

Saint Mark's Episcopal Cathedral

A Message from Bishop Rickel

July 30, 2010

Dear Ones

This newsletter is new for St. Mark's. It is the first edition of many. It is being put together and distributed by me, and me alone. I hope, with this newsletter, to be able to communicate directly and more often with you, the faithful at St. Mark's Cathedral. Just recently, your Vestry and I sent information regarding the initiation of some more intensive work on culture, identity, and profile development as we move closer to the search for the next Dean. We presented then the time-line and introduced my appointed leader for this endeavor, Canon Melissa Skelton from my staff. I write to assure you that she has begun the work and as per the time line, will be, this summer, making ready for work to include all those who wish to participate in the near future. In fact, you will find in this edition the final agreement, just worked through with the Wardens and Vestry which is a refinement of the initial proposal made to the Vestry in April and represents the first part of that work we put forth then and, now, the course we will follow in the next months. You will find that document just below and it will also be placed on the new web page on the St. Mark's site.

In this first edition I have reprinted several of the key documents below. However, these and more can also be found on the link, mentioned above, set up specifically for this purpose on the St. Mark's website. I want this process to be open, transparent as possible, and honest. I have urged us, in all our communication, to live by the Rules for Respect which I have also reprinted below and will keep in this newsletter as we move forward.

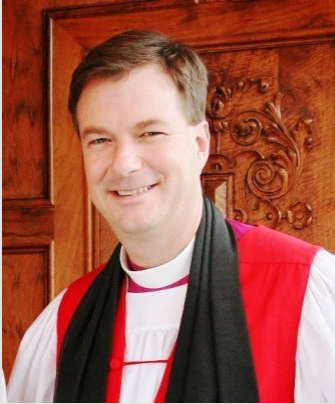
Most of all this process must be steeped in prayer, and based on a foundation that begins with the trust that even though we might disagree on certain parts of the process, we do indeed agree on the reason and focus of our work; to be faithful to the mission we have been called to in this place, at this time, on behalf of the One who has bid us to follow.

Blessings,

+Greg

A Letter from the Bishop about the Transition Process

Sunday, May 30th, 2010



To the People of God at Saint Mark's Cathedral,

Warmest greetings in the name of the living Christ. I first want to commend you on your faithfulness during this transition period in the life of the Cathedral. It was my intent that this interim period be utilized for stabilizing, refining, and solidifying some fundamental organizational activities and to begin to look, in a deeper way, at what St. Mark's strives to be in the days and years ahead for this community and the greater Church.

This past Tuesday I presented the following timeline to your Canon Missioner and Vestry. The timeline moves us into a new phase of this endeavor: a process to strengthen the culture of St. Mark's. This process will be highly participatory at many levels, and will move us, as you will see, to a profile of St. Mark's, and eventually the search and call of the next Dean.

Before that call can be made, I believe we still have some internal work to do. The ultimate hope is to have the healthiest environment for the next Dean to begin his or her ministry and for this reason I hope you will make a special effort to interact with this process as you are able.

This will not be easy, and perhaps not always comfortable. To do this well, we will have to ask some difficult questions, be challenged to envision a new and better future, and stay engaged with one another. This is not something I can do by myself; neither can the Canon Missioner or the Vestry. It will take the combined leadership, patience, and trust of all who call St. Mark's home.

In my experience, and in the occasional struggles I have witnessed as your Bishop, I have learned that one serious threat to success in such an effort is not communicating openly, honestly, and in a healthy way. It is so important that we take the time and effort to clarify assumptions, and give the benefit of the doubt, before making judgments; to talk to people, not about them. With all of that in mind I want to also provide the "10 Rules for Respect" just recently published in the [Rubric](#) (*n.b.: see Bishop's letter on page 3*).

I have asked Canon Melissa Skelton to oversee this process. She will be recruiting a team to work with her. In the beginning her team will come from outside St. Mark's, however, as you will see in the timeline, the plan is to train a team from St. Mark's to take this over and be able to keep it as an ongoing process. Meanwhile, Canon McClain, Staff, and Vestry will be freed to focus on operations.

We are sure to make mistakes, but we believe in the One that can redeem, and I believe strongly that all at St. Mark's, even if and when we disagree, desire the best for our community. If we stay focused on that we will be stronger and better. Let us be about that.

