

Church of the Nativity

Congregation Dialogue of Discovery:

The First Step in the Discernment Process

Report of Congregational Input on

Nativity's Mission and Vision

January, 2010

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We are deeply grateful to the parishioners who participated in this process so eagerly, openly and enthusiastically for the good of Nativity. We offer our appreciation and thanks to the following people who generously gave their energy, time and expertise to enhance this important work: Bill Wrenn, Diocesan Missioner, and parishioners Gail Christensen, Rebecca Christian, Dee Wallis, Alfred Christensen, Jane Vella, Sandy Entrup, Carolyn Kerr, Charlie Kerr, and members of the Vestry. It was a pleasure!
Karen Ridout and David Stoller, Co-Chairs

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Methodology

As part of the process of preparing to call a new rector, the vestry of Church of the Nativity sought input from the congregation to help build the parish profile and to discern the attributes of the rector to be called.

This input was gathered from the congregation in dialogue sessions that followed a design created by Karen Ridout (principal, Global Learning Partners and parishioner) using a Dialogue Education Approach and Appreciative Inquiry Model. Three sessions for adults were held in one week (Saturday morning, Sunday after the 10:30 service and Wednesday evening.) In addition, one session was conducted during Sunday school with youth ranging in age from grades 4-12. *(See page 39 for dialogue design and questions and page 45 for the spread sheet of participants.)*

Congregation members were mailed the questions in advance and were asked to provide input by e-mail or hard copy if they were unable to attend one of the dialogue sessions. 110 adults and 54 youth participated.

The goal of the dialogues was to gather broad input about members' understanding of Nativity's identity and mission and their vision for Nativity as a parish in the next 3-5 years. Members were also educated about the three options for conducting a search for a rector and were allowed to ask questions and offer opinions about the method they preferred.

The input was then grouped for summary purposes in themes by task: Who We Are (Mission) and Nativity's Call (Vision). However, it must be emphasized that the report, which contains *every comment* received, should be read in full to mine the details for gems, because summaries and number tallies indicate trending but do not provide the complete picture. *(See pages 9 - 38 for the verbatim responses).*

Findings

Individuals' personal "high point" experiences at Nativity

As a way of getting started and encouraging input from everyone, participants were first asked to reflect on a time when each personally felt Nativity was fulfilling its mission. The themes which emerged were remarkably consistent with the responses on Mission and Vision. (See pages 33 - What38).

Who We Are – What We Value About Nativity

1. Culture of our people (157). The overwhelmingly leading theme of what people value about Church of the Nativity is the culture of inclusiveness, diversity, and caring for each other and those outside the congregation. Many members mentioned diversity of all kinds: age, race, culture, backgrounds, beliefs, occupations, economic background, sexual orientation, and religious experiences. They highly value the acceptance of this heterogeneity and of a broad range of thoughts and beliefs—they believe the clergy and the laity of Nativity are open-minded. Participants value the tolerance that they believe is intentional—everyone works hard to make people feel attended to. The support that people give to each other and those beyond Nativity's walls was probably the chief thing people valued. They believe there is care for each other by clergy and by members, that there is a strong and warm welcome and that those being welcomed are made part of the whole. They speak of a strong, cohesive community that they feel is their family and that this community is fostered by a variety of fellowship opportunities, a sense of humor, listening to each other, support in tough times, inter-generational characteristics of the membership and comfortable style in worship and dress. They describe the culture in such phrases as "non-judgmental, not stuffy, flexible, warm and loving".
2. Worship, music and sermons was a second theme at about half the comments. (83). Participants value the strong preaching at Nativity which they believe is thoughtful, thought-provoking and intelligent, scholarly, inspirational and laced with a good sense of humor. They believe the sermons speak to them without "preaching at" them. They also value the music programs' quality, variety and breadth, the skills and generosity of the professional musicians who offer their gifts and that Nativity offers this to the larger community through such programs as Spirituality in the Arts. The liturgy, which is done very well, adds to their experience and participants like the participative, dignified yet "unstuffy" liturgy and music of worship services. They like the choice of two services and that time limits are respected.

3. Programs, Christian education and youth (54) was a third key theme. Participants value the Christian education program for youth and adults, particularly the variety offered to adults and Rite 13 and J2A. The commitment to the youth by volunteers and the youth, the fact that youth programs encourage questioning and are open and inclusive were mentioned. Participants also value other programs such as Foyer, prayer and study offerings such as Daughters of the King, noon books, the prayer chain and marriage classes.

Other themes included Outreach (19), Spiritual Direction (14), followed by the less prominent ones of Staff and Leadership (4) and Location (4).

Nativity's Call-Vision for the Future

More themes identified what Nativity should be accomplishing in the next three to five years.

1. Mindful growth of the community (72). The most prominent theme for our vision is growth, which participants want to be planned, purposeful and fiscally responsible while keeping the "family feel". They express a desire that the growth plan target the neighborhood, young adults (20s and 30s), newcomers to the area and that the congregation become even more inviting and diverse. The importance of matching facilities growth to the plan for membership growth is stressed.
2. Facilities (52). Completing the Build It Forward program with more education space and parking is a major theme. In addition, participants want to see building preventive maintenance and improvements to the kitchen and grounds, and more effort to make our facilities environmentally sound. There are also facilities ideas to meet special needs: a labyrinth, a prayer garden, a columbarium, and adaptations for seniors such as access, wheelchairs, walkers and hearing devices. Some hope that Nativity will share our facilities with others in the neighborhood.
3. Programs, Christian Education and Youth (43). Another prominent theme is a vision for Christian Education, Youth and Programs. Participants want Nativity's programs to be strategic, with objectives, evaluation against the objectives and end dates as well as appropriate staff support and budget. They prefer quality over quantity. Having programming that is inter-generational and fun is important.
People envision a vibrant Christian education program for children through adults. They see Nativity offering expanded, varied adult education opportunities including Bible study, Faith and Science, EFM and other efforts that challenge intellectually and spiritually.
A major vision is a strong, well defined youth program with consistent good

leadership and rector support. This vision includes more intergenerational involvement with youth programming and more involvement by youth in church service and ministries. Staffing this effort appropriately and providing appropriate space are envisioned.

4. Outreach (38). Outreach is considered almost equally important in the vision, with participants' expressions of a strong desire to get back to Nativity's "roots" of tithing to outreach. However the vision is for targeted, strategic outreach that makes an impact in the community beyond Nativity's walls. One aspect of this vision is to become a green, environmentally active congregation; another is to get our youth more involved. Some see Nativity having "signature" outreach efforts that enhance our visibility in the community.
5. Financial stability (32). Participants envision that Nativity will be financially stable with enough income and reserves to be able to fund what we want to do—with programming, staffing, outreach and facilities. People want to see a formal fund-raising plan that includes not only the annual campaign but also planned giving and estate planning. People want to see Nativity live within its budget and thus believe that if we want to do more, we will have to have increased pledging and stewardship.
6. Worship and Music (29). Worship that is thought-provoking, diverse, with new experiences and perhaps with varied times is envisioned. People see an expanded music program with a larger choir, appropriate paid staff, diversity in the style of music and special musical events.
7. Leadership (23). When people spoke of their vision for leadership it includes stable leadership, involvement of the congregation in decision-making opportunities, and delegation to expand congregational involvement. They hope to see openness and transparency including honesty about areas that need improvement, exit interviews with departing members and open forums with the rector so problems and needs get recognized early. They see improved communication which does not rely solely on any one method such as electronic but which takes varied forms, written and spoken. They envision appropriate staffing and stable leadership at all levels.
8. Spiritual Direction (13) One lesser theme focuses on spiritual direction. There is a vision that things will be in place at Nativity that will inspire participation and increase the spiritual growth of the members and of the church.
9. Finally, the Rector. While people discussed the rector, it can be concluded that participants envision a rector who helps members accomplish Nativity's vision. Participants want to see Nativity with a rector who is a leader who meets the new vision, who will help us grow successfully, and who is pastoral, forward-thinking, delivers strong sermons and who has business acumen.

