poder emitir un voto, los integrantes de la junta parroquial tenían que estar físicamente presentes durante la entrevista de todos los candidatos, lo que requirió un compromiso fuera de la norma para los integrantes de nuestra junta parroquial. Fue duro, pero esencial. También fue importante determinar desde el principio cuándo se requería una votación mayoritaria, en lugar de una simple.

Leímos todas las carteras del ministerio, nos reunimos dos veces para tener una conversación a fondo apoyada por la oración, redactamos preguntas estándar e individualizadas, realizamos entrevistas por Skype, nos reunimos para determinar a quiénes invitaríamos a que vinieran para que los entrevistáramos personalmente y nuevamente redactamos preguntas finales individualizadas y algunas situaciones pertinentes. La 'Marta' en mí después se hizo cargo de la logística... la parte fácil.

Las entrevistas de todo el día de

duración incluyeron un almuerzo para conocernos; un recorrido de las instalaciones conmigo; una reunión con el coadjutor junior y conmigo sobre el presupuesto, la organización y la planificación a largo plazo; y una Eucaristía para la junta parroquial en la que el candidato predicó y presidió, seguida por una cena durante la que realizamos la entrevista "formal". Ser anfitriones de tres candidatos en una semana exigió muchísimo de nosotros, especialmente cuando se requirió la asistencia de todos para la Eucaristía y la cena. ¡Uf!

Dejar espacio para la tristeza

Hay algo que no está incluido en ningunas directrices o reglas ni en los pasos de planificación: la necesidad de dejar espacio para la tristeza. Por su propia naturaleza, el papel de coadjutor principal crea un vínculo y, en mi caso, un gran afecto por el rector que se iba y por su familia. En un rol de liderazgo durante este período de transición, prestar atención a ello puede dejarse fácilmente de lado por haber tantas otras cosas en juego. Hay trabajo que hacer y hay entusiasmo y nerviosismo por el futuro, pero también hay un profundo sentido de pérdida que no se debe ignorar. Es importante permanecer sensibles a las necesidades y los sentimientos

del rector que parte, así como a la tristeza que genera su partida. Afortunadamente tengo varias fuentes de cuidados pastorales, que adopto sin reservas.

Junto con otros miembros de la junta parroquial, he crecido – y sigo creciendo – espiritualmente a lo largo del proceso. Si bien todavía estamos en las etapas iniciales de la transición, seguimos honrando a nuestro rector que parte y acabamos de llamar a un rector interino, opino que cultivar y apoyar deliberadamente a todos los miembros de la feligresía será esencial para llegar a un buen fin de la transición y estar dispuestos a darle la bienvenida al nuevo propósito que Dios pueda dar a nuestra iglesia y a sus líderes.

Jan Henderson ha ocupado altos cargos administrativos por varias décadas. Tiene una maestría de la Facultad de Derecho de la Universidad de Denver, estuvo empleada como administradora de división en el Tribunal Distrital de EE UU en Tucson, AZ, y en 2009 se jubiló del cargo de ejecutiva del Condado de Teton en Jackson Hole, WY, donde fue jefa de 350 empleados y 14 jefes de departamentos. Jan ha integrado la junta parroquial de St. John's Episcopal Church en Jackson Hole por 5 años, los últimos 2 como coadjutora principal.

Pruebe lo siguiente

Las transiciones en el liderazgo ordenado por lo general generan una gran ansiedad en las feligresías. De repente surgen muchos nuevos interrogantes: ¿Qué cambiará? ¿Quién reemplazará a la persona a corto y largo plazo? ¿Cuánto se tardará en encontrar un reemplazo? ¿Qué tipos de alteraciones querrán realizar las nuevas personas (incluyendo el interino)?

Las juntas parroquiales que lideran en épocas de transición pueden aprender mucho del ejemplo de Moisés. Su primera responsabilidad es permanecer calmas en medio del cambio y mantener a la feligresía concentrada en su misión. Después de todo, la iglesia sigue estando en pie, incluso si el rector se fue.

Aquí tienen algunas cosas específicas que pueden hacer las juntas parroquiales para facilitar la transición.

- Orar constantemente por fuerza y orientación y estimular a la feligresía a que haga lo mismo.
- Ayudar al rector que se parte a realizar una buena “salida”, reconociendo el ministerio conjunto que ha ocurrido.
- Dedicar tiempo a compartir la historia de la feligresía,

identificando las cosas que la feligresía desee llevar a su futuro y las cosas que desee dejar atrás.

