

## ORGANIZING FOR A NEW DAY - CONGREGATIONAL

### COMMON CAUSE MID-SOUTH CONFERENCE

MAY 11-13, 2006

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- I. Brief Introduction.
- II. Brief History of All Saints Anglican Church.
- III. Critical Importance of Prayer, Discerning God's Will, and Submission to the Call and Direction of the Holy Spirit.
  - **"..and on this rock, I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it." Mat.16.18**
  - **"Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it." Ps.127.1**
  - **"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? Every one who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like; he is like a man building a house, who dug deep, and laid the foundation upon rock; and when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house, and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But he who hears my words and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation; against which the stream broke, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great." Luke 6.46-49**
  - Have you discerned that the Lord has called you to form a new Anglican Parish or reform the parish where you are?
  - Have you prayed again and counted the costs: spiritual, personal, and weighed it against the cost of not following the call?
  - See Attachment 1: TEN CONCISE QUESTIONS TO ASK MYSELF WHEN SEEKING TO DISCERN GOD'S WILL.
- IV. What it Means to be an Anglican Parish and a Member of the Anglican Communion.

V. Essentials/Non-Negotiables.

- **Essential Anglican Formularies:**

- **The Authority of Scripture.**

Anglicans “believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God” and to contain “all things necessary to salvation.” The Bible is the source of our belief and moral standards. God’s revealed word to us, the Bible and his Living Word Jesus Christ is the lens through which we evaluate all Truth claims. Yes, Anglicans believe in Truth. All other Anglican formularies in all true Anglican doctrine, discipline, and worship must conform to the two testaments forming one perfect canon of Scripture (The Bible).

In our interpretation of Scripture, we always look to “..what has been believed everywhere, by all, and for all time.” (St. Vincent of Laurens), the Church Fathers, and faithful teachers. We never interpret scripture or take our “understanding of its meaning” by whatever the current popular fad would dictate, nor do we interpret scripture by anyone’s personal revelations. Anglicans always seek to be guided by the consensus of Christian teachers over the centuries, the Church Fathers who themselves knew the Apostles or lived closest to them in time.

- **The Three Creeds.**

Apostles, Nicene, and Athanasian still to this day form the confession of the Anglican Communion.

- **One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.**

- **Historic Faith, Order, Doctrine which has been received from Christ and the Apostles.**

- **Apostolic Succession.**

- **Sacramental.**

Anglicans hold to the two sacraments commanded by Christ; Baptism; and Holy Communion administered with the “Unfailing words and elements.”

- **The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion.** While not a confession such as

came out of Germany or Sweden in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion form an excellent basis for teaching the truth of the “Faith once delivered” and also the basis of Anglican polity. The relegation of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion to the “historical documents” section of the 1979 BCP is a sad testament to our failure to stand for truth.

- **The Historic Episcopate.**

The divinely distinct roles of bishops, priests, and deacons are clearly set forth in the New Testament.

- **Apostolic Succession.**

- **Liturgical.** We follow the order of the approved prayer books from 1662 forward and include both the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Mass (Holy Communion).

## VI. Vision.

- In forming or reforming a local parish, the Great Commission (Matt.28.18-20) and the Great Commandment are certainly Christ’s gold standard.
- During the formative period of All Saints Anglican Church, our Mission Statement was simply “Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we will be disciples for Christ.” After several vestry retreats and visioning for God’s refinement through the Holy Spirit of our vision, purpose, and core values, we were led by the Holy Spirit to the following:

### **Vision of All Saints Anglican Church**

#### **Our Vision.**

To be a Christ-centered congregation joyfully growing in faith.

#### **Our Purpose.**

To love God by

- showing His love,
- proclaiming the Good News in Christ,
- being and making disciples for Him, and
- serving our neighbors.

### **Our Core Values.**

- Our worship is meaningful and sacramental.
  - We are theologically Anglican and interpret scripture traditionally.
  - Our greatest witness is lives transformed by and for God.
  - Authentic Christian relationships are developed through Bible Study, Fellowship and Prayer in small groups.
  - We equip and empower lay people for ministry through Biblically-centered instruction and service.
  - We demonstrate Jesus' compassion and ministry in the world through our Outreach and Pastoral care.
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- These areas of vision setting, purpose setting, and core values are so important that if you do not have trained, experienced godly leaders to help develop your purpose, God will bless you if you call on someone with Christian vision, purpose, and core value setting experience to help your leadership body determine the truth of who you are. We must be consistent in presenting to the world who we are.
  - The purpose of the body of Christ is to proclaim the Good News of Christ to the world, so healthy, well-balanced Anglican churches are appropriately evangelistic with a mission to bring men and women to Christ. We know that baptism is not the end, but a beginning and all Christians are to be nurtured by the Word of God and the Sacraments. We are at our highest "purpose" when our individual and parish mission is to introduce people to Christ personally and as Christ has made Himself known in the teaching, worship, and "breaking of the bread".