Conclusion:

The consistency of themes, from the highlights of the past continuing to the things we value the most today to the themes of our vision for the future, was remarkable. These themes should inform and largely define the stated mission and how we want Nativity to serve God in the world.

Parishioners' Input (verbatim)

Who We Are

QUESTION: Name the 3 things you value most about Nativity.

We have separated the answers into seven categories, and several subcategories:

- Culture of our People: Diverse, Supportive, Accepting/Inclusive
- Worship/Music/Sermons
- The Programs/Christian Education/Youth
- Outreach
- Spiritual Direction
- Staff and Leadership
- Location

Culture of Our People

Diverse

- Diversity - 3
- Diversity/interpersonal relationships
- Positive, educational calling to action
- Diversity of the community - diverse interests
- Diversity of the people here - willingness to share
- Diversity of members and strength that brings to the church
- Diversity of thought - 2
- Diversity of ages, walks of life
- Openness, diversity
- Aspects of congregation - variety of ages
- Growing congregation - young and vibrant people, neighborhood demography
- Diversity of families and ideas
- Variety of opinions, political and spiritual
- Good economic mix without a sense of "important" (aka wealthy) members of the congregation
- Welcoming and including a very diverse population and preaching/teaching acceptance and tolerance and celebration of diversity
- Diversity of parish
- Diversity of ideas
- Diverse cultural, age, backgrounds, beliefs
- Diversity - age, race, occupation, religious background

- Diversity of all kinds
- Diversity that is accepted
- Diversity of the congregation
- Diverse congregation
- The diversity of this family: such as age, economic background, education, religious experiences
- Diversity every way: age, race, gender, politically
- I like the full range of ages at Nativity. It inspires and uplifts me every week to be part of a group that includes everyone from new babies to the elderly. It enriches my life to be part of this group, and to see the cycle and flow of life week after week, year after year, as I watch the babies grow into children and teens and adults, and also watch as all the adults grow older. It's important that we are all going through the phases of life together. I know I am getting older and my parents are getting older, and it is reassuring and meaningful to be in a community as this process continues. I value the diversity of age in our congregation.

Supportive

- Friends - wonderful, loving and accepting people
- We are a family that has survived many ups and downs and stayed cohesive and supportive and stronger because of the church
- Our care for each other
- Pastoral Care - 3
- Knowing that support is here when needed for new and old
- Welcoming attitude
- Excellent pastoral care
- Width and breadth of our pastoral care program
- The people - 5
- Support - always help can be found
- It's my family away from home
- Friendliness, warmth, welcoming and openness (inclusion)
- Sense of community
- Desire to welcome all people - "All are Welcome"
- Kind welcoming people and their involvement with the church and the congregation
- Friendships
- A very caring congregation
- Our deacons are wonderful at pastoral care
- Opportunity to serve - being invested in our community
- Being open with others and caring for others
- Theme: None are left behind Re: shut-ins, new members, prayer for those in distress, personal needs
- The sense of "family feeling" - from babies to seniors all are welcomed and made part of the whole.
- Friendliness - passing the peace, people know each other
- Sense of community - MON pig picking, pancake supper
- Flexibility - mode of worship, changes, Bishop feels at home
- Parishioners are encouraged to ask questions

- Commitment for change to give value and purpose. Keeping up with world changes and its people.
- Our appreciation of food as a vector of socializing
- Community
- Warmth, welcoming
- Support of each other such as Seniors Group
- Congregation friendliness cohesive
- Nativity is my family - was glad to come back here
- Social - Fellowship variety - King's cake, Blue Jay Point
- Pastoral care from laity as well as staff
- Availability of Pastoral Care
- Friendliness
- The community of my peers at the 8:00 am service
- Camaraderie without pre-condition leads to a sense of perpetual belonging
- I value the warmth and love I feel when we share Eucharist
- CotN is a very strong and loving faith family (community) - i.e., it's our big family
- Social
- Social group
- Fellowship - just nice people
- Non-judgmental
- Friendship between families
- Fellowship and friendly
- Level of humor
- Casualness
- Casual and friendly, not "social"
- Relaxed, less formal atmosphere
- Sense of community - humor
- Comfort in dress, participation, worship style - to kneel or not
- Close to Lutheran religion
- Particular CotN traditions - priestly stamp on worship
- Friendship, feeling loved by someone
- Community - friendships, fit in, good feel, not stuffy
- A caring and warm community
- People and youth have grown up with as a community
- Outreach for the shut-in people who can't come to church
- Involve children with participation in church as a family
- Value the way the parish comes together in loving care - individually and wholly
- Honesty of emotions, relationships, ups and downs
- Community activities
- People "listen" to our needs and opinions
- The friendships within our church
- Close-knit diverse community - "good feel", not too big, all types of families
- Support from all during "highs" and "lows"
- Value most sense of community and responsibility to broader community
- Pastoral care program outreach
- Fellowship in hard times. Love of congregation when going through tough times.

- "True" friendships
- Family. 3 generations active and happy to be here.
- Intergenerational church
- Talented smart energetic congregation
- Dedication of many people involved in making CotN work
- Opportunity for leadership
- Great talent among congregation
- Ability to get involved
- Fellowship
- The people in the Nativity family
- People stick through hard times
- Opportunity to become involved

Accepting/Inclusive/Open

- Inclusive people
- Non-discriminatory - accepting of people who are different - openness of all - political, races, sexual preference
- "Radical inclusivity"
- It's a comfort thing - always inclusive feeling, always feel at home
- Intention of our inclusivity many here work very hard to make people feel attended to
- Inclusiveness - 5
- Open-minded nature
- Openness of thought
- Tolerance of political views out of the majority of the congregation (i.e., conservatism)
- More than tolerance, it is inclusive all that we hear, say, and do is inclusive of all people and other faiths, ideology, etc.
- Being inclusive but not dogmatic
- Inclusive opportunity/chance to serve
- Caring for one another, especially in times of need and celebration
- Not aware of any internal divisiveness
- Open to using talents and interests of members
- Many active participants
- Diversity of members
- The congregation: open, inviting, tolerant, inclusive, liberal
- democratic
- Open and accepting
- Inclusiveness (most within last year)
- It's tolerance, inclusiveness, and open-mindedness
- Inclusion across the board (Mother Diane and Father Hale can share same pulpit!)
- Accepting of one another as opposed to tolerance
- Inclusivity
- Accepting of diverse people and ideas
- Openness in which I can contribute and be valued as part of the community
- Acceptance of heterogeneity in race, sexual orientation, politics
- Honesty, progressive thinking
- Progressive, modern thinking/open-mindedness

