

PARISH CELEBRATION – ST. ANNE’S CHURCH

Summary of Saturday 05 March 2016 9:00 – 12:00 noon

This Parish Celebration was a follow-up to the recent Sharing Faith day facilitated by the Ven. Dr. W. Harrison on Sunday 21 February. Part of this first seminar explored our parish growth through building on St. Anne’s existing strengths. The Parish Celebration was undertaken by two personable, kind volunteer congregational coaches Sandra Coulson and Paul Townshend who have been trained by the Diocese of Huron.

This Celebration followed some of the principles of the “Appreciative Inquiry”. In order to form balanced groups of participants for discussion and recording the innovative IKEA model of four behavioural types divided the participants amongst some comments of “yes, that’s me!” It is important to acknowledge the things that actually work well, to look to the future with confidence bringing our parts of the past into this vision and to formulate what we want in the new future.

PART ONE – Blessings to St. Anne’s

- hardworking, resourceful faith based people with communication skills
- relatively small parish with a growing presence in Byron and area with invitations to the e.g. the annual May cemetery service, ACW bazaar and the November Remembrance Sunday
- positive clergy leaderships
- value our history and roots; groups working together with relevant goals
- upgrading the parish hall and church facilities
- various orders of service using the BCP and the BAS

Challenges to St. Anne’s

- need for greater: co-operation, evangelism, risk takers, willing to change, communication, understanding of financial responsibilities, younger parishioners
- talk openly about faith and sharing of personal spiritual autobiographies
- how to reach and invite the unchurched making their experiences positive ones
- provide other times to reach families rather than their busy, overbooked Sundays
- ongoing maintenance repairs necessary to old buildings and structures
- increase the number of committed choir members
- various genres of worship music, vocal and instrumental
- discourage the mindset of, “That’s the way we’ve always done it.”
- clarification of the roles of the various groups to avoid overlapping of fundraising

PART TWO - Who is the God we have discovered in these blessings and challenges?

What do we learn about God from these blessings and challenges? What is this God like?

This God

- is eternal in His unconditional love
- is working in us
- is forgiving, compassionate and empowers us to grow in faith and understanding
- provides what we need rather than what we want
- is a constant source of strength for all eternity
- accepts our humanity with our weaknesses
- is patient, inspiring, guiding, personal, long suffering
- is beyond material things and mysterious
- is aware of our faith and encourages each of us to grow
- challenges and tests us, is tolerant and accepting of our mistakes
- rejoices in our faith giving us free will to make our own choices
- welcomes us into the family of God
- supports decisions about our health challenges, our education and careers
- provides the basic human needs of food, safety, family, home, friends
- gives challenges but not impossibilities even if we are unaware of His presence
- teaches us to be as forgiving of others as God is with each of us
- is the provider of all our blessings and collectively we can do amazing things
- uses family and community to bring us into a relationship with Him

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation, in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. *BAS Prayer after Communion p. 214*

The next parish transitional conversation will take place from 11:15 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Sunday April 10th.