### VII. Membership Characteristics and Expectations.

- At our very first All Saints vestry retreat, we identified the characteristics represented by the members who had stepped out to be formed by Holy Spirit into All Saints Parish. We then assigned each of the vestry members one of the characteristics listed for the purpose of writing a paragraph or two about each of the membership characteristics and expectations that God has for a healthy, well-balanced New Testament church. Those ten (10) characteristics identified at All Saints are:
  1. Members are baptized.
  2. Members have a relationship with Jesus as their personal Savior.
  3. Members regularly attend church.
  4. Members are actively involved in parish ministry.

5. Members are committed to move toward the biblical minimum of a 10% tithe.
  6. Members are committed to the unity of the church and refrain from gossip.
  7. Members actively participate in small sharing groups.
  8. Members are committed to the Great Commission.
  9. Members strive to lead a godly life.
  10. Members will grow in their gifts and talents.
- These Membership Characteristics with the paragraphs explaining the scriptural basis for each of the membership characteristics are attached as Attachment 2.
    - Each time that I review these membership characteristics, the movement of the Holy Spirit within our founding members becomes clear.
    - Do not fear or have anxiety about being clear on the doctrine which forms the content of the belief of your parish.
    - Do not fear certitude in stating the conviction of those beliefs.

#### VIII. Leadership.

- To be Anglican is to recognize Christ as the head of the Church. While there is no limit to what a healthy body (parish) can accomplish when it recognizes Christ as the head, you cannot be Anglican without being under the oversight of a bishop.
- Whether you are forming a new Anglican parish or reforming your parish, there is no substitute for a godly, god-fearing, servant-hearted shepherd as your bishop.
- Servant-hearted priest who solemnly honors his/her ordination vows, understands his/her role as an under-shepherd of Christ, understands the godly role to which he/she has been called and all of the ramifications contained in I. & II. Timothy, Titus, and all of the other New Testament directives will bless you and the witness that your church will be able to make to the world.
- In forming a new lay leadership group, do not be constrained by old terms such as vestry, senior warden, junior warden, or any other such words which may have significant baggage. Why not consider Board of Servant Stewards, Lay Servants Council, Body of Stewards. Don't be limited in how you think about the naming of these roles other than that your leaders know and are willing to live into the Anglican Formularies, the Great Commission, Christ's purpose for his people, and our persons of servant-hearted love.
- See Attachment 3. Principles of Vestry Leadership.
  - A vestry which begins its work under the principles set forth in this attachment will give room for the Holy Spirit to work effectively and

allow your parish to become all Christ wants it to be much sooner than if everyone brings their own leadership styles, particularly those borrowed from the business community, to your leadership meetings.

- Strongly consider a “new form” of determining leaders. One example which has borne fruit within the AMIA is helpful. Typical vestry functions of property management, providing worship space for the priest and congregation, and other such matters will be handled by people with those specific gifts or on-the-job training and this group can certainly be elected by the laity. Consider wherever possible and spiritually feasible, allowing the rector, or in some cases the rector and the wardens to place people who have already demonstrated spiritual gifts in certain areas into the visioning and spiritual nurturing leadership roles. This requires Christian trust within the local body. God will bless these choices.
- At All Saints Anglican Church, even before a priest was called, all of the small groups were studying The Purpose Driven Life by Pastor Rick Warren. Our leadership team also included in the job description of rector that within the first sixty (60) days, the Rector and Vestry shall engage in retreat studying The Purpose Driven Church by Pastor Rick Warren.
- See attached Job Description of Rector of All Saints Anglican Church. Attachment 4.

#### IX. Essential Ministry Functions for a Healthy Well-Balanced Church.

- The following areas of ministry represent the characteristics of a healthy, well-balanced Christian family as set forth in the New Testament. While many of these functions will have to be combined in smaller parishes, none of them should be overlooked and they should all be performed with the aim of excellence in their faithful performance.
1. Organizational Structure. See the discussions of Servant-Hearted Lay Leadership, Servant-Hearted Clergy, and Servant-Hearted Bishops.
  2. Stewardship of time, talent, and treasure. It all belongs to God. It’s all His. The percentage of His gifts and talents and finances that we decide to keep for our own personal use is a measure of our belief in Him.
  3. Treasurer and Finance Ministry. The body of Christ is not a business. While there are some accounting principles that are directly transferable to good stewardship of the gifts that people have offered to Christ use in your parish,

general profit motive principles are often not helpful and frequently harmful to the work of the Holy Spirit within your parish.

