

RECONNECT, BUILD YOUR TEAM & FOLLOW THROUGH

**Wednesdays, August 3, 10 & 17
7:00 – 8:30 pm**

PROJECT*  *RESOURCE

The Stewardship Commission of the Diocese of New Jersey

Prayer

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light:
Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery;
by the effectual working of your providence,
carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation;
let the whole world see and know
that things which were cast down are being raised up,
and things which had grown old are being made new,
and that all things are being brought to their perfection
by him through whom all things were made,
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Project Resource:

The Stewardship Commission of the Diocese of New Jersey



Fr. Bob Fitzpatrick
Co-Chair
Grace Episcopal Church,
Merchantville



Eva Lesniak
Co-Chair
Church of the Holy Spirit,
Lebanon



Tena Achen
St. David's Church,
Cranbury



Sergio Delgado
Christ Church Cristo Rey,
Trenton



George Funk
Church of the Good
Shepherd, Pitman



Natalie Krauser
All Saints' Church,
Scotch Plains



Fr. Chuck Messer
St. John's Church, Salem



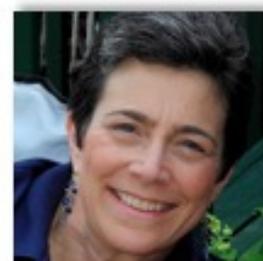
Fr. William Ndishabandi
St. Augustine's Church,
Asbury Park



Mo. Megan Thomas
St. Luke's Church, Ewing



Shirley Thompson
St. Augustine's Church,
Asbury Park



Canon Phyllis Jones
Episcopal Diocese of
New Jersey

Three Sessions

**Session 1:
Reconnect**

**Session 2:
Build Your Team**

**Session 3:
Follow Through**

**Wednesday, August 3rd
7:00 – 8:30 pm**

**Wednesday, August 10th
7:00 – 8:30 pm**

**Wednesday, August 17th
7:00 – 8:30 pm**

Session 1 – Reconnect

Overview

- *Where has God been at work reconnecting your congregation in the last 12 months?”*
- Evolving congregational activities and ministries
- Breakout into groups and then reports of findings
- Taking it home – your next step

“Chat” Exercise

“Where has God been at work reconnecting your congregation in the last 12 months?”

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Four Trends arose from the stories shared in the Chat:

1. Being able to be together in person again – some have utilized creative themed events to bring everyone together and restore in-person attendance in a way that make everyone feel comfortable:
 - Fellowship and fun
 - Picnic church
 - Grill and Gospel
 - Worshipping Sundays on the lawn
 - Coffee hour
 - Excited about being able to reunite at both new events and on Sunday
2. Enabling Outreach Ministries and Fundraising
 - Reorganizing children and youth ministry including a monthly family night; working with ecumenical clergy; anti-gun violence prayer vigil for the community; maintaining Food Pantry services.
 - Gathering through volunteerism → Gathering in service to others/community outreach
 - Capital campaign and repairs
3. New personnel – both clergy and laypeople in the congregations bringing fresh ideas to churches (new ideas for fellowship)
4. Capitalizing on the Zoom environment
 - Online is working better for some than in-person had been pre-pandemic
 - Online service has given some churches a larger audience

“Where has God been at work reconnecting your congregation in the last 12 months?”

Your stories shared in the Chat:

- I have seen the hand of God at work especially seeing many people willing to volunteer when asked to do something or donate to a noble cause, St. Augustine’s Church, Asbury Park
- Still working on restoring person attendance. Holy Trinity, Collingswood.
- Enabling our outreach ministries to expand
- St. Augustine, AP - in church services have resumed. scheduled fellowship after the service
- We have been presenting programming to our membership in three diocese on zoom without interruption since 3 2020 and have had great rewards in doing so.
- St. John's in Little Silver. We have been blessed to have a new priest-in-charge this past year, beginning in December 2021. Pastor Tammy Young has brought a lot of energy and ideas and excitement to our congregation.
- St. Peter's in Spotswood. We are seeing many parishioners joining us again on Sundays. This has been a joyful reunion for St. Peter’s!
- Bringing back events that are well received
- God has been reconnecting us, slowly but surely. Not everything - or everyone - is coming back together in the way they were before. This feels like work sometimes, and there can be friction, but it feels holy too.