- Committed, participation in church and world
- The appreciation of female clergy
- Accepting, liberal attitude; I have met some nice, open-minded people there.
- Progressive clergy welcoming to conservatives and to people who disagree with them
- Nonjudgmental - Welcoming and listening to both progressive (me!) and conservative
- Known as slightly off kilter
- Education, talents, intelligence, and energy level of its members
- Informal
- Joyful, fun

The Worship/Music/Sermons

Worship

- "High Church" liturgy but not stuffy or formal
- Traditional liturgy
- Formal liturgy but acceptance of informal participation
- Liturgy/Preaching
- Sunday liturgy
- Liturgy and music - symbolism and formality of worship
- Liturgy and service: participative, respectful, dignity of style
- Eucharist every Sunday
- Chasuble - music - Eucharist every Sunday
- Strong worship
- Style of worship - casual High Church - quality of liturgy
- Worship - choreography is good - things (mechanics) done well - flows well
- Worship service - sermon - music
- Service
- Worship
- Our liturgy, our worship, our music
- Choice of services: simple and celebratory
- Two Sunday services option
- Respect time limits for worship, start and finish on time
- No wasting of time in the service - quality and timing
- Worshipful attitude
- Value most: Worship service as tradition
- Episcopal traditions
- The traditions and connections to the Church's past
- Worship: service, prayer
- Small, traditional 8:00 a.m. service

Music

- I value Nativity's music program
- The music programs - 5
- Congregation that deems the importance of GOOD music
- All musicians and their talents (don't have to be talented, just love music)
- Vocal choir

- Music program - great variety
- Quality and breadth of the music program
- Choir - 2
- Handbell/music program
- Handbell training only music instruction my kids received
- Music - 7
- The quality of the music program and the large number of people who participate in it
- Skills and generosity of the professional musicians who continue to give abundantly
- Music program especially part music plays in worship
- Variety of music - including choir, bells, orchestral offerings, Taize, etc.
- Musical diversity
- Spirituality in the Arts/Music program
- Spirituality in the Arts - including the larger community
- Traditional music
- Timothy's musicianship
- Music (Timothy)
- The music programs: children's choir, adult choir, bells for all ages
- Good music (although I prefer piano to organ)
- To be known as musical

Sermons

- I value the wonderful sermons that have been here as long as I have
- Preaching: Sermons that speak to everyday life and good explications
- Meaningful sermons that connect to everyday life - touch our hearts
- Meaningful preaching - sermons that connect more directly with our everyday lives
- Intelligent preaching
- Sermons thoughtful and thought-provoking
- Good sermons combined with efficiency and scholarship
- Sense of humor
- Preaching
- Our priests don't read their sermons - content and delivery are good
- Consistent high quality of sermons - educational, inspirational, entertaining
- GEORGE!
- George Act of God
- Sermons: intelligent and "off the cuff" but obviously well prepared
- Knowing God better through teaching and sermons
- Preaching: thought-provoking, challenging, uplifting
- Sermons/philosophy which has relevance to my life, touches my heart and inspires me and also reinforces the love of God for all people. Value a rector who has life experience.
- Inspiring sermons! Positive, educational, calling to action
- Intelligent, skillful preaching
- Messages of Mother Diane and Father George
- Preaching - liberal orthodoxy
- Strong sermons, for the most part
- The rector
- Fr. George Clifford forward thinking inclusive sermons

- The sermons
- Intellectually challenging sermons - 2
- Spiritual connection - sermons speak to me with feeling I'm "preached at"
- The values of the priest agree with mine
- Example set by rector who is a Pastor, not just a preacher

The Programs/Christian Education/Youth

- Flower Committee
- Foyer
- Foyer - meet folks might not otherwise meet
- Foyer groups
- Family Foyer
- Foyer dinners - opportunity to meet new people
- Noon books
- Prayer Chain
- Prayer and study - DOK
- Marriage class - new beginnings - silver dress

Christian Education

- Sunday school for all ages
- Adult ed - Christian education - previous variety in offering, but I like adult Sunday School now
- Adult Christian Education - Sunday morning and EFM
- Adult classes
- Adult ed
- EFM, Faith and Science
- Educational Opportunities - Faith and Science, Engaging the Powers, Sermons with socio-economic and historical context with living word relevant to today
- Variety of classes for adult education - David Buck Programs
- Opportunity for study
- Value most: Educational opportunities
- Adult education, particularly when other faiths invited to speak
- I like the fact the Bible is taught not in a literal way but as a guide
- Committed to religious instruction for adults and children
- Teaching/theology conducive to my beliefs or views of Christianity

Youth

- I value Nativity's commitment to our youth
- Commitment of leaders and students to participation in the youth program
- Youth program - comfortable for parents and youth, trustworthy, open and inclusive
- Youth - participation, camaraderie, critical mass that continues (sustainable)
- Youth
- Youth volunteers and leaders
- Youth programs (especially Christmas Eve this year)
- Youth programs and level of participation in these programs

- Development of Youth to Adult education program
- Value educating my children to strengthen their beliefs and mine
- Value of youth programs
- We teach our youth: there are no WRONG questions and lots of RIGHT answers!
- Education - Rite 13
- Youth - #1 priority
- Youth programs - idea of graduation of groups; large active group of children, teens, etc.
- Youth programs - 4
- Importance of youth programs - Rite 13, J2A, Pilgrims, YACs
- Youth program J2A
- Active youth program
- Variety of programs for the youth of the church - progression, growth in personal ownership and responsibility
- Active youth groups
- Strong youth programs - noteworthy that youth rarely miss youth group even though miss church service
- Strong youth program and multi-generations
- Parents Night Out
- Rite 13 and J2A Program
- Not just youth education but the J2A program specifically
- Teen education - "It takes a village"
- Children's education
- Volunteers who work with youth
- Kids are us

Outreach

- The spirit of helping others who are in need (i.e. medical mission, Food Shuttle, etc.)
- Active participation in In-reach and Outreach
- Supportive of ministerial tasks taken upon by individuals in the congregation
- To be known as committed to Outreach
- Outreach – 4
- Outreach—to God every place is local, every one is precious
- Outreach - bring the world into the Church and realize we are not above the world
- Service to the community/global (others)
- Outreach - willingness of people to do service
- Community service at the local level - outreach
- Outreach - involvement beyond the church into the neighborhood/community
- Outreach - Food Shuttle, Interfaith Caregivers, Pastoral Care
- Outreach and In-reach
- Numerous Outreach ministries
- The Outreach programs - helping those in need
- Steadfastness of our Outreach focus

Spiritual Direction

- Challenged spiritually
- Encouragement of spiritual growth - EFM, Faith and Science
- Freedom to discuss, explore and question our faith - the Faith and Science program!
- Celebration of spiritual exploration
- Forward thinking - EFM, Faith and Science, Spirituality in the Arts
- Emphasis on socially responsible interpretation of Christianity
- Worldly in viewpoint and mission
- Blue Candle
- Blue Candle prayer
- World view of the national church, local pastoral care
- Development of faith (David Buck's programs)
- Acting on your faith in daily living - environment, economy
- Progressive yet traditional
- The history that challenges me not to fear
- Spiritual uplifting

Staff and Leadership

- The current clergy and leadership volunteers, including the Vestry
- Willingness of vestry members to continue their work under adverse conditions
- Jennie's work - reliable, dependable
- Ministry - clergy

Location

- In a convenient, central location
- Size
- Location
- Nearest Episcopal church

Nativity's Call

QUESTION: What will be Nativity's 3 most important accomplishments to you over the next 3-5 years?

