

PARISH CONVERSATION – ST. ANNE’S CHURCH

“A Long, Loving Look At The Real”

Summary of Sunday 12 June 2016 – 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

This Parish Conversation was the next step in the transition of preparing for future decisions. The parish and community data which included population, neighbourhoods and finances was compiled by the Transitional Team under the guidance of the Rev. Rita Harrison who was also the facilitator for this Conversation.

Prior to the opening prayer, the 34 parishioners in attendance were encouraged to look at the two maps prepared to outline the homes of parishioners and also the southwest area of London. In this gathering we needed to exercise only Holy Manners with statements that begin with “I think ..., I feel ..., I have an idea...”

Our Characteristics:

St. Anne’s is a “village church” which feels connected to Byron and to each other. It has a small church building which presents physical confines in that newcomers don’t feel welcome if there are over 80 people seated in the pews. But the value of being small is that we know each other well, willing to adapt and love and have the ability to make special accommodations.

The following information is based on the approx. 60 returned surveys (2016) and the 2015 Vestry Report.

Age and gender (Keith B. presenter)

gender: - 65% female, 32% male, 3% undisclosed

age: 11% between 1-55 yrs., with 0% in the 36-45 yrs., 27% - between 56-65 yrs., 33% between 66-75 yrs., 24% over 75 yrs.,

Givers and attendance between 1998 -2015 (Keith B. presenter)

Correlation between givers and attendance showed a decline throughout these years. In 2015 attendance was approx. 120 with 150 givers. The pre-authorized payments help support lower attendance months.

Age of givers (Keith B. presenter)

The two age groups of 70-79 and 80+ donated over 50% of all givings with the greatest majority being the 80+.

Volunteering over time (Keith B. presenter)

As attendance has decreased “future” interest and/or commitment in the following ministries of ACW, worship, education community, property and parish council have decreased. Since we are in transitional mode perhaps feelings for the church’s future is unknown.

Our neighbourhoods information is based on the latest federal census of 5 years ago in 2011. At that time the four areas of Byron, River Bend, Talbot and Woodhull had a total population of 20,100. But statistics have shown that at least 30,000 people are needed to provide enough parishioners to support one Anglican Church (building and full-time rector). Over the next few years preliminary estimates are that these areas listed above will increase by approximately 6,000 people. There are several other Anglican churches in the southwest area of London looking at this same future population.

Table conversation report regarding “suppose 5,000 people move into these new areas mentioned above in the next 5 years. What does that mean for St. Anne’s on a Sunday morning?”

- a warm welcome is important and this is everyone’s responsibility
- appeal to the over 55 years population with spiritual programs, relevant social activities, and engaging fundraisers
- retain two Sunday services to accommodate any new members; perhaps another evening service during the week; understand the “village church” pew space and limited parking
- utilize our electronic sign to give Jesus’ message
- understand the challenges and opportunities of: keeping people who show up occasionally, more large attendance fundraisers for a greater community involvement (e.g. Elvis and the Downton Abbey Tea), strive to be relevant for younger age groups, promote public profile (e.g. annual city Open Doors),
- record an accurate member count as this may reduce our annual diocesan apportionment
- look for opportunities to attract and keep younger people in the 0 to 45 years age groups; what do they want? sports activities?
- Keep Rev. Rita H.!

The financial story – revenue 2012 – 2015 (*Shelley L. presenter*)

Six sources of revenue were tracked including givings, designated donations, parish organizations, interest, hall rental and other. The largest source was givings followed by parish organizations. The lowest source of income was hall rental although there has been a modest increase. The givings revenue for 2015 was approximately \$130,000.

The financial story – expenses over the years 2012-2015 (*Shelley L. presenter*)

The categories measured were salaries, occupancy, office and worship supplies, maintenance, capital, apportionment, charities, other and ministries. Total salaries are the greatest expense with the highest in 2012 and a gradual decrease in the subsequent years. The church apportionment to the Diocese of Huron was the second greatest expense with the occupancy costs being a close third. The total expenses in 2015 were over \$250,000.

Salaries over time – salary breakdown 2012-2015 (Shelley L. presenter)

The largest salary per annum, over \$80,000 (a figure including housing and benefits), was consistently for the clergy in the years 2012-14. The administrator salary was the second highest amount.

Expenses as percentage of revenue 2012-2015 (Shelley L. presenter)

Four pie charts were presented with the total salaries, followed by occupancy costs as the two greatest areas of expenses. In 2015 the larger capital expenses were to pay for the new washrooms in the parish hall and the fence.

Table conversation report in response to the two questions: “What does this financial information make you think about? Does your table group have any suggestions for a way forward?” All suggestions were welcome.

- will St. Anne’s become a two point parish?
- consider clergy that are less than full time – e.g. 75% which may appeal to a semi-retired or a priest of mature years who can accept a lower salary for lesser time
- look for a younger lower salary (on the diocesan grid placement) clergy who may commit to a long term growth of ministry
- if a clergy is not full-time the parish needs to increase its pastoral care team in order that the priest can lead this team and do the “critical or emergency” pastoral care with follow-up by other members of the team
- if a clergy is not full-time the office administrator support needs to increase
- all clergy must be good time managers
- stop being hesitant to ask our parishioners for more givings
- if we value the level of ministry that we have had, we need to *commit* to cover the costs
- maintain initiatives to reduce operating costs down e.g. heat, hydro, upgrade the windows in the parish hall to double glaze and put insulation in the church attic
- reach out “differently”
- encourage the community to use our facilities
- use the school parking lot more

Concluding observations were made by Rev. Rita who also noted that there are changes at the diocesan level. Our new Bishop Linda Nicholls will not be having a Suffragan Bishop to assist her. The Director for Mission and Ministry’s full time position will become half time at the end of 2016. A closing gentle reminder is that an Anglican church needs a population of 30,000 to draw on to support a full time clergy. The concluding doxology said together reminded the participants that God’s power “working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.” *BAS pg. 214*