- Compartir su comprensión de las diferencias entre “cambio” y “transición” y preparar a la feligresía para el tiempo que llevará que las cosas vuelvan a parecer “normales”.
- Permitir la experimentación. Ello ayudará a la feligresía a prepararse para los cambios que traerá todo nuevo líder y que podrán generar nuevas ideas sobre ser “iglesia”.
- Al mismo tiempo, evitar los cambios innecesarios: el exceso de cambios eleva el nivel de ansiedad.
- Cuando llegue el nuevo rector, destine tiempo a aclarar roles y expectativas y a acordar que se realice una Revisión Mutua de Ministerio al final del primer año.
- Y, sobre todo, ESCUCHE y, de la misma manera en que Moisés dedicó tiempo a acercarse a las fogatas y sentarse con la gente, las juntas parroquiales tienen que estar especialmente disponibles durante este período.

Así como Moisés necesitaba que lo aconsejara su suegro Jetro, los comités de búsqueda, los equipos de la transición, miembros del personal o asesores diocesanos pueden ayudar a las juntas par-

roquiales durante el período de transición. (Pasaje de “Reaching for that Trapeze Bar”, por Mike Ehmer, Vestry Papers, enero de 2010). <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers/transition/reaching-for-that-trapeze-bar/>

Recursos

- “A Warden’s Guide: Surviving the Process” por Anne Burns, Vestry Papers, enero de 2010 <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers/transition/a-wardens-guide-surviving-the-process/>
- “Leading Through a Clergy Transition” webinars, Parte 1 <http://www.ecfvp.org/webinars/part-1-of-leading-through-a-clergy-transition/> y Parte 2 <http://www.ecfvp.org/webinars/part-2-of-leading-through-a-clergy-transition/> Episcopal Church Foundation
- Material elaborado y empleado por la junta parroquial de St. John’s en su búsqueda de un rector interino:

Agenda para la visita y la entrevista del/la candidata(a) (pdf) http://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Agenda_for_Interview-Spanish1.pdf

Preguntas para hacer en la entrevista (pdf) http://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Interview_questions_example-Spanish.pdf

Proceso de selección propuesto (pdf) http://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Process_for_selecting_the_candidateSpanish.pdf

Protocolo de votación (pdf) http://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Voting_protocol-Spanish.pdf

■ “Navigating Transitions in Clergy Leadership,” Vestry Resource Guide, Episcopal Church Foundation <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/programs/ecf-publications/vestry-resource-guide>

■ St. John’s Episcopal Church, Jackson Hole, Wyoming <http://stjohnsjackson.diowy.org/Connect/im-new.html>

■ Actualizaciones del proceso de búsqueda del comité de búsqueda de la feligresía, de Revelations, el boletín semanal de St. John’s :

Para empezar: Una carta del canónigo Tristan English, Diócesis Episcopal de Wyoming, 21 de septiembre de 2014 (artículo página 2) <http://s3.amazonaws.com/>

[dfc_attachments/public/documents/3196963/Sept21_Revelations.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/dfc_attachments/public/documents/3196963/Sept21_Revelations.pdf)

Actualización: número de solicitantes, preguntas de entrevistas, dónde se encuentra la junta parroquial en el proceso de entrevistas, 23 de noviembre de 2014 (página 2 – barra lateral, el casillero verde a la derecha) http://s3.amazonaws.com/dfc_attachments/public/documents/3199885/Nov23_Revelations.pdf

Actualización: informe breve sobre el proceso de selección y conversación con el obispo, 21 de diciembre (avanzar hasta la página 3 – es el texto en el casillero verde pequeño http://s3.amazonaws.com/dfc_attachments/public/documents/3201009/Dec21_Revelations.pdf

Anuncio del interino, 4 de enero, página 4 http://s3.amazonaws.com/dfc_attachments/public/documents/3201506/Jan4_Revelations.pdf

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Leading from the Side

BY ELIZABETH M. MAGILL

Editor's note: A key vestry role is to identify and support emerging leaders. What might that look like? In her "Leading from the Side" series, Elizabeth Magill, of The Mission Institute, shares steps individuals and congregational leaders might take to support emerging leaders.

Lay people often tell me that they love so many things about their church, and that they hate so many things about their church. They describe how the congregation dreams of change and how change doesn't happen. These members of churches ask me for advice, they look at their community life critically, they engage in creative thinking, they get excited about ideas that might work, and then they turn to me and say, "You should talk to my pastor." One minute they are full of energy for change, the next minute they are deferring all change to the work of the pastor.

Let me say this clearly: you can change your church; you can make a difference. I know, you are not ordained, you are not the paid, you didn't study church change, you aren't an organizational guru, you can't work on this full time, you have a family and a job, you have a

hundred reasons you cannot work on this problem. Yet still I say to you clearly: you can change your church; you can make a difference; you are called to be part of the change.

