

Notes from the Sabbatical Gathering 9/20/2022 came from the questions posed by Angie as listed in the word document below.

Full time vs Part time clergy:

- ~ The priest has difficulty keeping time at 80 % when there is much need, some needs connected to the church and others of his choice in the community
- ~ People have difficulty with Father Rick cutting back his time
- ~ We know Rick gives an extra % of time beyond 80% for which he is hired
- ~ Father Rick is the face of St. John's
- ~ Good at visiting parishioners
- ~ People expect priest to be a mind reader
- ~ Father Rick has too much to do. Consider increasing the parish administrator's hours

Expectations of laity if clergy not full time:

- ~ "If you are baptized, you are empowered to do anything an ordained person can except preside over the communion"
- ~ "Idea that it has to be the priest, that no one else will do ; that an ordained person is better than the ordinary person we need to move away from
- ~ We need to know people's needs and establish a process for what is asked
- ~ A paradigm shift is needed from what most have been taught that if the priest is not there, God is not there. This thinking causes spiritual distress
- ~ Pastoral care of one another
- ~ We don't know what people expect, it is not openly talked about

Worship, service time, community of faith:

- ~ Ask other Vermont Episcopal churches day and time they hold services
- ~ Parishioners are thankful for Zoom Sunday services to be home, care for children, attend while taking a break during work, meet elder parishioner decrease activity needs, snowy days to attend and not trudge the roads
- ~ Consider a service of silence

~ Time:

- ~ Customary time for many visitors is Sunday AM
- ~ Would winter visitors who are in Stowe for recreation come to a 4 pm Saturday service?, would they come if the service were followed by a soup supper, "Come as you are"?
- ~ Evening service might be a leap of faith and it could be just the right thing now
- ~ Maybe an evening, 6-7 pm weekday service would be welcome to folks who want their w/e free

~ Music:

- ~ Music some times and other times no music
- ~ Postlude for 5, 10 minutes
- ~ Ok not to have musician some Sundays, to have more silence akin to the Quaker style where there is power and value in silence, a place of quiet peace, listening to God

~ Service:

- ~ Really talk about Eucharist as being one in being together, sharing in community, breaking bread (real home baked bread, not wafers that stick to the roof of your mouth)
- ~ The altar can become the table for coffee hour, it gives a positive message “ The service is over, now go forth, be God to one another.”
- ~ Combine a service with the liturgy; right after communion have a small meal then resume the service. “ Feed the ones we have in our midst”. Invite neighbors and friends to join us

Change:

- ~ “Change is really hard and threatening”
- ~ Few people to do things
- ~ As change is often scary, give reassurance that “ God loves us no matter what we do”
These new things we are doing are ok, have faith in your discomfort, be open to the new
- ~ People may not know they are anxious and it is not common for us to acknowledge feeling anxious
- ~ What does change mean?
 - ~ Important to not see it as bad or good. Change can make the load easier to bear, open avenues, make things better, we won’t know until we try
- ~ For years we have been trying to grow the number of people who attend SJ. Should our focus be nurturing ourselves first? Tend our own flock? Rebuild with the few people we have. In nurturing ourselves, we then are energized to extend ourselves to others, engaging in the community in ways God calls us to be and love.