We have separated the answers into nine categories, and several subcategories:

- Mindful Growth of the Community
- Facilities
- Programs/Christian Education/Youth
- Outreach
- Financial Stability
- Worship/Music
- Leadership
- Spiritual Direction
- Rector

Mindful Growth

- Mindful expansion, especially continued involvement of congregation with decision-making opportunities and challenges. Continued responsiveness to need of education of the children, i.e. adequate space.
- "Purposeful change" not change for change's sake
- A plan to manage our growth - how to keep the "family feel" in a corporate size church.
- Managed growth with fiscal responsibility and without jeopardizing our core values
- Develop a plan to guide and promote our growth.
- Keep Nativity traditions while discovering and incorporating new ideas.
- Inspired, united congregation
- Grow church family internally and externally.
- Increase congregation size
- Recruitment of new members
- Meet gap in 20-30 year olds
- More members, more families, larger funding stream
- More diverse congregation
- Effective membership retention and growth program
- Growing in a way that serves all: kids, youth, parents, and adults without kids here - balanced and responsive/proactive for all groups
- Growth - spacewise and in membership
- Visibility - letting the community know who we are
- Visible priority for children's education - space NOW as well as 3-5 years
- Growth to support having an assistant rector
- Young families are missing. We need them!

- Young adult programs to draw our kids back after college
- To be known for a certain expertise or offering - an identity!
- Education space
- Mindful expansion and assimilation
- Inviting, welcoming, integrating, nurturing - outline process for building a strong congregation
- "Beyond Sunday" theme
- Communicate, invite, include the surrounding neighborhood
- Relate to larger community via Church Women United
- Reaching those who are moving into the area
- Growth - reaching the unchurched or the inactive, engaging them and enriching them
- Work more with others in community (our other church neighbors included)
- Reaching out in Nativity's neighborhood
- Grow church family internally and externally
- Realize some of our dreams: building, grounds, staff
- Stability - consistency of clergy focused on parish development
- Expanding its congregation and therefore programs to reach more people
- Expand the population. Let the public know who we are and what we're about.
- Get more pledges
- More pledged income - 2
- We're waking up, not stagnant
- A very diverse congregation
- Diversity - increase in African-Americans, etc.
- New member incorporation
- Diversity and inclusiveness
- More participation - more volunteer effort
- An expanded church, Build it Forward, and more diversity.
- Redouble and institute efforts to attract non-whites to church. Percentage is dwindling and it is disturbing.
- To expand our newcomer/new person ministry
- Continued welcoming and ALL are valued.
- Continue the welcome after a visit. When someone is in need, identify.
- Move from merely welcoming to inviting.
- Don't let people fall between the cracks
- Integrate various ages. Integrate services (8:00 and 10:30).
- Have young adult (ages 18-34) ministry in place
- Outreach to early 20s to mid 30s
- Increase participation by members and more programs developed.
- Great pastoral care program - model
- Greater involvement throughout the congregation (ask people who may want to be involved but are shy). For example, personal invitation at the door by choir members has been very effective.
- A strong pastoral care program that is consistent
- Re-establish community
- Maintain sense of community
- Continued supportive loving congregation

- Continuing to be an open, welcoming Christian community
- Spanish
- Who are we? Who is our geographic community?
- Begin regular, casual, simple meal gatherings for fellowship and to feed the hungry (hungry busy families, those who are lonely, those who are literally hungry)
- Supportive seniors of Nativity
- Recognized by our neighborhood community as a caring, loving church that is open to all.
- Creating balance among the wants/needs of the congregation
- System to provide rides to church for elderly members
- Sign language for deaf members

Facilities

- Growth in 3-5 years will cause us to rethink our current building and size of location, search committee.
- Facilities able to meet needs and care for them better.
- Improvement in visual esthetics of buildings and grounds
- Improve church facilities: grounds and buildings
- Building growth and facilities improvement
- An expanded church, build it forward
- Finish the Build it Forward program
- BIF
- Completion of the new building -3
- Complete the building program (beyond education building)
- Complete education building.
- Push forward with new building
- Get the new building built
- Fully used Educational Building
- Better Christian Education space
- Educational building - 2
- Building an education building
- New education building
- Complete the new building and move the Sunday School classes in
- Continue to develop additional space for youth and other programs
- Building the new education building (and parking space)
- New building complete, develop our campus
- Building completion
- New building offers room to grow and space for programs
- Building the new addition - let's get on with it if we are going to build it! The building may change/expand the programmatic aspects of CotN which may drive other important decisions.
- Finishing the building project, including trying to increase parking spaces
- Expand parking - 2
- Increased parking
- Expand parking lot
- Share facilities with other groups - 2

- Building expansion.
- Improving our physical gathering spaces
- Larger kitchen
- Better kitchen
- New kitchen - stove and double oven and 2 refrigerators
- Kitchen and Estill House improvements
- Dedicated and expanded choir space
- A labyrinth in the memorial garden
- A prayer garden and a labyrinth with access to the memorial garden
- A columbarium
- Landscape management plan in place.
- A better playground
- Develop classrooms with equipment
- Providing a new building for education
- For seniors: access in church, hearing aids, wheelchairs, walkers
- Building space to support both spiritual and community program development/growth
- Preventative maintenance program
- Better space/facilities for youth, education, and fellowship
- Stop Estill House flooding!

Programs

- Programs must evolve. There is a shelf-life for all things. Reevaluate based on objectives not the status quo.
- Be strategic in program activity
- Develop system for church programs: consider, introduce, implement, evaluate, end or continue
- Programs should have goals, evaluations and end dates, budget and appropriate staff support
- Do fewer things better
- Sound programs; fun recreation - need to have fun; bring back annual golf; the softball was success; annual picnics
- Develop a marriage ministry
- More events and social programs held
- Have more family functions
- Continuance of programs with quality

Christian Education

- Growth of EFM and/or adult education
- Bible study more available to adults at 9:15
- Expansion of adult education offerings
- Education will always be a priority
- Continued growth/breadth of adult education program
- Formal Christian Education program including Bible Study for adults
- Provide appropriate and adequate space for Christian formation/educational gathering at all levels

- Vibrant education program for children through adults
- Keep Faith and Science programs
- Provide intellectual and spiritual education for self
- Getting adult education/class back such as David Buck had set up and run so successfully when he was at Nativity. We really enjoyed the variety of topics and learned so much from starting each class with a bible verse and sharing our reflections. These classes opened your mind to life inside and outside Nativity and are missed.

