



The Epistle

June, 2016

Father Bob's message

In my last article for the Epistle I talked about the Diocese's Strategic Vision and the four areas that support this vision. This month I want to continue this focus by looking at the framework that the Diocese is seeking to create to support the Diocese mission to make, equip and send mature disciples of Christ.

I do not think that there is a person who is in the church today, be it St Stephen's or any other church, who does not realize that something has changed. Most of us in what we would call the mainline denominations find ourselves trying to understand what is happening in our parishes and congregations. Recognizing this, our Diocese has partnered with Pinnacle Leadership Associates to create a program called "Shift". Out of this partnership, there has come what is being called Three Big Moves for the 21st Century Church. These are (1) Membership to Discipleship, (2) Attractional Church to Missional Church and (3) Church Consumers to Sacred Partners. I have not read a lot about these three "shifts" but I am excited by what I have read and where I believe they will lead the Diocese and St Stephen's. I have tried to give below what I know of these three "shifts" to hopefully

pique your interest also. I will admit that these three do call for a significant "shift" for many of us including myself, but again I feel that dialogue on these can bring forth fruit for St Stephen's.

1. Membership to discipleship: What is becoming clear today is that church membership is no longer a priority for many as it was in previous generations. Now I am not saying that these folks are not religious, the fact is that they are. The concept of "joining" a church is not something that they are interested in doing. To them attending and participating is one thing, joining another. What is confounding to many of us is that there seems to be a great deal of energy and growing enthusiasm around living as disciples of Jesus Christ. We need to discuss this as a faith community
2. Attractional Church to Missional Church: While we talk often about being the hands and feet of Christ in the world, the real focus is how many people are in worship on Sunday. It is by the numbers of those in the pews that we judge our success, our health as a community of faith. The truth is that this model of the church, the attractional model, which is built upon increased attendance as a measure of success is disappearing. What is emerging is the missional church which is an old and new way of looking into the future, an approach that focuses on mission in the world. It is a completely different model of being a church which should be examined by St Stephen's.
3. Church Consumers to Sacred Partners: You and I recognize all too well that we live in a consumer driven society and this has slipped over into the churches. This is not

the roots of the church and faith community. We need to move back to our Christian community roots where members achieve significant changes by covenanting together in relationships to focus on achieving changes in their community by supporting and working together.

I feel that there is something here that God is speaking to his church here in the Diocese of South Carolina that will bear fruit and witness.

Have a blessed summer.

Fr Bob

Senior Warden Update

Father's Day will soon be here. Beverley Anderson is coordinating a brunch for that day. Along with it she wanted to get a picture of the fathers of our members and have a competition to see who could match the father to the member. The one who gets the most correct will win a prize.

I have volunteered to collect the pictures mark them with a sticky note and judge the contest. This Sunday will be the last time to collect the pictures. Right now I only have one entry. If we don't get any more the prize will go to the only entry. So if you have a picture you want to enter bring it Sunday 6/12 and give it to me so I can mark it. On Father's Day I will let everyone know if the contest is a go or not.

The ice machine quit working last week and is now working. I don't believe the unit has ever been cleaned. David Ford said the filter and coils were very clogged up. He saw to the complete cleaning of the machine and we owe him a round of at-a-boys. Thanks for the great work David.

Not much else to report. Summer is normally a slow time for news so the little articles will be very short during that

period. If anyone has anything to contribute to the Epistle, please type it up and send it to my email. I will see to it getting into the monthly newsletter.

DID YOU SIGN UP FOR HOSPITALITY SOON?



JUNE

| | |
|------|-----------------|
| 6/5 | Dee Dee Branham |
| 6/12 | OPEN |
| 6/19 | OPEN |
| 6/26 | OPEN |

JULY

| | |
|------|-----------------|
| 7/3 | |
| 7/10 | Beck and Koenig |
| 7/17 | Harwood |
| 7/24 | |
| 7/31 | |



*Please wish the following people
Happy Birthday*

JUNE

| | |
|------|-------------------|
| 6/3 | Beth Arndt Owens |
| 6/3 | Brenda McGrew |
| 6/3 | Rhiannon McMaster |
| 6/4 | Patti Earle |
| 6/4 | Emily Matthews |
| 6/16 | Kyra Davis |
| 6/20 | Chad Langdale |
| 6/20 | Carter Siegling |
| 6/21 | Erin McMaster |

JULY

| | |
|------|-----------------|
| 7/17 | Bitsy Milling |
| 7/24 | Kellie McGrew |
| 7/24 | Haley Autry |
| 7/30 | Laura Langdale |
| 7/31 | Phillis DeLoach |
| 7/31 | Mike McMaster |