

Renewal Works

Executive Summary Report for Vestry

Main Objective: Spiritual Growth

Our working definitions:

Spirituality is fundamentally relational. It is the state of being connected through loving relationships to God, our neighbors, and ourselves.

Spiritual Growth is the deepening of these connections.

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we seek to increase our spirituality individually and as a parish by utilizing data obtained from the Spiritual Life Inventory, envisioning the steps necessary for spiritual growth, and being guided by a 4-stage **Spiritual Continuum**:

Spiritual Continuum	Grace in the Mtns	Episcopal Norm	All Norm	# of parishioners
Exploring	22%	18%	10%	23
Growing	44%	50%	40%	46
Deepening	31%	24%	26%	32
Centering	3%	5%	24%	3

Reference: *Spiritual Life Inventory Data Findings for Grace Church in the Mountains, Waynesville, Part 1*. p. 5 Sept 2023

The **Four Catalysts** which foster movement along the **Spiritual Continuum**:

1. Engaging with Scripture
2. Transforming Power of the Eucharist
3. Deeper Prayer Life
4. The Heart of the Leader

The heart of the leader is both a catalyst for change and central to guidance within the **Four Best Practices**

1. Get People Moving
2. Embed the Bible
3. Enhance Ownership
4. Pastor the Community

The Renewal Works team was very engaged in examining the Best Practices and developed a list of recommendations to implement these concepts in our parish community. The following are ideas we advocate implementing first, followed by additional ideas to be addressed over the next several months or years.

ENHANCE OWNERSHIP

First Steps – implement now

Modify our communication guidelines to include personal responsibility for “spiritual growth” (already implemented)

Develop a Mentorship Program

- Long-time members could volunteer as mentors to newcomers

- Informal relationship to help newcomers learn about Grace

Next Steps - to implement over next several months/years

Promote Healthy Ownership vs Territorial behaviors. Examples: Taizé, funeral receptions by DOK, Marthas group all function well without clergy supervision.

Tap into the middle 40%

- top 20% are always engaged

- lower 40% can't be engaged any more

- middle 40% would do more if **invited**

Ask, what does it mean to you to be part of this church? as a regular part of our life together

Promote inter-generational learning and fellowship

GET PEOPLE MOVING

First Steps – implement now

Identify whom to invite to participate in any ministry/group/activity

- Consider the “40%” who would participate if asked

- Better use of the Time and Talent list

Prayers of Thanksgiving

- Give thanks during the Prayers of the People for how God has moved us as a parish during the past week. Examples: we served 38 people at Bethel House this

week; we sent 200 hats to Ukraine

Next Steps - to implement over next several months/years

Worship leader's use of personal anecdotes that show vulnerability can be helpful to reduce dualistic thinking about clergy/laity

Create permeable boundaries between ministry teams; encourage people to try new groups or just visit them to learn more

Highlight and celebrate different gifts we offer

Explore lay-led spiritual direction in small groups

Offer a "stations of Grace" orientation to church buildings & grounds. Visit unique areas and learn about them; hear some origin stories.

Encourage library exploration & use. Create a reference list of recommended online resources for spiritual growth

Use Forward Day-by-Day and Venite as ways to deepen spiritual growth, apps are available

Spotlight resources in weekly e-news with a short blurb and link

Offer Book of Common Prayer 101 sessions

Redefine summer small groups to mix year-round & seasonal folks: focus on spiritual journey stories, followed by a shared meal

Change metrics for successful meetings to include the results of our "time and talent" offerings

Emphasize Christian fellowship over socializing during meetings and gatherings

Engage laypeople in core activities like liturgy (eg. writing the Prayers of the People each week)

Benefit of retreats

Offer a forum to develop a "Rule of Life" for our parish. (Example written by a church in Chicago): Worship more than you don't. Seek to deepen your faith. Serve others in the name of Jesus. Give as generously as God has given to you.

EMBED THE BIBLE

First Steps – implement now

Order more Bibles in various translations that are accessible in all meeting spaces

Provide Day by Day in every room

Provide QR codes with instructions of how to add *Day by Day* and *Venite* apps to one's phone

Start/end all meetings and activities with prayer/scripture

Highlight weekly lectionary readings in newsletter

Next Steps - to implement over next several months/years

Expand Bible studies & lectionary studies. Lay-led Bible studies can be offered throughout the year.

Provide link in weekly e-news to assigned Scripture reading. Encourage reading of the lessons prior to Sunday. Implement lay-led online forums to discuss the week's scripture

Small groups: Caregivers/Sisters/Martha's, etc.

Weekly or monthly spotlight on different groups in our newsletter

How do they embed scripture in their programs, meetings?

Integrate devotional readings/prayers when serving others

Pray before we serve - BCP is a great resource for this

Create a format to follow when serving at Bethel House

ONGOING

Schedule quarterly Sunday Forums to continue this shared journey

Workshop committee to meet quarterly for 2024 to shepherd this process

Continue to build on our current work of Pastoring the Community