Youth

- Continue dynamic growth in parish youth programs
- Youthful involvement in church ministries
- Keep youth programs
- Respond to needs of children - e.g. education space, etc.
- Youth program that offers skeptical child grounding and answers
- Youth program: have more formal leadership (Volunteers giving blood, sweat, and tears can't be expected to keep at fever pitch) - either new rector or a part-time hiree.
- Hiring a youth minister to strengthen children's programs
- A very strong, well-defined youth program that will really work, with good consistent youth leadership and rector supported.
- New ways to include youth in church service and church.
- Continuing with youth and adult activities
- Growing the youth programs
- Maintain a strong youth program
- More involvement in youth - intergenerational
- Youth, including teaching, build it forward
- Better teen youth program; look to other denominations for examples and comparisons - EYC one example
- Continued enhancement of youth program with more emphasis on spirituality growth with/through the clergy
- Retention of present youth post-high school
- Teach our kids to know and use the Bible (i.e., the actual book)
- Integrate our youth with groups and youth in other communities, faiths, joint community services
- Include youth in growth efforts
- Preschool program
- Paid youth director

Outreach

- Rejuvenate Outreach - "back to roots"
- Get back to looking outward. More Outreach - what can we provide for community
- Real progress in targeted and more cohesive Outreach commitment
- Signature Outreach project
- Continued/enhanced commitment to focused Outreach at the local, national and international level
- Establish a greater presence on a local level

- The church to get more involved in the community so it can affect the community
- Commitment to Outreach
- Active participation in Outreach
- More Outreach
- Outreach 10X of today
- Tithe Outreach
- Outreach: community active
- Expansion of our Outreach program
- Continue to have a strong Outreach/pastoral care program that responds to the needs of the congregation and the wider community
- Reach out to elderly at all these retirement homes
- More relief here in Raleigh (tutoring, sheltering, etc.)
- Strong, targeted Outreach program
- Expand from mere Outreach to Reaching Out (Expanding its community)
- An array of support groups offered to the community
- Continuing with community activities
- Outreach for which we have strong focus and impactful
- Outreach to homeless
- Continued varied Outreach opportunities
- Find new ways to enhance an already excellent Outreach program
- Outreach to neighborhood community; Interfaith Hospitality Network (homeless families)
- More emphasis on Outreach
- Enable broader participation in Outreach - action associated with faith
- Outreach
- Become green, environmentally active congregation - "care for creation" needs to start with people of faith - commit to Genesis covenant
- Environment - get green
- Focus on Outreach
- Renewed emphasis on Outreach/thoughtful, strategic reaching beyond ourselves to be God's representatives in a challenging world
- Take advantage/recognize needs of broader community (participation in broader (i.e. diocesan and beyond)
- Keep all of Outreach, maybe increase
- Get the youth more involved with Raleigh area service and volunteer
- Provide areas to perform Outreach and care of others outside these church walls
- Improve presence in our local community

Financial Stability

- Nativity will be financially stable so that quality staff can be retained, music program can continue and buildings can be maintained.
- Preplanning for potential economically difficult times
- Reach sound financial basis
- Continued financial viability
- Live within our budget
- Financially strong

- Financial stability - 2
- Reduce debt
- Formal fund-raising plan beyond stewardship; develop financial/donor planning and management - planned giving, estate planning
- Financial stability to allow more flexibility with Outreach programs
- Enough income to fund what we want to do
- Be financially sound
- Become fiscally/financially secure
- Fiscal responsibility and openness
- Financial stability (120 days cash on hand)
- Several consecutive years of surplus/cash on hand
- Progress to financial security - planning for future to maintain what we have
- Small scholarship fund to church participating youth members who have good grades.
- Firm up our financial plan. Build budget to enable more paid staff.
- St. Paul's Cary a benchmark for growing parish contributions
- Fund programs while maintain sound financial position
- Goals that realistically reflect finances.
- Financial accountability to continue to be self-supporting parish
- In these uncertain times, a budget that reflects the concerns and common mission of the congregation
- Enhanced stewardship program to encourage higher percentage of participation (More info to more people)
- Seek ways to invigorate the annual stewardship program
- Better every member canvass
- Larger percentage of congregation contribute financially
- Building program coupled with fiscal responsibility
- Financial freedom for the church. Fundraising activities.
- \$ enuff

Worship and Music

Worship

- Sign language interpretation as enhancement of worship
- Compline - lay led - full circle to how CotN began - during the week in home or at CotN
- A need for healing masses once a month
- Offering a Saturday service time - 5 pm; summer service
- Keep church service under 1 hour
- Announcements back in church
- More progressive service
- More diverse worship program
- Meaningful, though-provoking worship experiences
- Prayers by the kids
- Continue/maintain the momentum of enhancing our worship, experiencing new prayer/music
- Expanded embellished services

Music

- 40 members in adult and teen choir
- Expanded wonderful music program
- Continued expansion of the music program
- Music: specials; Spirituality in the Arts; vocal choir; bells
- Separate youth choir
- Paid bell choir director! More money directed to music
- Nativity to be thought of as destination for musical excellence by the community
- Keeping Waltye, Timothy, and Ruth in the music program
- I would also like to see our music program expanded to offer some nontraditional music.
- More diversity in worship/liturgical music
- More music that is a today style; diversity in style of music
- New, modern, engaging music
- X-Generation music
- Music program for all ages that is thriving
- Addition of contemporary and multicultural music
- Music program diversity - sometimes more modern, guitar, jazz, congregation suggest hymns
- Non-traditional music during 10:30; example: Once a month folk mass - liven things up!

Leadership

- Continued involvement of congregation in decision-making opportunities and challenges
- Set priorities and staff appropriately
- Establish stable leadership
- Stability of vision in overall leadership at all levels
- Reexamine organization structure and design in a way to enhance the priorities set for the next 3-5 years; not operate out of assumptions
- Expand "core group" of worker bees
- Openness and transparency
- Hire staff: associate rector, organist, youth minister
- Full-time office coordinator
- Have church reviews so problems or needs get recognized early - "open forums" with the rector
- Dynamic leadership who delegate
- Sense of security in Nativity's leadership (priest, vestry) so we can do God's work
- Institute annual job reviews
- Do not rely on electronic means of communication - communication not as strong as before
- Things we must be honest about: The best things we do, the areas we need to examine, the areas we are starting but need improvement, such as exit interviews for members who decide to leave Nativity.
- Focus first on parish unity and stability - pastoral, programmatic and financial.
- Developing additional and different persons to fill lay leadership positions (not limited to Vestry!)
- Vestry openness.

- Communication: eGroups is not enough - communicate in ALL forms written, spoken, posters, etc.
- Continue this year's communication
- Getting a youth minister
- Full-time education staff
- Hire a full-time youth education director

Spiritual Direction

- Environment that inspires participation and moves spirituality
- Continue growth of programs/spirituality of children/youth
- To increase the spiritual growth of the church and prepare the church into a more spiritual position.
- Engender individual and corporate spiritual growth
- Increased spirituality
- Healing
- Faith-based tradition, scripture, reason
- Meeting my prayer needs - giving and receiving
- More emphasis on spiritual direction, broader definitions, and more creative opportunities
- Institute for Spiritual Development (ISD)
- Teen and kid branch of ISD and Senior branch of ISD
- Cursillo support and connection
- Inspiring individual members, new members, visitors, etc. through sermons, educational programs, and other programs, events and structures (inspiring personal discipleship)

The Rector

- Have an effective, well-loved priest in place
- Finding a rector.
- Calling of a new rector - 2
- Finding a new rector ASAP.
- New priest
- Obtain right rector
- Rector who leads AND allows direction to emerge
- Finding the right rector - strong spiritual focus, strong leader, flexible
- Choose the "right" rector
- Choose a new rector that meets our new vision
- Rector with business acumen
- Rector.
- Nativity will have a rector who can meet diverse needs of congregation.
- A rector who is the spiritual child of Mother Diane and Bishop Curry.
- New rector should know kids' names.
- New rector should be interested in youth education.
- A successful search for a rector that allows us to continue to grow successfully
- Select, welcome, and get comfortable with new rector.
- Getting and keeping a new rector and associate rector.