Blessings,
The Rt. Rev. Gregory Rickel
Bishop of Olympia

St. Mark's Transition Process and Timeline

July 30, 2010

An Agreement among The Rt. Rev. Greg Rickel, the Wardens, Vestry & Canon Missioner at St. Mark's Cathedral and the Canon for Congregational Development

Goals of the Consultation

The overall goal of the consultation is to strengthen the health of the congregational culture at St. Mark's as the Cathedral prepares for a new Dean. Within this effort, the intent is a) to increase the awareness of and learn about both healthy and unhealthy patterns of behavior among and between congregational members, staff and leadership, b) based on what is learned in the process, to begin some first steps toward strengthening healthy patterns, paying special attention to trust development and/or how disagreements are handled within the Cathedral, c) to reinvigorate the relationship between the bishop and the Cathedral and d) out of all the work, to arrive at greater transparency about the Cathedral as it enters the call process for a new Dean.

Elements of the Consultation

The following are important elements of the consultation. More elements may emerge as the consultation unfolds:

- *Prayer:* All individuals, teams and efforts within the consultation will ground themselves in prayer for the effort and prayer for St. Mark's: its people, its leaders and its future.
- *Consulting Team:* The creation of a consulting team of 2-3 additional people who will assist the Canon for Congregational Development with the work.
- *Internal "Core Team" and other teams:* The creation of an internal core team, and other task teams to join with the consultants to learn, coordinate, design, support and administer parts of the process. Members of the teams will be selected by the Vestry and Bishop Rickel. Criteria for those chosen to serve on the teams

include: regular participation in the life and worship at St. Mark's and a pattern of financial giving (pledging) to the Cathedral, love for the Cathedral and its people and an expressed desire to stay connected to the Cathedral in the future, an interest in working in teams and the engagement of and communication with others, a willingness and ability to attend and participate in team meetings, an interest in organization and congregational development and a willingness to learn and practice the skills associated with both, and an ability to abide by norms of confidentiality as appropriate. Additionally, the wish is that the teams will as much as possible represent what the Cathedral wants to "look like" in the future.

- *Review and validation of the data, and exploration of both what the data means and what actions the data might suggest:* A review of data already collected at the Cathedral (various reports and CAT data) and a process by which the Vestry, groups in the congregation and the congregation as a whole validate the data, that is, review it, add any additional perspectives to it and in looking at the whole, most come to say: "Yes, this is who we are." Following from this, explorations of what the data might mean and what actions might be appropriate to take.
- *A process design engaging many stakeholders at the Cathedral:* A process engaging the Cathedral's leadership, its members, its subgroups, and its staff along with Bishop Rickel. The process will engage the Cathedral's history, its data, current dynamics, structures and processes, etc. Within this attention will be paid to engaging the perspectives of a variety of generations at St. Mark's.
- *Ongoing transparency and an exchange of information and perspectives that fosters healthy patterns of communication:* An ongoing exchange of information, news, learning and ideas among consultants, leadership, Cathedral members, staff and the Bishop via in-person meetings, electronic mail and exchanges, postings on the website, etc.
- *A team to attend the College for Congregational Development:* Identification of a team from the Cathedral of at least five people who will participate in the 2011/2012 College for Congregational Development. The intent of sending a team to the College will be to continue to build St. Mark's internal capacity for organization/congregational development work.

Roles

The Bishop: Bishop Rickel is the sponsor of this effort, that is, the person who has initiated this effort and to whom this effort is ultimately accountable. This authority

and accountability is rooted in St. Mark's Constitution stating that in absence of a Dean, the Bishop will serve as the acting Dean.

Canon for Congregational Development: The Rev. Canon Melissa Skelton heads up the consulting effort for this project and is accountable both to Bishop Rickel and to the Vestry of St. Mark's for the work.

Consulting Team: Any other consultants who are a part of the consulting team for this effort will be accountable to the Canon for Congregational Development.

St. Mark's Cathedral: The Cathedral as a whole is the ultimate "client" of the consultation. The entire consulting effort is intended to increase and support the health of the Cathedral as a whole community of faith and as a system. In the process, as much as possible, it will be important to listen for and to the "collective voice" of the experience of those at St. Mark's-both within the community as a whole and within its subgroups. Out of this we may be exploring and suggesting actions that strengthen the way the various parts of the system interact in order to serve the health of the whole.

Internal Team: The internal team will be selected by both the Vestry and Bishop Rickel as acting Dean. The internal team will work directly with the consulting team and will be accountable to Bishop Rickel and to the Vestry in its work.

