

The Warden's Handbook

BASED ON SPRING WORKSHOPS 2012

Diocese of Colorado



Transformational Leadership

Helpful Resources:

- *The Vestry Handbook* by Christopher Webber
- *The Vestry Resource Guide*, Episcopal Church Foundation
- *Beyond the Baptismal Covenant: Transformational Lay Leadership in the 21st Century*, by Donald Romanik
- *The Answer to How is Yes*, by Peter Block
- *Stewardship* by Peter Block
- *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times* by Peter Steinke

In Donald Romanik's book, *Beyond the Baptismal Covenant: Transformational Lay Leadership for the Episcopal Church in the 21st Century*, he says: "The primary purpose of a transformational lay leader is to be a full and equal partner with the clergy in advancing mission, preparing the people of God to deal with new ways of being and encouraging and empowering congregations to transform and change themselves, their local communities and the wider world." This statement captures the role of wardens clearly for the church today. Romanik also outlines qualifica-

tions for transformational leadership in having the ability to:

- Articulate, inspire, and build support for a shared vision
- Enable and empower followers to act by encouraging collaboration and supporting their efforts
- Set an example and model the way
- Recognize the contributions of others and celebrate their achievements
- Develop inner leadership that involves the capacity to appraise and examine personal history and live consistently with Godly

values.

These are the kind of leaders needed for the Church in the 21st century.

Romanik's book is available on the National Episcopal Foundation website.



Beyond the Baptismal Covenant

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Rector/Warden Conversations

Regular rector/ warden meetings should take place to keep the communication and relationship up to date and with healthy trust being developed throughout the congregation. Content of conversations vary, but talking about upcoming vestry business, areas of congregational life, what is

going well and what needs attention, pastoral and staff concerns should be a regular part of the conversation. It is also good to keep tabs on one another's wellness. Having each other's back is very important. Annually, it is good to plan the vestry retreat and to talk about conducting mu-

tual ministry reviews, annual pledge drives, filling vestry vacancies, and annual parish meetings.

Keeping the focus on mission and holding one another accountable to staying on target to fulfilling God's purpose for the congregation will help the whole vestry and congregation.

Vestry Responsibility Highlights

The major areas of Vestry and Warden responsibility include: following the governance of the Episcopal Church and Diocesan policies, following standard business practices, being legal representatives of the corporate prop-



The Business Side of Church

erty, being spiritual leaders in the congregation, leaders of stewardship, and managing the clergy relationship.

Each congregation should have a copy of the Constitutions and Canons of the Episcopal Church as well as the Diocesan Canons. Up to date versions of the Diocesan Canons can be found on the diocesan website. Also on the website are templates for parish By Laws and Guidelines for Mission Congregations, Alienation and Encumbrance processes and forms, and other diocesan policies such as “Safeguarding God’s Children”, Sexual Misconduct, Ethical Guidelines for

Clergy, Discretionary Funds, and Compensation and Insurance guidelines.

The Manual of Business Affairs which can be downloaded from the National Church website is an invaluable resource for all the business practices of the church.

Each congregation should also have building use policies, keep up the safety, insurance, structural integrity, and appearance of the buildings and grounds.

For vestry job descriptions, see The Vestry Handbook or The Vestry Resource guide.

Acting on What Really Matters

“THE ANSWER TO HOW IS YES!”

Peter Block has written a book called “The Answer to How is Yes.” In that book Block says that acting on what really matters is often a practice of getting com-

mitment from each person and connecting with their passions. We find ourselves often asking “how” ques-

tions and getting stuck or not doing what really matters. Five how questions which usually stump us can be reframed to get at what really matters:

1. How do you do it? Becomes: What doubts and fears do I need to let go of?
2. How long will it take? Becomes: What commitment am I willing to make?
3. How much does it cost? Becomes: What price am I willing to

pay?

4. How do you get those people to change? Becomes: What is my contribution to the situation?
5. How have other people done it successfully? Becomes: What can we create together?

Re-framing the questions helps focus on what really matters by gathering the passions and commitment of parishioners for God’s mission.

Another Look at Stewardship

“Stewardship is choosing service over self interest” says Peter Block in his book *Stewardship*. Often when we talk about stewardship we are really talking and thinking about money. Stewardship actually is more about what we hold in trust for God: all of our resources, time, talent, knowledge, lives, everything. So, when we talk about stewardship “it expresses our desire to find meaning in and to treat as an of-

fering what we do.” (Peter Block) For an organization such as the church, “stewardship demands a choice for service with partnership and empowerment as basic governance strategies”. Collectively we choose to use all that we have and structure our life together in terms of what we hold in trust for God and God’s mission. This is what we teach, model, and nurture as leaders in the church today.



Rector Support and Feedback

We all need support and feedback for our ministries to keep us focused on what really matters and Building capacity for God’s redeeming work in the world. The basis for this support and feedback is our fiduciary responsibility for the Gospel. Support includes insuring care for the clergy and lay leaders so that all are free to advance the Gospel. Feedback includes insuring that the clergy and congregation keep the focus on God’s mission and from sabotaging one another with unhelpful distractions and behaviors.

Developing a trusting relationship where we have one another’s back is essential. Open, honest communication is key to the process.