- Dynamic, forward-thinking rector.
- Hire leadership to meet needs of congregation - rector, associate, deacon
- Two priests to accommodate a smoother operation
- Multiple layers (at least two) of clergy to reach diverse needs of congregation
- Continued thought-provoking sermons
- God's word is always preached.
- Preaching: sermons, prayers, study, outreach, God's word
- Growth in 3-5 years will cause us to rethink our current building and size of location, search committee.
- Getting a rector and a deacon - who are both progressive and wonderful preacher as well as efficient and knowledgeable businesswise
- A priest with leadership skills - Father Brad
- Hire Brad Mullis - has enthusiasm, leadership, people skills, all we need

Youth Input

Church of the Nativity Youth Group Questionnaire

(Input was given in table groups; facilitators took notes. 54 youth attended)

1. What are some things you like about COTN?

- a. Youth program and the people who run the program
- b. Events where people come together
- c. Events combining different youth groups
- d. Choir
- e. Bell choir
- f. Acolyting
- g. The people
- h. Youth group support (financial)
- i. Short services
- j. Program activities and teachers
- k. Activities – Pancake, more working together activities of all ages
- l. Youth Groups are not all one big group
- m. Good mix of reality and spirituality (especially Father George's sermons)
- n. It's small, it's Episcopal, it's open to ideas
- o. We don't use incense
- p. The new organ
- q. Fast church service
- r. The youth programs
- s. Blessing of the animals
- t. Fellowship – friendship, food
- u. Liberal views
- v. It's small
- w. Community service
- x. Pancakes/waffles
- y. Great friendly people
- z. Youth activities
- aa. Like trips
- bb. Close knit community

2. What are some things that should be changed or improved in the future to make Nativity a better place?

- a. Bell choir improvement
- b. Shorter service
- c. No more Youth Sunday
- d. More youth involvement during announcements

- e. Blue Jay park service
- f. Give the tree back
- g. Announcements in church
- h. Fun youth activities, for example – bowling
- i. Go back to old service
- j. Expansion and development of the youth group programs
- k. Dedicated Youth Director
- l. Diversified travel locations
- m. Non-service activities with the youth groups
- n. Reclining pews
- o. Bigger music programs
- p. More mission trips for youth
- q. Make our own host/wafers
- r. Faster service
- s. Youth program – empower the youth
- t. Student council
- u. More social events
- v. Building – youth, music
- w. Steam cleaning of couches
- x. Hire youth leader
- y. All – dance service
- z. Everything is ok
- aa. Consider having youth service once with youth music
- bb. Bible study

3. Do you have any questions about how Nativity is going to pick a new priest?

- a. Take time to select
- b. Use vestry committee
- c. Military mother or father as selection or someone who supports the armed services
- d. Prefer short list/targeted search approach
- e. Rector should have youth group program experience
- f. Are we voting?
- g. Are we going to have a priest showdown?
- h. How is Nativity going to pick a new priest?
- i. Can youth sit in on any part?
- j. How will Father George be involved?
- k. Will these questions be answered?
- l. How long will it take?
- m. Where are funds coming from?
- n. Some don't understand the search options
- o. Want to discuss the process

4. Any additional comments about Nativity, the Youth Groups, finding a new priest....????

- a. We enjoy the liberal mindset of the church
- b. Keep Father George
- c. Someone who can relate to all ages personally and during the service

- d. Has to be easy to talk to
- e. We like the way the church has 'changed'
- f. A priest who has an understanding of family and time
- g. The priest should have a mustache
- h. More regathering events during the year
- i. I would trust Bishop Curry's decision
- j. Nativity is fabulous, but we need a call and response system (for hymns, etc)
- k. Brian is super great
- l. Rite 13 room is too small
- m. For a priest, we need someone who gives energetic sermons that engage the parish, involves youth, passionate, not boring or evangelical, wants to interact, interested in people's lives, (some students want politics in sermons and some do not)
- n. Want the priest to be fun, relate to youth
- o. Likes the Bishop's Ball and the Summit

Your Experience

(Used to focus participants on the topic and get people thinking of their personal experiences with Nativity)

QUESTION: Reflect on your time at Nativity. Locate a moment that was a high point, when you felt Nativity was doing God's work/fulfilling its mission.

We have separated the answers into seven categories, and several subcategories:

- Community/Participation
- Programs/Christian Education/Youth
- Worship/Music
- Rector/Leadership
- Outreach
- Facilities
- Finances

Community (also called Welcoming/Caring/Supportive)/

Participation

- Combined St. Ambrose and our choir, Bishop, several priests - the wider Raleigh community came together at Timothy Barnwell's funeral. Amazing high was someone's low.
- Timothy Barnwell's funeral: family in crisis, pulling together - good response to terrible thing
- High Moment: Moments of great sorrow and great joy - our church community came together (in large numbers) to support those persons.
- Coming together to mark passage of life: e.g. - embracing Brad and Ellyn through coming together for Brad and Ellyn's baby
- Today is your apex of this faith community - with joy, little kids, and especially teens who are happy to be here.
- Interpersonal relationships to help through personal issues
- The feeling of community - welcoming, supportive
- Modeling nurturing behaviors
- Coming together in Big Moments of Member's lives - personal touch
- Welcoming children, strangers, nontraditional paths
- Feeling of Community
- Community help in my darkest hours
- Gathering of support each time there is a person or family in crisis. Not one specific moment, but several

- This morning, church was full at 10:30 service before Eucharist; laughter, joy
- Welcomes people (all)
- First Sunday service Gail Christensen invited me to join the choir, fulfilling my mission to provide God's work.
- First Sunday drawn right in
- Friendliness of greeter when we first came
- If CotN's mission is to bring people to a home where they can love God, feel God's love and act on that love, then my high point was the day we first attended and knew its message of welcome, radical welcome
- Welcoming newcomers
- Support: compassion of parish when Ed was in hospital - pastoral care
- Attention and support David and Nancy gave when in hospital
- Mother Diane prayed for me when in hospital
- Immediate care for a member by the congregation
- Accountable to one another - we all have a stake
- Support, prayer, healing, laying on of hands, sense of community
- Sense of community
- Formation of organized pastoral care program (prev. had no structure)
- Welcoming. Cliff Shimmel individuals' time talking with me. First visit.
- Personalization - initial welcome by Mother Diane - approach by DOK - personal approach by DOK - from DOK, welcome/invitation
- Personal approach - invitation to join Blue Candle - personal by Helen Armstrong
- Personal approach - welcome by Mother Diane - particular effect on our son
- Personal invitation to join DOK - mentoring by Mary-Benton Gordon
- First visit - welcoming, hug from Mother Diane, various groups to be involved in - choir, book study, Spirituality in the Arts
- Enthusiasm and support after death of our child in having another
- Good group dynamics welcoming new helpers - Blue Candle welcomed me with no introduction
- Pastoral care. Being a LEM. Nancy Titus coming to my home to take my mother's blood pressure. Mother Diane sitting with us after my mother's death.
- Welcoming the stranger.
- Welcoming - newcomer lunches - priests knows you (Brad was excellent)
- Being greeted and welcomed by Perry Holstein - feeling of sincere welcome and inclusion - you left here feeling that you were part of something.
- Here 1 1/2 years - close knit, friendly, godly folks in congregation
- CotN's high point is its inclusiveness!
- Inclusiveness and finding communality
- Closeness of the congregation when we had church in the old building

