

## Heritage Event Summary - September 22, 2019

Heritage was introduced as being more than just history. It is the way that events, people, location, facilities, etc. from the past continue to have influence upon the present. Our heritage goes much further back than the history of this parish; our heritage is really that of Christ's heritage. Our heritage feeds and sustains us, like roots feed and sustain a tree. We are building upon foundations laid by people before us, and our work now will serve as the foundation for those who come after us.

80 people gathered in the parish hall, grouped into 13 tables.

All were asked to consider individually: Are we as a parish more focused on the past, the present, or the future?

Totals by show of hands: Past = 1, Present = 36, Future = 18.

Some people were not sure how to answer, and others arrived at the event later.

Table groups discussed, apart from its history, what is the storyline of this parish? A storyline involves a focused theme, continuity, development, and some sense of purpose.

In summary: We are a blended community, a tossed salad of sorts. Some of us have connections to our namesake parishes Holy Trinity and Grace Church going back generations, some of us are new to Richmond or new to the Episcopal Church altogether. The combination of past and present makes Grace and Holy Trinity Church a special place to worship. We have always had an eye toward service and outreach, whether it is in caring for veterans, students, or families, and both locally and abroad. We are a community that cares about others. We are able to care in different ways at different times. We see a need and respond to it, our mission is to follow Jesus regardless of the changing times and the changing needs of our neighborhood.

A sampling of responses:

- there are new people in the parish who are not aware of its heritage
- the parish has adapted to changing times, needs, and realities
- it evolved from a neighborhood church, to a community church, then to a destination church for people choosing to come into the city
- there is plenty here for everyone
- an approach to faith that combines old and new
- a strong music heritage
- two parishes came together; now people come together from all around the city

- originally founded to serve on the edge of the city
- working within the VCU footprint
- a non-West End church
- seeking alternatives to the traditional family pipeline
- people are allowed to be who they are
- opportunities from our proximity to Monroe Park

Table groups then imagined that they were preparing GHTC's Last Will and Testament. They discussed and listed the tangible or intangible inheritances or legacies that the parish would have to bequeath to its members or to the community at large.

In summary: Our legacy at GHTC is one of physical architecture, artistic expression, and living into the commandment to love one another as Christ loves us. We have a handsome building with Red Doors which houses worship, music, care for those in need, and so many unseen ministries. If we would close our doors tomorrow we would miss one another, we would miss our common prayer experience, we would miss our time of fellowship and community. If we would close our doors tomorrow others would miss an integral member of the community, a place to be fed and to receive assistance and welcome, a neighbor to VCU, a supporter of the arts, and a place of transformative relationships that rarely happen elsewhere.

A sampling of responses:

- an established, educated, and inclusive community
- hard working, with hands-on involvement, to those right outside our doors
- imagining our identity or our reinvention apart from the physical structures
- taking who we are out into the world
- what we have accomplished is not replaceable
- historical, yet forward thinking
- the endowment would continue to serve those in need in the community
- the people would still be as engaged
- the spirit of the congregation is service, friendship, and welcome
- a shelter that would be missed
- a bridge needed to connect communities
- we turn no one away and meet them where they are
- we are the worker bee of Richmond's Episcopal churches
- our diversity is our strength
- taking care of one another