

RenewalWorks

Report to Congregation, June 7, 2017

What is RenewalWorks?

RenewalWorks is a ministry led by Forward Movement...

- Designed to be catalyst to refocus on spiritual vitality
- Based on 10 years of research that uncovered key characteristics of thriving congregations
- Tailored to the Episcopal tradition

What is the RenewalWorks Process?

Our RenewalWorks Team of 18...

- Prepared by reading ***Footsteps: Making Spiritual Growth the Priority*** by Jay Sidebotham
- Met with other RenewalWorks churches in our Diocese on January 10 and on May 30.
- Encouraged the congregation to complete the **Spiritual Life Inventory (SLI)** from January 19 to 28
- Participated in four guided workshops on March 6, 20, April 3 and 25:
 - Reviewed demographic data of our congregation and neighborhood
 - Reflected on our own individual spiritual journeys and the role of the church
 - Reviewed the SLI report
 - Identified areas of future growth using the **Episcopal Beliefs and Practices** as a guide
 - Brainstormed action steps using ***Spiritually Vital Congregations: Best Practice Principles*** by Forward Movement as a guide
- Reported preliminary recommendations to the Vestry on May 22.
- Fine-tuned our recommendations on May 28.

What did we learn from the Spiritual Life Inventory?

While no written survey, including the Spiritual Life Inventory, can fully capture the diverse ways in which we explore or practice our faith...

- We believe it is a valuable tool to start conversations, look more closely at ourselves and reflect.
- Our high response rate of **91%**, or 192 respondents of 210 (average Sunday attendance) demonstrates...
 - A commitment to our faith community
 - A desire for spiritual growth

Demographics: A Diverse Congregation

While we are **similar in age and tenure** to other Episcopal Churches who have taken the SLI, we are **more racially diverse** than other Episcopal and non-Episcopal churches who have taken the SLI

Spiritual Continuum Profile

Footsteps outlines a path of an individual's relationship with God; St. Michael's is, again, similar to other Episcopal churches on the continuum:

- 25% are **exploring**, or taking the first small steps in an intentional spiritual journey.
- 55% are **growing**, or are more committed to their Christian faith but still have many questions.
- 16% are **deepening**, or have a faith by which they rely on God's presence and power in their daily lives.
- 4% are **centered**, or view their Christian faith as the most important relationship in their lives.

Spiritual Vitality Components: Beliefs, Practices, and Faith in Action

Overall, St. Michael's appears to place greater emphasis on **relationships, contemplative practices and authenticity of action**:

- Beliefs: We are more likely to place importance on **grace, spiritual growth and interfaith conversations** than on the role of scripture, Baptismal Covenant or creeds
- Practices: More of us are willing to **pray for others, seek solitude and pray to express love of God**, than we are to tithe, read the Bible or read the Book of Common Prayer.
- Faith in Action: While participation in **Sunday service, various forms of service, conversations and friendships** are high, participation in spiritual growth activities are low (e.g. small groups, spiritual mentors, helping others grow)

Satisfaction with Spiritual Growth

Nearly a quarter (24%) of St. Michael's report "some level of dissatisfaction" with "the church's role in my spiritual growth" indicating that developing spiritual growth is an area of opportunity

We value free will and authenticity

In addition to reviewing the SLI findings, we reflected on our own experiences and expressed our views of the **Episcopal Beliefs and Practices** and believe our church values:

- Free will and diversity of beliefs
 - *Every person has freedom and responsibility to discern the truth of God for his or her life through engaging the Bible, in conversation with the historic teachings and liturgy of the church, and human reason. We cherish diverse expressions of belief and practice as people grow into abundant and authentic lives in their time and place*
 - Given that we found that less than 25% of our group are cradle Episcopalians, we want to honor diverse pathways to church and faith
- Holistic and authentic practices
 - *We believe that God is present and active in the whole of creation and that we are called to participate with God through appreciation and care for creation, through the arts, through our daily work, through our relationships with other people, and in our own inner lives.*
 - An area of growth: *We promise by word and example to proclaim our trust in God's reconciling love.*
 - An area of growth: *We seek spiritual friendship and accountability through individual and group reflection on our spiritual journeys.*

Our Recommendations for Spiritual Growth

- Embrace every opportunity to build relationships
- Better communicate who we at St. Michael's are
- Meet people where they are as we invite them to explore the Christian way of life and deepen their spirituality
- Develop and empower lay and ordained leadership to facilitate spiritual growth within the community

What next?

Provide us your feedback during the meeting or by sending an email to Kris Ishibashi at ishibashi0201@gmail.com.