Participation

- High Point: When there was a greater level of participation by what felt like a majority of the congregation, rather than minority (select few)
- Sense of being "vested"
- Opportunity to share and grow - EFM

- Unloading of new church organ in parking lot brought a lot of parishioners together. Lots came to help organ helps the services.
- Opening oneself to tasks - forward, allowing God to work his plan among us - things fell in place to accomplish great things with help. Sign from God - rainbow/white stag
- Having "skin in the game"
- Creating church every Sunday
- When we literally "built" the church every Sunday - set up chairs, etc. - @ Ravenscroft and York. It involved every member, young and old.
- Time when we formed the church wonderful pioneering spirit. Great all people attendance in the beginning.
- When we built the second church.
- Excitement of new building.
- The signup Sunday - participation of parish
- They signed you up immediately for something you were interested in (e.g. Outreach)
- Working with other church members to maintain the church property (instilling a sense of community)

Programs/Christian Education/Youth

- Softball - time of truly enjoying our community
- Coordinating Pastoral Care Visitors
- Intergenerational gatherings for seasons of church year - Interpersonal, Spiritual
- Inviting Community to Vacation Bible School
- St. Michael's feast - Diane on roller skates and Fred Corlett in leather and chains.
- Vestry Retreat
- EFM class
- Prayer Group, study group
- MON - support to all members
- Luncheon to kick off the Capital Campaign for the new education building brought many together to embark on a common theme to meet a goal to grow the church.
- Parish retreat - small groups at homes - larger group meetings at restaurant
- Small discussion groups in homes
- DOK quiet day
- Talent show
- Fellowship through MON - annual BBQ generating money for Outreach

Christian Education

- Adult spiritual formation
- Father David's "Nativity University" life in the church
- Faith and Science - ex. Interfaith presentations
- Faith and Science adult class
- Attending adult and Sunday school and having an active Sunday school and youth group for our children
- EFM program
- Brad in charge of Christian Education
- Weekly Bible Study, support, prayer, church family

Youth

- Sense of belonging for the children
- Family camping events. Great opportunity to bond with people outside of church.
- When Brad was here and his focus on family events and youth.
- Transformation in son and interest in youth activities@ Rite 13 from leaders' continued easy encouragement
- Young people involved
- At training as a first-time Sunday school teacher - told by Brad that #1 job - only truly crucial job - was to show those kids that we loved and cared for them
- 2005 Costa Rica Pilgrims
- Brad's family/youth program. This pulled all ages together.
- Teenagers can hang out here. Questions OK. Joy.
- Children belong. Welcomed. Involved.
- The closeness of the youth groups. Youth want to come. Program involved.
- Youth programs. Community.
- When Sally Bloom came up to me and my twins, then age 11, and invited us to join Rite 13.
- Journey to Adulthood curriculum.
- J2A program
- Beginning of Journey to Adulthood program (Rite 13, J2A, etc.)
- EYC support for very shy teen!
- Youth camping trips
- Rite 13 and its associated activities, esp. the dinner
- Grandchildren going through Rite 13. The book of wisdom was really meaningful.
- When my son experienced his Rite 13 program. He learned responsibilities to his church and community.
- Children active in youth program - diocesan, province, national - strong youth leaders
- Programs - there is division of adults and children and teens
- Commitment to youth programs - vacation bible school, pancake breakfast
- Starting J2A program
- Youth and Children's leaders recognition - standing than sitting in church

Worship and Music

- Getting married @ Nativity
- Baptism of my daughter
- Mother Diane's goodbye service
- Opening self involvement in Prayers of the People
- I attended a quiet retreat - emphasis on self awareness in relation to God
- Accepting spiritual questioning
- Worship services at Nativity - excellent sermons and wonderful music
- Worship experience is right: every week
- Organ dedication service
- Spirituality during Silent Night and candlelight on Christmas Eve

Music

- The music program - Spirituality in the Arts, etc.
- Excellent music department
- Singing at Mother Diane's goodbye service
- Here 22 years - what has kept me: handbell choir and longtime acquaintances, daughter married here
- Choir - any moment during Christmas Eve Easter when we provided spiritual joy to the congregation
- Music and the musicians
- The opportunity for my daughter to sing in church - i.e. music program
- Jack Durant's signing the role of Jesus during a Lenten performance. It dramatically affected some parishioners.

Rector/Leadership

- George stepping up to the plate.
- When George Clifford began work here was the high point
- Father George has pulled church together - there has been progress since he has been in charge. Wonderful progress. Feels part of church even only here for a short time.
- Rector modeled nurturing behavior upon the death of our child.
- The personal stories Diane shared in sermons
- The sermon was the most enjoyable each time I came to the early mass
- To hear the word of God and how it is preached gave me inspiration to more than I have
- Robin Rhaney/Brad Mullis/David Buck - truly feeling welcome
- Bishop Curry's Easter sermons
- Calm, steady leadership of Chuck Till - heading the meeting after the financial crisis and M. Diane's health issues

Facilities

- Building a new church (Diane's bath)
- The timing completion of the new church building shows it is a lively parish
- New building now Estill House - home at last - Diane priest - Energy
- Building the new church
- Building the Memorial Garden

Finances

- Tom 's (McNally) time on the vestry - putting finances in order
- Environment of giving

Outreach

- When we were consciously pledging time and talent to Outreach
- Inclusion of external community
- When there was a diverse and active Outreach ministry

- Caroling with the Sunday School classes at the Assisted Living Facility
- Support—money, people, faith—of Inter-Faith Food Shuttle at its inception
- Food Shuttle and apartments giving
- Outreach (Honduras Medical Mission)
- Getting to go on the Honduras Mission
- Honduras Medical Mission - helping the poor get access to free basic healthcare
- Food Shuttle
- Gathering and distributing Food Shuttle food to Episcopal Farm Workers
- Food Shuttle delivery to Agape and seeing the children running out
- Census to homeless
- Farm Workers Mission - people going to area workers
- Outreach to Hungry through Stop Hunger Now
- Hurricane Katrina relief to evacuees
- Supporting creation of Center for Volunteer Caregiving
- Outreach - No Matter What

Process - The Project and Meeting Design

Church of the Nativity Congregation Dialogue of Discovery: The First Step in the Discernment Process

WHO: the participants

All members and friends of Church of the Nativity are invited to give input to the Vestry regarding their vision for Nativity.

Lead facilitators of the process are: David Stoller and Karen Ridout, Nativity parishioners, and Bill Wrenn, Diocesan consultant.

Table facilitators are: David, Karen, Bill, Becky Christian, Gail Christensen, Alfred Christensen, Jane Vella, Dee Wallis

Communication, RSVPs will be handled by Dee Wallis.

Meals will be organized by Carolyn Kerr and Sandy Entrup

Set-up/Clean-up will be organized by Charly Kerr (Men of Nativity)

WHY: the situation that calls for this event

Nativity is preparing to call a new rector due to the resignation of our current rector. The Vestry will determine the procedure and issue the call. As part of the process, the Vestry wishes to gather input from parishioners to inform decisions regarding the direction and vision of Nativity for the next 3-5 years. They will use the results of the input to:

1. help form the parish profile, and
2. discern the attributes of the rector to be called.

