

Leadership Event Summary - October 20, 2019

Leadership is not just about one person leading the church, but also about how the many leadership roles within a church have to work within their individual groups and together. Leadership requires prayerful discernment of God's leading. No one individual, or even a small group of leaders, alone, can do the ministry of the church. Leadership, in its many forms, is a spiritual gift. All of us, as Jesus' disciples, are given authority to take on higher levels of responsibility in carrying out his ministries. Every parish needs four groups of leaders: its congregation, Vestry and lay leaders, staff, and clergy. Each group contributes an important piece that must fit in with the other pieces.

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

All were asked to consider: Who comes to mind as a great example of a spiritual or religious leader? Why? Responses included:

- Archbishop Curry: speaks against injustice
- Nadia Bolz Weber: inclusive; love of God
- Martin Luther King & Elijah Cummings: moral clarity
- Henri Nouwen: storytelling / spirituality
- Mother Theresa: putting others before self

We discussed the Four Basic Leadership Styles handout. Each person was given four dots for voting, to place one dot on each of the four flip charts, in one leadership style quadrant, expressing their experience of the predominant leadership style, over the recent time frame, with the four leadership groups. Responses:

Clergy: Directive = 18, Laissez-Faire = 23, Collaborative = 21, Bureaucratic = 3

Staff: Directive = 4, Laissez-Faire = 13, Collaborative = 25, Bureaucratic = 22

Vestry & Lay Leaders: Directive = 1, Laissez-Faire = 12.5, Collaborative = 25.5, Bureaucratic = 27

Congregation: Directive = 2, Laissez-Faire = 47, Collaborative = 15, Bureaucratic = 0

The highest responses, by far, were for the Congregation's Laissez-Faire style. The rough balance in the responses for the Staff's and Vestry & Lay Leaders' styles between Collaborative and Bureaucratic is to be expected; those groups follow established policies and procedures, but with input from clergy and the congregation.

We reviewed the Ministry Involvement handout with its increasing levels: General Public, Window Shoppers, Customers, Workers, and Owners. Table groups discussed and listed two ways each group of leaders could help lead people from any involvement level more deeply into ministry. Responses included:

Congregation

- show up to worship and other activities, be friendly, and speak to visitors
- invite your friends and neighbors to worship and to other activities, and follow up with them
- invite parishioners on the margins to help with specific tasks
- help create a safe and welcoming place for VCU students

Vestry and Lay Leaders

- invite more participation
- increase visibility of our anti-poverty efforts
- increase personal interactions with parishioners and visitors
- think of new ways to bring people into church

Staff

- increase personal interactions with parishioners, esp. the new and those on the margins
- introduce staff to the congregation
- ask for volunteers from those not already burned out
- church flyers to pass out during parking events

Clergy

- make the connection between the gospel and how it is lived
- children's sermons
- ask for volunteer commitments; carries more weight than others asking
- more visitations to those in need
- lead through inspiration

Table groups indicated their most exciting ideas from the discussion. Responses included:

- invite visitors, even the non-religious, and help them participate
- increase commitment to children and families
- combine services, perhaps 10:00
- increase Vestry and committee communications and transparency
- highlight successes; help people feel good about what we do
- focus internally to strengthen our ability to serve externally