

Spiritual Discernment Group Summary

Thirteen members of St. Paul's committed themselves to ten days of meditation, prayer, assigned Bible readings and journaling toward discerning our vision for the future. This is a summary of our thoughts and conversation together following our experience.

In the voice of one which reflects many, words arose for St. Paul's to live into: community, trust, love, unity, silence, humility, authenticity, and transformation.

The discernment process must be ongoing, both individually and corporately. Through prayer and meditation we are called to journey into inner richness and healing. Through these processes we learn more deeply to see God in ourselves and God in all. By being transformed and discovering our gifts and where to use them, St. Paul's will be strengthened.

Our outreach must always grow out of love; social action "bathed in prayer". HOW we do is more important than WHAT we do. If we are honest with ourselves we face our own neediness for being fed before we can give, give, give....and burn out. Perhaps we might better listen in the wider Charlottesville community for what is needed.

Suggested Vehicles for Transformation and Ministry

Groups, groups, groups !

-- Spiritual growth through contemplation to ponder challenging questions and to share our experiences of the Divine in our daily life

--- Continuation of existing groups: Generation Wise, EFM, Friends in Deed, Prayer Shawl Ministry, Stephen Ministry, book study groups, Centering Prayer,

-- Add some new groups e.g. dinner groups, dream groups,

Worship

-- Use of more silence

-- Use more inclusive language

-- Use approved alternative liturgies

-- Celtic and Taize services

-- Importance of the liturgy feeling "stable"

Community Building

-- Better job of drawing in newcomers and helping them "step in" to our life

-- Shepherding within the congregation so that no one gets lost

-- Better job with the young people preparing them to create the church of the future making sure they feel a part of the community

Education

-- More retreats

-- Spiritual leaders who can provide a way in to new understandings of metaphoric language

-- More Creative Use of our Building--Food Coop--Childcare

-- University involvement-- Labyrinth