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Your stories shared in the Chat (continued):

- Members of St. Luke's Ewing and Grace-St. Paul's in Mercerville met 4 Wednesdays in July for "Grill & Gospel"---food and fellowship, some bible word games, and then a conversation about the topic, creation care. Ending with Compline. The energy was good. Great to have 2 congregations sharing
- St. John's, Chews Landing. we have a new music director, and he has lots of plans for fellowship.
- At St. Augustine , we had a wonderful welcome back Coffee hour where everyone was so happy to connect again.
- St. David's Cranbury. I feel God has been reconnecting our congregation through in person service. We've had a very positive response to in person service, as well as, participation in outreach activities.
- Worship, fund-raisers, youth activities, bible study.
- We have been having more in-person events as conditions warrant
- At St. John the Baptist in Linden we have been engaged in delayed work to upgrade the church and parish hall. We are moving into the final phase of that work. We have also been integrating members from a closed church into our congregation. Over the past year, I have been talking about stewardship in sermons without asking for money but as a spiritual discipline for disciples.
- Holy Trinity South River: This summer we have added picnic church to our weekly services where every other week we bring our own food and have a casual bible study.

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“Where has God been at work reconnecting your congregation in the last 12 months?”

Your stories shared in the Chat (continued):

- St James Eatontown - we are hoping meetings like this will help to reinvigorate our parish. We have Bible study, and during coffee hour a book group discussion. However, we have unfortunately lost a number of parishioners this past year, most moved out of state. So our vestry is looking towards other churches to see if there is something we can do to bring in more people.
- God and the Holy Spirit have been at work at St. Peter's in Clarksboro. We are growing and begun our Capital Campaign, which is going well. We have begun the work of creating a Community Food Pantry to meet the needs of those around us.
- He has been speaking to a number of our parishioners to encourage us to help other members overcome fear.
- By worshiping most Sundays on the lawn, we are visually and audibly present to our neighbors--some stop to watch, we've welcomed some new folks (maybe they will stay!), some honk their horns as they drive by. We want to make God visible.
- St. Matthews Church Pennington. Our congregation is so happy to be back for services. Virtual reality was necessary, but not conducive to in person interactions

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“Where has God been at work reconnecting your congregation in the last 12 months?”

Your stories shared in the Chat (continued):

- Grace church, Pemberton - A few of the activities we have been able to reconnect: service group that work on church grounds, food pantry once a month to those in need, blessings of the animals, VBS with neighbor United Methodist church, Truck or treat on church grounds for local folks, training in progress for Eucharistic visitors
- St. Peter's Perth Amboy is working on community outreach with working with other churches in our area for prayer vigils and offering space for fellowship
- Bringing the congregation back to in person worship has been a challenge. Our on-line worship (new during pandemic) proved to be more successful than imagined. New people are now joining the Sunday service in person. Had our 1st Community Dinner last week - successfully attended by 40 - since Feb of 2019.
- St. James, Long Branch, they kept the food pantry open during the most critical moments of the pandemic.
- I attend the Church of Heavenly Rest, Here online Sunday service and programming during the entire week has been remarkable and the outreach world-wide
- Grace-St. Paul's, Mercerville -- We just saw a wonderful revitalization by way of a significant increase in the number of volunteers to work with our upcoming VBS -- even in this heat!

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“Where has God been at work reconnecting your congregation in the last 12 months?”

Your stories shared in the Chat (continued):

- St Peter's Clarksboro, We have new families joining us every week through our renewed effort to be a welcoming congregation, The word is spreading and we are growing. Mother Mantelle Bradley has brought energy and enthusiasm and a contagious joy! Our efforts un Outreach haver doubled including bi monthly contactless food drives and increased publicity about our church!
- We have maintained services and Bible Study on ZOOM and You Tube. We have just resumed our coffee hour. We are currently in the Discernment process and in the process of hiring a new organist.
- Miracles happen as surprises a loom the house: We were able to accomplish one of the major project: “A New Roofing of the Church”.
- St. John's Little Silver. Reorganizing children and youth ministry including a monthly family night. Working with ecumenical clergy. Had an anti gun violence prayer vigil for the community.
- Grace-St. Paul's also had a successful take-out roast beef dinner with a wonderful # of volunteers for that as well as well as a good # of dinners sold. PLUS we had a TERRIFIC time joining St.Luke's for their Grill & Gospel last month. :-)
- Have heard of Dinner Church but would love to hear more on Picnic Church.
- St. Bart’s new website, affiliation with Holy Trinity, Friday Brief with upcoming activities and pictures, special vestry meeting to brainstorm on connecting with the community
- St. Bart’s-recognizing all that use time, talent, special donations to expand stewardship.