An additional congregation session will be scheduled to share the results of the input sessions.

Meals will be provided. RSVPs may be

1. emailed to deewallis@aol.com
2. mailed to 8849 Ray Road, Raleigh, NC 27613
3. sign up on poster in Narthex
4. call Dee Wallis at 782-2558

WHEN:

We are inviting input via three methods:

1. Three face-to-face duplicate sessions are scheduled: Saturday, January 9, 8:30-10:30 a.m.; Sunday, January 10, 12:00-2:00 p.m.; and Wednesday, January 13, 6:30-8:30 p.m. One youth session is scheduled for Sunday, 1/10, 9:15-10:15 a.m.
2. Invitation with email questionnaire (due 1/13) sent to the Nativity listserv on 12/30
3. Invitation with questionnaire (due 1/13) sent to parish mailing list on 12/30

WHERE:

1. The face-to-face sessions will be held in Corlett Hall.
Round tables seating 6, sticky notes, theme mural, sound system, food/beverage tables
2. Babysitting will be provided.

CONTENT

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this process, participants will have:

Who are we? (mission)

Described a high point at Nativity
Described what he/she values most about Nativity

What is God calling us to do/be in the world? (vision)

Described 3 wishes for the future of Nativity

Rector selection process

Examined the 3 models for rector selection and asked questions

Handouts:

- Agenda
- Search Models
- Closing Prayer

AGENDA

(Food will be available to take to the tables.)

(5) **Opening Prayer/Welcome**

(10) **Introduction**

Why we are here; Agenda preview; Search process; What's next

(10) **Explanation of meeting process**

Appreciative Inquiry introduction; Small group formation

(90) **Small group input** (every voice is heard)

(tables of 6 participants, 1 facilitator, sticky notes, chart paper)

(20)

Task 1

Your Experience

In pairs, interview each other using Question 1.

Share your responses with the table group, documenting your factors on sticky notes

In your table group, identify the themes. Document on sticky notes and place on the chart paper.

Question 1:

Reflect on your time at Nativity. Locate a moment that was a high point, when you felt Nativity was doing God's work/fulfilling its mission. On a sticky note, name what was happening.

(5) **Whole group:**

Debrief Question 1 themes with whole group

(20)

Task 2

Who We Are

In pairs, interview each other using Question 2.

Share your responses with the table group, documenting your factors on sticky notes

In your table group, identify the themes. Document on sticky notes and place on the chart paper.

Question 2: Name the 3 things you value most about Nativity.

Document your thoughts on sticky notes.

(5) **Whole group:**

Debrief Question 2 themes with whole group

(20)

Task 3

Nativity's Call

In pairs, interview each other using Question 3.

Share your responses with the table group, documenting your factors on sticky notes

In your table group, identify the themes. Document on sticky notes and place on the chart paper.

Question 3: What will be Nativity's 3 most important accomplishments to you over the next 3-5 years?

Document your thoughts on sticky notes.

(5) **Whole group:**

Debrief Question 3 themes with whole group

(15)

Task 4

Rector Search Models

Examine the descriptions of the 3 search models.

What are your questions?

(5) **Full group:**

Next steps

Closing prayer in unison. Invitation for participants to pray the prayer every day.

Eternal God, we lay the life of our parish before you in this transitional time as we search for a new rector.

Renew in the Church of the Nativity a sense of your love and mission, that we may serve the people around us and be guided to the priest who, as our rector, will care for this parish and equip us for our ministries.

Guide those involved in the search process that they may patiently listen and hear what your Spirit says.

Give us the grace and power to follow where you would lead, that your Name may be glorified among us and your people strengthened in the work of reconciliation and caring for others.

All this we ask through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Search Options

The Diocese offers three options for Nativity's Vestry to use to call a new rector. Our Vestry will prayerfully determine, using your input regarding your vision for Nativity, gathered during the *Congregation Dialogue of Discovery*, the most effective process for Nativity.

"The Traditional Search"

With consent of the Bishop, the Vestry appoints an Interim Rector to serve while a parish profile – more than just a routine job description – is prepared and candidates are considered to identify a prospective Rector. The Vestry usually appoints a Search Committee to perform these functions. It's common for traditional searches to attract more than 50 interested priests. Once a prospective Rector is identified, the Vestry requests consent of the Bishop to call the priest who becomes a fully tenured Rector. The Traditional Search process runs for 12 months, more or less.

"The Targeted Search"

Again, an Interim Rector is appointed while a parish profile is prepared. The Bishop's office then acts as an "executive search consultant"; using the parish profile and their knowledge of candidates, the Bishop's office provides the Vestry with a list of 3-5 qualified priests. The Vestry interviews these priests and identifies a prospective Rector. With consent of the Bishop, a fully tenured Rector is called. The Targeted Search process runs for 6 months, more or less.

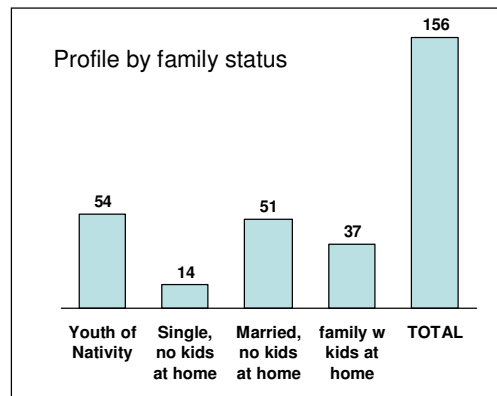
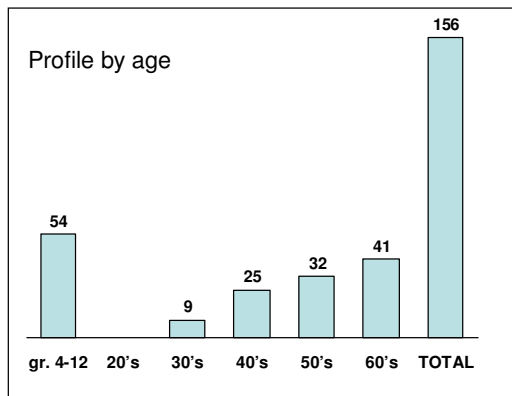
"The Rector Time Certain Search"

No Interim is called, and no parish profile is written. Rather, the parish wants to fill the position quickly. The Bishop's staff considers the needs of the parish and provides the Vestry with the name of one priest whom the Bishop believes to be a strong fit. The Vestry interviews the priest and either accepts him/her or requests another name. Once accepted, the priest becomes Rector Time Certain – a Rector in every respect except tenure. The RTC signs a three-year agreement. After two years, the RTC and Vestry mutually decide whether to extend the relationship into tenure. If this decision is not reached, during the third year of the agreement the parish undertakes a Traditional Search while the RTC searches for another call.

Participants

Church of Nativity – 2010 Congregational Dialogue of Discovery Summary of Profile of Participants (estimates)

	4-12 gr	20's	30's	40's	50's	60's	TOTAL
Youth of Nativity	54						54
Single, no kids at home			1	3	2	8	14
Married w/o kids				3	18	30	51
Family with kids at home			6	18	11	2	37
TOTAL							156



Supplement to Jan 2010 Report prepared by K.Ridout, D. Stoller, R. Christian, G Christensen