Every church exists as a system and every system changes when an individual decides to act differently. You can stop criticizing people and start calling out bad behavior, you can stop complaining in private and start speaking out in public, you can stop listing people's weaknesses and start appreciating people's strengths. You can refuse to rescue programs that need to die, refuse to do more work than can be done well, and refuse to take on the anxiety of others. You can pray for the complainers, pray for the blockers, pray for the despairing, pray for the neighborhood, and pray for the church. You can choose a different way.

Choosing to act differently, choosing to see people differently, choosing to live by your values—all of these things will change the system of your church. If you are in charge at your church this choosing behavior is called leadership; if you are not in charge at your church this

choosing behavior is called leadership. It is leadership when it comes from the top; it is leadership when it comes from the side. We have high expectations of those who are leading from the top, we need to set higher expectations for all of us who are leading from the side.

At work this leading from the side might be called managing the management, at home it might be called negotiating solutions, among your friends it might simply be described as assertiveness. If you try to change others by being aggressive, or passive, or passive-aggressive then you are not engaged in leadership, you are engaged in manipulation. Please don't use manipulation to change your church!

Change your church with assertive leadership from the side. Manipulation focuses on problems; leadership imagines opportunities. Manipulation pushes others to take sides; leadership guides others to the community's values. Manipulation is quick and destructive; leadership is slow and creative.

Draw a deep breath, begin a slower

pace, take a tentative step, start leading at your church, leading from the side. Join God and your neighbor in slow and creative change.

Elizabeth Magill is program coordinator, faith based leadership for The Mission Institute and Episcopal Divinity School's Lifelong Learning. Her passion is the education of lay and ordained leaders for a radically new version of Church in the United States. Liz is ordained with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) but speaks Episcopal nearly fluently. She gets her support from the United Church of Christ, grew up United Methodist, and was an elder in the Presbyterian Church for 10 years.

This post first appeared on The Mission Institute website (<http://themissioninstitute.org>) and is reprinted with permission. The Mission Institute is a collaborative venture of Episcopal Divinity School, Episcopal City Mission, and the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts. It offers congregations and communities innovative learning opportunities that nurture leaders, strengthen communities, support spiritual growth, and advance positive transformation in our societies. Learn more about The Mission Institute here (<http://themissioninstitute.org>) or visit their Facebook page.

(<https://www.facebook.com/TheMissionInstitute?sk=info>)

Try This

What can congregational leaders do to encourage healthy patterns of communication?

- First, recognize that as leaders in Christian community, we are called to teach and model a higher standard of communication.
- Call out unhealthy behaviors when you see it or experience it as a leader in a congregation, taking the time to do so in a caring way.
- Establish a culture of listening and caring through the use of covenants, norms, clear ministry descriptions, and holding people accountable.
- Take the time to learn together how to be a faithful leader, which might include Bible study, prayer, and sharing appreciations and regrets.
- Evaluate your congregation's health using 12 Marks of Healthy Church Behavior and its related assessment tool. <http://www.epicenter.org/12-marks-of-healthy-church-behavior/>

- Recognize and empower healthy spiritual leaders by placing them in positions of authority and influence.
- Practice patience and persistence, allowing time for new behaviors to become the norm.

Resources

- Being Church: A video parable study series Being Church Study Series, a collection of video parables set within thought provoking, spiritually rooted content that can assist congregations and Christian communities to deepen their own commitment to and journey into being Church today. <http://themissioninstitute.org/content/being-church-page#history>
- Call out unhealthy behaviors when you see it or experience it as a leader in a congregation, taking the time to do so in a caring way.
- Other articles in the Leading from the Side series:
 - Part 1: Leading from the Side <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/leading-from-the-side/>
 - Part 2: Leading from the Side: Power & Authority

<http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/leading-from-the-side-authority-and-power/>

Part 3: Leadership from the Side: Patience

<http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/leadership-from-the-side-patience/>

Part 4: Leadership from the Side: Follow Other Leaders

<http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/leadership-from-the-side-follow-other-leaders/>

- The Mission Institute <http://themissioninstitute.org/node#page-top>
- “No More Parking Lot Conversations,” by Nancy/Mary ECF Vital Practices’ Vestry Papers, May 2011
<http://www.ecfvp.org/vestry-papers/caring-for-each-other/no-more-parking-lot-conversations/>
- 12 Marks of Healthy Church Behavior, Episcopal Diocese of Texas <http://www.epicenter.org/12-marks-of-healthy-church-behavior/>

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