Activities & Ministries Tool

	MUSIC & WORSHIP	CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES	SENIORS	FELLOWSHIP	FORMATION	SERVICE TO OTHERS
NEW						
PIVOTED						
ON HOLD						

- **What new activities and ministries are happening?**
- **Which ones have “pivoted” (changed, been reshaped)?**
- **Which activities or ministries are still on hold?**

	MUSIC & WORSHIP	CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES	SENIORS
NEW	<p>Using Alternative Liturgies in Lent 2022; Morning Prayer Podcast 6 days/wk; Began Hispanic Service & Ministry 2021 sharedprayers.net online liturgies to share on smartphones; Livestreaming Services; Psalm 119 read aloud by members; Ashes to Go to 2 local shopping centers</p>	<p>Began a Coaching Ministry for families with young children;</p> <p>Online Sunday School improved attendance & consistency;</p> <p>"Cooking with Fr Phil+" on Zoom;</p>	<p>Ashes to 2 local nursing homes this Lent 2022</p>
PIVOTED	<p>Less seasonal liturgical variety; Moved to Service Music without Choir; No lay altar parties; Exclusively full text bulletins; Sundays Outdoors for over a year; Hybrid Services (will continue indefinitely) – those who moved or vacationing still attend; Online Readers & Intercessors; All Services Online; World Day of Prayer held as Hybrid (4-Mar-22)</p>	<p>Kept some favorite "big events" as special in-person things to do; Saturday Church School on Zoom (really kept young families engaged; parents loved it!); Resumed Youth Breakfast Run to NYC Homeless; Continue to "Bio-Blast"</p>	<p>Tuesday Bridge Club moved online;</p> <p>Meals on Wheels in Hunterdon, who use our parish hall, never closed; they continued to deliver hot noontime meals to homebound seniors, but pivoted to contactless pickup and contactless delivery into coolers</p>
ON HOLD	<p>Didn't sing at all for months;</p> <p>Chime Choir (not enough have returned to resume); Healing Services now resumed;</p> <p>Choir, Acolytes, & Lay Eucharistic Ministers (LEMs);</p>	<p>Teens took time off;</p> <p>Sunday School;</p> <p>In-person Sunday School</p>	<p>Lay Eucharistic Visitors (LEVs) because Country Arch not allowing visitors or even clergy</p>

	FELLOWSHIP	FORMATION	SERVICE TO OTHERS
NEW		Started Men's Bible Study In-Person	Created a Helping Hands Ministry; "Church in the Woods" on-campus; Pizza & Compline (sung, outdoors); Continuing to experiment with campus outreach to Rowan University;
PIVOTED	Online Vestry Meetings; Hybrid Vestry meetings (members with young families can participate); "Picnic Paloozas" in the Parking Lot; Online, Mid-Week Coffee Hours; Virtual Service Auction; Drive-By Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper; Social Distance Coffee Hour with Pre-Packaged items & one server (masked/gloved)	Started Daily Office on Zoom 7 days/week in 2020 / changed to 3 days/week in 2022; Moved Wednesday Night Bible Studies to Zoom; All-Online Adult Formation;	Food Pantry Distribution moved Outdoors; Supplied Family Promise meals
ON HOLD	Coffee Hour (coming back with Easter); Re-starting Coffee Hour March 2022; Dollar Auction (held in Fall 2021); Annual Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner (resumed in March 2022); Blessing of the Bikes (resuming in May 2022); English Teas & other fundraisers (working on their return. Our church needs to raise funds...)		IHN changed models; Family Promise Lodging; AA, Boy Scouts, Whiting Garden Club, OSL, and Thyroid Support Grp resumed as soon as had permission.

St Thomas Glassboro St David's Cranbury St Andrew's New Providence Holy Trinity South River Holy Spirit Lebanon St Stephen's Whiting

Breakout Groups

Some questions to consider

- Which strategies have been successful? Which have not?
- Who is still in touch and who seems to have fallen off the face of the earth?
- Who needs to hear that God still loves them and their Church misses them?
- What media are working for you?
- How do you track participation?

Report Back

Can you name

- **One Success**
- **One Struggle**
- **One Lingering Question**

One Success

- Being together! Especially coffee hour but all things that met the real hunger to be together for fun, fellowship, food, IN PERSON after isolation.
- Use of various sources of media, i.e. Zoom, Facebook, YouTube
- Financial commitments have been honored by pledgers.
- Reaching out through traditional (rather than electronic) methods appears to have a positive impact: letter writing; taking attendance, and then sending a post card if misses 3 consecutive Sundays followed by calling on the telephone if misses a 4th Sunday; mailing hardcopy printouts of the church newsletter.
- Everyone is offering some kind of hybrid worship and feels that this is necessary for the indefinite future. Some are doing Zoom with members of the congregation at the church and other members participating from home, e.g., as lectors, intercessors. Some are livestreaming to Facebook and saving the livestream to be viewed later either on their website or YouTube page. Congregants who could not initially access technology have received instruction or equipment, if they wanted it, so they can participate. It seems that technology is not an issue for those who wish to be virtual.

One Struggle

- Those who were at edge of congregation before may be further out or outside entirely now.
- Reconnecting with youth. Reaching older population.
- Rejuvenating youth programs; overcoming fear among older parishioners.
- Some families have slowed down and pared down on obligations outside the home, including church. In some cases, going to church has lost out to other secular pursuits.
- People are still very concerned about keeping the members of their congregations together. One participant asked the group if we were still offering virtual worship and planned to continue, so our conversation focused on that. Everyone is concerned, to some degree, that members who came in person in the past have dropped away.

