

Back to Church Sunday Insert #5

Each one of us is aware of a portion of what makes up our entire parish life. Active church life for most people fits on a spectrum ranging from attending services weekly/biweekly to offering time and talent on one of the twenty or more ministries (committees) we have in our parish. Determining what aspect of our parish life we value most and would be attractive to share with others depends very much on where a person finds themselves on the spectrum.

As a worshipping community an integral part of our life is our twenty-three services we have every week, especially those on Sunday. It is during these liturgies that the Word of God is proclaimed, the sacraments are administered, people's spiritual lives are transformed, nurtured and challenged.

Our biblical sermons help us reflect upon the lections for the day allowing the Scriptures, as the Word of God, to continue to be a positive influence in our lives.

We are a Eucharistic community which focuses on worship as a foretaste of the heavenly banquet, a gathering of people from all parts of the world who are empowered by the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

While most of our worship on Sunday uses the Book of Common Prayer we do use the Book of Alternative Services every Sunday in a sung setting with hymns and a sermon. We value the diversity of our worship which over the period of one year is one of the most diverse in the diocese. This is taking into account such celebrations as: Advent Procession, Christmas Lessons and Carols, Candlemas Procession, Palm Sunday Passion Reflection, and the Service for Young People on Mothering Sunday.

Our classical Anglican Choral Music tradition at the Sunday services is an area where we put much attention and practice to enhance and compliment our praise and thanksgiving to God. Great care is taken in the selection of hymns to be consistent with the Scripture lessons and the seasons of the Church calendar.

The liturgy (worship) itself involves a great number of people. Preparation and care of the sanctuary, vestments and linen; schedules for Sides-persons, Stewards, Servers, Readers, Eucharistic Assistants, Elements' bearers, Intercessors, Preachers and Presiders, etc., all come together in a sacred hour as the faith community gathers to offer the very best of what we have to the praise and worship of Almighty God.

There are a number of ministries within our parish that grow out of our worship.

Hospitality – Welcoming whoever may come as the Holy Family welcomed the Magi calls us to exercise a growing ministry of hospitality. We try to seek out visitors on Sundays at our worship and during the week through our Tour Guides. We

welcome newcomers to make the Cathedral parish their spiritual home and we are open to Anglicans in the diocese who desire the sacraments of the Church; Baptism, Confirmation and Marriage.

Spiritual Formation – We believe in ongoing Christian formation, that discipleship is a life-long learning experience. After Baptismal preparation we provide learning opportunities in Family Ministry through Sunday School, Confirmation, Marriage Preparation, Bible Study. We are continually nurtured and challenged through the preaching of the Word.

Nurturing – We nurture one another as part of our Family Life ministry. Meeting specific needs is part of our Visitation to those who are Sick and Shut-in, Home Communion, Cathedral Messenger Mailing lists and pastoral counseling when requested.

Building Supportive Relationships – We recognize that a parish is more than just a place where people gather on Sunday. As a parish family many of us are close friends and supporters of one another. We are interested in each others' lives – our joys and sorrows, our accomplishments and our failures – for it is in the sharing of the details of our lives that we deepen our relationships and build up a sense of a caring faith community. Organizing major events such as the *Spring and Fall Sales* are as much about enjoying the fellowship of pooling our varied gifts and resources towards a common goal as it is the proceeds we realize at the end of the day.

Openness to membership – In our organizations (ministries) we welcome new blood, for example, on Vestry (our administrative body) we try to encourage new people as well as former members to offer themselves for nomination at our Annual Meeting. We value the gifts, insights and experiences of new comers and we want to provide an opportunity for all to make a contribution to the life of the parish.

The invitation of “Back to Church Sunday” challenges us to think about what the Cathedral Parish has to offer within the community itself that we might share with others who we might think of inviting back to Church. While every snapshot of the Parish has its limitations, it is a part of the whole spectrum.