

Senior Warden Comments 2010 Annual Meeting

First, thank you all for your vote of confidence and to Emory for asking me to serve as your senior warden. Second, I want to acknowledge the work of our outgoing Vestry members and especially note the contributions of Sue and Otho. Rarely have the words "well done, good, and faithful servant" been more appropriate. I certainly hope for a calmer watch.

Lorri, your junior warden, and I have been blessed to have the opportunity to talk and listen to many of you in the time we have had before our annual meeting. In these conversations, you have shared your hopes for our church.

She and I are listening, and have started conversation with Vestry and Emory and while it is far too early to speak of specific plans, actions, or timetables; remember we have not had our first meeting as a new Vestry yet, a direction is becoming apparent.

But I know this, many of our programs are well underway and established, be it youth, pastoral care, parish life, stewardship, music, house tour, finance and outreach, to name a few. We certainly have a healthy rhythm and history in place.

What emerges from the conversations we have had, and will continue to have, are the following comments and observations:

We are first a church. Let me say that again, We are first a church.

Second, we are a community, a community called, and with the capacity to care for each other and our wider community, be that down the street or in the reaches of Haiti, Guatemala, or Africa.

While I feel very good about where we are as a parish, let's be honest, we still have some healing to do. Some feelings are deep and not easily resolved, I acknowledge all of these, and those that have not yet been articulated to me. I am mindful that we have had shared experiences, but depending on who you are and your perspective, not necessarily a common one.

With all that, let me suggest a set of ideas and direction that can guide us in the days and months ahead to aid our healing process and the time of transition that we are in. These have emerged from conversation and dialogue with our current Vestry, Wardens, Staff, and Rectors.

I got some advice from my rector from our church in Florida. "A healthy church is a growing church. Focus on health, and all else will follow." Let me say that again, focus on health and all else will follow.

Health comes from people knowing each other and in knowing God together. Be it collectively or through individual worship and spiritual practice. Health come form open, honest conversation and in listening to each other. Health comes from respect. Health comes from understanding what it is that God calls us to do. And that, in my experience, is a constant journey.

To that end the Vestry and Staff will focus on outreach, worship, and fellowship with the parish in the days ahead. The overriding theme is to find opportunities to do the work we are called to do as a church in our community, to come together in worship, and to break bread together. With all three, we have the common opportunity to get to know each other, not just old friends, but new ones. As we spend time talking / doing / praying / eating, we will have the chance to listen to each other, share common things, and learn anew from each other; in doing so continue to get healthy. We saw this at work as recently as our Julia/Julia dinner.

We are blessed with a rector in Emory who knows us and can actively lead us in and through this process. We have the financial resources, capacity, and people with the talent to make our mission happen and our challenge budget reflects this. We need to move forward and not hunker in these times. Hunkering is not healthy. A church like Trinity needs to lead, especially in these times.

With such a focus underway, at a time that will be obvious when we get there, we will conduct our parish study. But, we will do so off a solid base provided by outreach, worship and fellowship and the relationships created therein. Only when we all know each other well can we create a blueprint of our parish that lets us call a new rector successfully.

When the study is done, and done right, we can start a search for a new, permanent, rector. We need time to do this right and Bishop Michel has been clear in his advice to us. In fact, he grants permission for when this process starts. My ambition and experience suggest that different committees do our parish study and the search when the time comes.

In the meantime, we have work to do. Focus on health and all things will follow. Focus on outreach, worship and fellowship as a means to do the work we are called to do and to experience God in our lives. We have no reason to rush, we have the gift of time, and I would hope the scar tissue of recent events, to challenges us to focus on parish health and to come through this time of transition in a better place.

I am also reminded that our Vestry is a volunteer organization. I would ask that you remember that as well. Good people offering up their time and talent to work with the staff and rector to maintain, create, and grow a vibrant church on the hill that has, and continues to hold such promise.

You have my commitment to listen, my commitment to lead through service, to make decisions when called, and I pray, to lead by example. My habit as a manager in my day job has been to run an open door/open book company. My style is not likely to change here. My specific job is to support our rector and assistant, and to give them the support to be as effective as they can be. You have elected a very talented Vestry and I am honored to serve with them. Our bench has never been so deep and we need to leverage the experience available to us.

My simple challenge to you this day is to participate in the life of a healthy Trinity. Reach out and know someone new. Have a conversation with someone you don't know. Create common experiences. Participate in outreach, participate in active worship, and participate in fellowship. Shape who we are, who we are becoming, and who God is calling us to be. Again, I am grateful for Trinity and I look forward to the days and months ahead. It is an exciting time. Thank you.