4. Worship. Worship is a ministry. While the general direction of the worship is within the function of the priests in the spiritual care of the parish, whatever form the worship takes, it must be high and lifted up, God-honoring, and is best when supported by prayer teams throughout the week and before and/or during the service.
5. Christian Formation. Biblically based and Christocentric. Solid teaching for all ages is essential to growing faith.
6. Youth Programs. Your members, their children, and the unchurched watch closely the value that your parish puts on youth.
7. Nursery. Clean, safe, inviting, well-staffed. Again, the world is watching.
8. Ushers and Greeters. These two are not the same. Greeters are front-line evangelists to receive the unchurched or transferred churched that the Lord is sending your way.
9. Prayer and More Prayer. Prayer ministries can naturally center around (1) intercessory prayer teams, (2) crisis prayer teams, (3) healing prayer teams, and (4) prayer teams which lift up the clergy, the worship, the leadership, the Christian Formation leaders, and every member of the parish on a regular basis.
10. Building and Grounds. How we care for facilities on loan to us from the Lord is an indication to our membership and to the unchurched and transferred churched how we care for the Lord.
11. Evangelism Ministries.
  - A. Small groups.
    - i. Affinity groups - choir, altar guild, etc.
    - ii. Small groups focused on prayer, fellowship, bible study, and evangelism which can meet based upon:
      - i. Availability of night of the week, or
      - ii. Geographical location within the areas surrounding your parish.

Small groups are where true authentic Christian relationships are developed.
  - B. Personal Evangelism.
    - i. Personal Evangelism is not an “elective” course of study for believers.

- ii. Develop the strongest leadership ministry team that you can so: the entire membership can be well trained and disciplined, and so that the entire parish has an example of personal evangelism in action.
- 12. Altar Guild. An area of recurring excellence in service, too often under recognized.
- 13. Pastoral Care. Direct reaching out to members of your parish with meals, transportation, emergency needs of all types when they are sick, ill, “or in any other adversity.”
- 14. Outreach. A parish which is not involved in mission in its own geographical area and the wider areas of the United States and the World may be exhibiting an early symptom of unhealthy focus.

X. Legal Status.

- 1. Incorporation within the laws of your particular state.
- 2. Consideration of a §501(c) status.
- 3. Association for Religious Purposes. Depending upon your state law.

XI. General Thoughts on Building A Parish God’s Way.

- 1. Center on the Great Commission. “Christ went up. The Holy Spirit came down. The people went out.” Rev. Ruth Urban.
- 2. Anglicans are a “People of the Book”. Sound Biblical doctrine is essential. Read it. Know it. Live it.
- 3. A healthy well-balanced church is always teaching who, what, and why it believes.
- 4. Have high expectations and high purpose to make a difference in the lives of members, your ministries, your service, and the lives of those who will come to know the Lord through you and your parish.
- 5. Communicate clear expectations to members and the world. God approves clarity.
- 6. People want to be part of a church that makes a difference.

7. Authority. Whoever sets your moral compass is your God. Let God's Holy Word written and his son Jesus Christ be your only moral compass.
8. This side of heaven we may never perfectly understand Scripture, but when the Lord returns may He find us perfectly standing under scripture and no where else. If you are not standing under the authority of scripture, you must quickly ask yourself what/whose authority am I now accepting.
9. May your parish be uncompromising on the Word of God.
10. May your parish teach and preach clearly the Word of God and your parish become a people who believe in what is taught and preached. Christ does not want lukewarm churches. Never accept novel doctrine or novel interpretations of the Gospel. (Gal.1.6-9). Souls are at stake!!
11. Have you made understanding of biblical doctrine essential to the core beliefs of your church?
12. In your statements, your publications, your rector's preaching, have you left open to doubt any issue of faith?
13. Have you called a priest with integrity of belief, conviction, and certitude of doctrine, a servant and teaching heart, any equipping gift to disciple committed laity. Doctrine attracts the unchurched.
14. Place an immediate clear and unmistakable focus on the importance of youth. Spend of your treasure whatever is necessary so that your deeds match your word in supporting youth.
15. Distinguish and identify your leaders. Some leaders are merely spiritual "poll takers" who take a poll, then jump in front of the supposed crowd, and "claim" leadership. Truly, Godly leaders identify where God is working and where God is truly calling, pray for discernment, put their shoulder to the work, and call others to follow. Choose every leader wisely. Souls are at stake!!

## XII. Resources.

- The Provocative Church, With Study Guide, by Graham Tomlin, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2002, 2004.
- Surprising Insights From The Unchurched, Thom Rainer, Zondervan, 2001.