St. Mark's Vestry: During this process St. Mark's Vestry will be exercising its leadership as it would normally do. Additionally, as one of the parties signing this agreement, the Vestry will be kept informed about and will be actively and visibly encouraging others to participate in the work as it goes forward. The Vestry will be accountable to the Cathedral as a whole for the work and will be one of the groups engaged as a subgroup in the consultation.

Canon Missioner: During this process, Canon Missioner Rebecca McClain will be focusing her energy on her role as priest and pastor of the people of St. Mark's and in exercising the leadership she would normally exercise in the role of Canon Missioner. She will also be assisting the consultants, Vestry and Wardens as needed in the formation of the internal team and will also be someone engaged in the consultation as source of perception and insights about the culture and environment at St. Mark's.

St. Mark's Staff: The staff at St. Mark's will not be tasked with staffing this effort. The staff will be one of the groups engaged in the consultation to offer their perceptions and insights about the culture and environment at St. Mark's.

Communications Manager at St. Mark's: Liz Sloat will assist the consultants, internal

team, Vestry and Bishop Rickel in the flow of information, news and ideas that this consultation will require.

Suggested Timeline (may need to be adjusted as the work unfolds)

July and August, 2010

Identify the consulting team and internal team, orient both to the work and, with them, design the overall process (elements of which may need to be adjusted as we do the work).

September-December, 2010

Do the work of the consultation, adding, adjusting elements of the process as we go along

January, 2011

Reflect on the work done to date: what has been learned, what the learning means and any specific actions to take now. As a part of this, also engage the question of whether further consultation may be needed going forward to build on the work done to date.

March, 2011

Potentially begin identifying the process for creating a profile for the calling of a new Dean. As a part of this, consider how to orient/involve new Vestry members who will elect the new Dean in the learning/experience gained in this process.

Estimated Costs

Consulting Team costs-consultants and coach	\$3000
Materials for use by the internal team (books, articles and materials)	
\$2000	
Tuition for College for Congregational Development in 2011	
\$2100	
Total estimated costs	
\$7100	

The above 2010 costs (\$5000) to be shared equally between St. Mark's and Bishop Rickel's office.

For 2010, therefore, the maximum cost to St. Mark's will be \$2500.

We agree to the agreement as outlined above

The Rt. Rev. Greg Rickel, Bishop of the Diocese of Olympia
Date

The Rev. Melissa Skelton, Canon for Congregational Development, the Diocese of
Olympia Date

The Rev. Rebecca McClain, Canon Missioner, St. Mark's Cathedral
Date

Mr. Phil Haas, Senior Warden, St. Mark's Cathedral (for the
Vestry) Date

Mr. Randy Revelle and Ms. Janet McCully, Junior Wardens, St. Mark's Cath

Rules for Respect

Guidelines on how we will communicate with one another through this process

In every Letter of Agreement I have had with congregations, and now with the Diocese of Olympia I have asked that the "Rules for Respect" spelled out below be made part of the agreement. I first saw these in an article by Church of the Nazarene pastor Charles Christian. I think they are quite helpful in framing our communication and life together. I vow to do my best to follow them and invite you to do the same. We will all fail, but through gentle challenge and loving encouragement these can become a foundation for healthy communication for us all. Blessings to you! Greg

10 Rules for Respect

1. **If you have a problem with me, come to me** (privately).

2. **If I have a problem with you, I will come to you** (privately).
3. **If someone has a problem with me and comes to you, send them to me.** (I'll do the same for you)
4. **If someone consistently will not come to me, say, "Let's go to Greg together. I am sure he will see us about this."** (I will do the same for you.)
5. **Be careful how you interpret me-I'd rather do that.** On matters that are unclear, do not feel pressured to interpret my feelings or thoughts. It is easy to misinterpret intentions.
6. **I will be careful how I interpret you.**
7. **If it's confidential, don't tell.** If you or anyone comes to me in confidence, I won't tell unless a) the person is going to harm himself/herself, b) the person is going to physically harm someone else, c) a child has been physically or sexually abused. I expect the same from you.
8. **I do not read unsigned letters or notes.**
9. **I do not manipulate; I will not be manipulated; do not let others manipulate you.** Do not let others manipulate me through you. I will not preach "at you." I will leave conviction to the Holy Spirit (she does it better anyway!)
10. **When in doubt, just say it.** The only dumb questions are those that don't get asked. Our relationships with one another, at the end of the day, are the most important things so if you have a concern, pray, and then (if led) speak up. If I can answer it without misrepresenting something, someone, or breaking a confidence, I will.

Webmaster
Saint Mark's Episcopal Cathedral

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