

St. Anne's 2024 Vestry Retreat Summary for eBlast, Bulletin, etc.

The St. Anne's Vestry met for retreat on April 26-28.

On Friday, we gathered at The Light House to enjoy fellowship with the residents of The Light House. During this joyful gathering, we participated in several rounds of Bingo and got to know our neighbors a little more intimately.

Saturday was a full day of reflection, discernment, and planning.

We opened with prayer and reflection, led by Father Manoj.

Next was a dialogue around the book, *When Church Stops Working*, led by Vestry member Howard Buskirk. The discussion centered around how we and St. Anne's might move from searching for "more" (influence, programs, money, etc.) to attaining a deeper connection with God and each other (resonance). We reflected that quiet times during which we wait for God's word is not idle time, but some of the most productive time we could have. It is with hubris that we think that we know the best plan for the church and parish. There was deep discussion reflecting those in the Bible who rushed out to create action versus the events that God created through patience and His own plan (Peter choosing Matthias, God choosing Paul; Abraham choosing to have an heir through Hagar, God choosing for Sarah to give birth to Isaac (who gave birth to the line that led to Jesus)).

The Senior Warden led a review of our Core Values (Preach the Good News, Seek Justice, Walk with Humility and Practice Hospitality) to confirm that they remain so. While we affirmed these Core Values, we added that we will SERVE our community by upholding these Core Values. We also committed to ensuring that all ministries are acting with these values as their central purpose. The Vestry will be surveying our Ministry Leaders for better ways to support them in achieving the values that we cherish. As a way of providing meaningful feedback to our ministry leaders, the Senior Warden will establish quarterly gatherings to answer questions, provide policy guidance and updates, and listen to feedback on ways the Vestry can better support our beautiful community.

In the afternoon, the Vestry and Clergy were led by Executive Coach and St. Anne's Parishioner, Michael "Mickey" Thaxton. This provocative session helped open our eyes about how we desire to lead, where we are in our leadership journey presently, and what practices we need to adopt to get where we want to be. Mickey had us envision how a Vestry could fail in its service to St. Anne's. He then asked if we recognized any of those practices in how we conduct business today. Finally, we discerned what actions we need to take to correct or reverse actions and practices that were leading us away from the beloved community we long to be. We took away very specific actions and timelines that will help us serve our community and church.

On Sunday, the Vestry took on various servant roles during the 10 AM service. It gave us an appreciation for those who put such great care in our beautiful liturgy. We even had some Vestry members who loved serving so much that they are joining in that ministry!

Throughout the weekend we spent time connecting and learning of each other's faith journey and calling to be Vestry members. It was a wonderful event that generated a lot of thought and action, and it was something that we are looking forward to repeating!