One Lingering Question

- “Who needs to hear God still loves them and the Church misses them?” Invitation to take this question home in prayer, and see what God and we make of it.
- Why members have not come back and how to reach them?
- How to increase in-person participation.
- What do you do when you’ve tried to reach those who aren’t coming in a number of different ways but have still been unsuccessful in reconnecting ?
- There is a sense that for some folks, virtual church will be their preferred mode of participation because they cannot leave home, are afraid to be in a group, or just have adapted their routine to watch church at a later time. There is no certain way to track participation or attendance via these methods.

Reconnecting – Taking It Home

**“What is your
one next
step?”**



“What is your one next step?”

- I love the opportunity to attend Sunday service via the church website using links that are sent to me by email. I can record the sermon and listen to it again and I can watch the service again at a later time. I enjoy our Sunday Forums before service and if not able to watch all of it before service I can come back to watch via a link provided by my church.
- We are adding new members to the parish to our Stewardship committee so hopefully we will hear new ideas.
- We are planning on doing renewal works this fall
- Connect with our new members and families
- Holy Trinity SR: As summer ends I think we should send postcards to remind the parish of the date when we go back to 2 services and celebrate our fall “opening day”
- As Pastoral Care Coordinator, I take my ideas to the Vestry for discussion and help with implementation.
- To keep communicating and reach out to members of the parish, our stewardship team, The stewardship chair and senior warden are working together and people are responding. We look forward to hearing the speakers and feedback.
- We're putting our Stewardship committee together, so my hope is to reach out to possible members to build our team. We will also be working with our Vestry to discuss our upcoming plans.

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“What is your one next step?”

- Engage those folks that are rare in their attendance in a non Church project such as Habitat for Humanity, outreach, and slowly create a conversation with them seeking to know what could be a reason of their less attendance
- We are just beginning to set up a new Sunday School/Youth Education program, with a new leader who is looking for parents or others to help her. We are getting read to re-establish our monthly Messenger.
- We have outdoor events to enable greetings without masks and I try to attend these as well as volunteer activities. We have an art show in the basement offices which brings people to the church. The daily emails from the Church to members always keeps the schedule of functions and activities easily accessible.
- Our team will meet later in August but we are also meeting with the St. Bart’s team which, hopefully, we can inspire each other
- We have a host of young families that have joined our congregation. Many are not from an Episcopal background so they are not educated in Stewardship. They take envelopes but do not pledge. We need to reach them and educate them about Stewardship and what it means to our parish
- Building on continuing to bring people into service at church
- Looking back to see who has left and why...seeing if they can be enticed to come back.
- I like the theme “Build and Engage”

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“What is your one next step?”

- Our church has also added meet and greet 15 minutes before the service at 11AM.
- We are having a celebration Sunday reconnection with our parishioners and our community
- We are looking to establish and invigorate our Stewardship Committee and celebrate our successes during the pandemic
- St James has formed a task force of sorts that is both members of the vestry and parishioners to work towards adding outreach, and focus on bringing in new members. We are going to work with local community leaders to forward any ideas.
- "INREACH" to those who we have not seen, BY NAME, based on a review of parish directory by pastor and a few lay leaders. Use written letters, hand notes, personal invitations, some online, but focus more personal ways communication.
- We're working on presenting some new "re-connect events" such as picnic after service. Also starting (actually re-starting) the personal note writing from vestry members and parish leaders to our missing parishioners.
- Renewal Works is terrific. I would love to hear more here and beyond.

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“What is your one next step?”

- Hoping to encourage our parents to become more actively involved in a children/youth Christian formation program that will include education and opportunities to put faith in action. Small group formation specifically for young families who have recently had their children baptized. Homecoming for the fall.
- In Pitman, we are using Treasurer's records to find who has not been recently active. The Vestry members will be personally reaching out to our people to reconnect. Shutting down for an extended period has been particularly difficult here.
- We have our next Roast Beef Dinner set for October as a Cafe-style event -- pre-packed meals you can take home OR join a friend, find a seat, and eat!

NEXT TIME – Building Your Team

Wednesday, August 10 @ 7:00 pm

- *Building in Faith - Obstacles and Solutions*
- *Building in Practice – Tools You Can Use*

Closing Prayer

More Resources

- [Summer Stewardship Email Series](#)
- [Summer Email Series Resources](#)
- [“Use Summer Well for your Fall Pledges and More” Recording & Slides](#)
- [“Keeping In Touch With Parishioners During Covid & Beyond” Recording & Slides](#)
- [Online Project Resource Library](#)
- TENS Website – <https://www.tens.org/> (password available [here](#))
- [Reimagined Consecration Sunday](#)