The warden is also often a bridge of communication with the congregation about the changes and transformation occurring in the church. Lay leaders are critical to this transformation because of their important connection to the culture, traditions, and history of the congregation. Clergy come and go, but lay leaders have the power to really change the congregation. Con-

tinual communication with the membership as all seek together the emerging vision of the congregation for God’s mission is essential.



Mutual Ministry Reviews

Mutual ministry reviews are based on congregational goals which fulfill God’s mission. Asking questions such as:

- Where do we expect the congregation to be a year from now if we were to fulfill this goal?
- In what ways will individual members be affected?
- What specific steps do the vestry, program staff (volunteer or paid), and the clergy need to take to

make the achievement of this goal a reality?

- How is what we are trying to do relevant to the needs of the people in our local context?
- What adjustments might we need to make in the coming year to fulfill this goal?
- When do we need to review our progress?

Worksheets and templates for a mu-

tual ministry review process are available on the Diocesan website or through the Office of the Bishop.

**“MUTUAL
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Managing Conflict



When two or three are gathered, there will be disagreement which can escalate into conflict quickly when the

differences revolve around deeply held values, beliefs and expectations. Frequent causes of conflict include: frequent change or change without careful preparation, poor communication, leadership style expectations, and betrayal of trust.

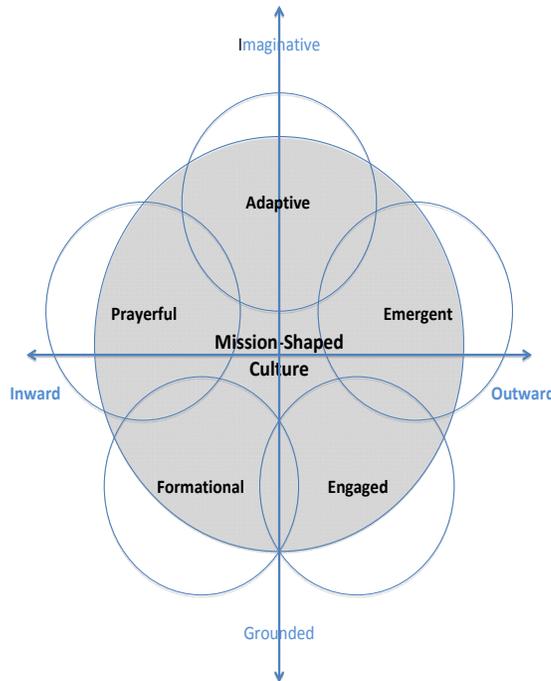
The Ladder of Inference and the Levels of Conflict are good tools to have on hand when evaluating what is go-

ing on and how to respond to the conflict. Setting up norms and educating congregations on healthy ways to deal with negative anxiety and conflict especially with internet technology will help keep conflict from escalating to the point of no return too quickly.

Help is available through the Office of the Bishop.

Components of Mission Shaped Community

Components of a Mission-Shaped Community



Adaptive: The congregation has the capacity to adapt to a rapidly changing context prayerfully and intentionally seeking ways to imaginatively meet the future with the Gospel.

Emergent: The congregation is innovative and flexible in moving with the Spirit to form new ministries and communities out in the local context.

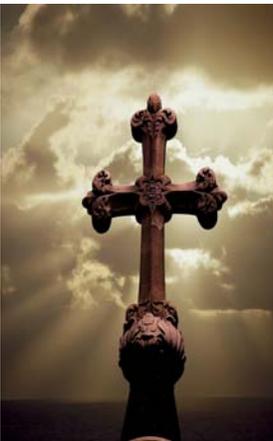
Engaged: The congregation is actively engaged in hands on ministry in the local context addressing the real suffering of the people, perhaps utilizing community organizing efforts grounded in theological reflection.

Formational: Members of the congregation are actively engaged in life long Christian discipleship being formed in Christ's image in heart, mind, and spirit through study, prayer, action, evangelism, and stewardship perhaps even covenanting together to live by a rule of life.

Prayerful: Prayer soaks all that the congregation is and does from worship to meetings, fellowship, pastoral care, use of the property, young and old, and intentional ministry in the local context.

Spiritual Grounding

Exercising spiritual leadership as a warden is key to keeping the focus on being the Body of Christ and not just another organization. Discernment rather than just decision making is the way of the faithful. Discernment is about recognizing the presence and direction of God.



In order to keep the focus on God, tending your relationship with God is imperative both individually and corporately. Each vestry member should have a "Rule of Life" however simple it may be to commit to some form of spiritual practice which enables each person to remain somewhat centered in God. The vestry as a whole also needs to attend to the spiritual life of the group with prayer, Bible study, annual retreat time (not just goal setting and visioning work), and even some music or Eucharist together from time to time.

The spiritual grounding is primarily based on following Jesus, and what Jesus is doing in your midst. It is not

about following the latest ideas, fads, successful programs, or people who seem to be doing it right. It is more about joining in what God is doing in your local context connecting with the passions and giftedness of your faith community with the needs of the people in your neighborhood.

Being able to recognize what Jesus is doing, knowing Jesus' voice, discerning God's leading is all part of staying grounded spiritually.

