

Vestry Retreat
Barth House
March 20, 2021 . . . 2 pm – 5 pm
Facilitated by Kat Gordon, Owner, Muddy's Bake Shop

Clergy: Scott Walters, Rector; Paul McLain, Associate Rector

Vestry: James Aldinger, Sr. Warden; Anna Kathryn Word, Jr. Warden; Madge Deacon, Clerk; Laura Squire Trott, Warden-at-Large; Lisa Buckner; David Cocke; Elizabeth Crosby; Zachary (Zach) R. Ferguson; Will Hayley; Nancy Manire; John Owen; Jerry Scruggs; Ginny Strubing; Greta Cooper Young;

Guests: Kat Gordon, Retreat Facilitator and Owner "Muddy's Bakery"

Kat - Opening – Lord's Prayer

Emotional reactions of many to being together and saying the prayer in unison

Kat – Housekeeping rules reviewed before moving into the day's theme and agenda.

Welcome – **Back to Calvary** (theme) . . . Looking forward to "**Welcome TO Calvary**" . . . *What does that look like moving forward?*

Scott – First time we have all been in the same room together!

- Story about disassembling things for the sake of learning
- Everything was "taken apart" with the Covid outbreak and shut-down
- Assembly – Assembling . . . Our lives have been disassembled . . . Our task is not necessarily to rebuild - - - it is to build on what is needed today

Kat – Working with mindset of "once we are assembled in person", not on a specific date . . . This is a journey, and all journeys have a starting point and a destination . . . Need to build plan looking at both the forest and the trees

Introductions: *Name and one word to describe how you feel going into the year at Calvary . . . Anything keeping you being fully present today*

***Clerk's note:** because of acoustics, some responses were missed, particularly the possible distractions keeping members from being fully present for the retreat.*

- Scott – Expectant –
- Lisa – Excited – babysitter issues
- Ginny – Delighted to be with people
- Zach – Energized –
- Nancy – Pleased – with what we have done and with are doing
- Elizabeth – Interested – distracted because I've just been with my sister for the first time in a year and that reunion is still very much on my mind
- Paul – Hopeful – NCAA Tournament
- Madge – Hopeful and Energized
- Laura – Hopeful
- Greta – Apprehensive
- James – Hopeful –

- Kathryn – Apprehensive
- Jerry – Positive
- John – Enthusiastic
- Anna Kathryn –
- David – Hopeful / Relieved
- Will – Thankful

Small Group Discussion – Where Is Here? (18 minute discussion)

Assign roles of Facilitator, Note-taker, Post-it-Person, and Spokesperson

Discuss the following:

- **What stage (forming, norming, storming, renaming, performing, termination) is Calvary in currently / recently in? Why?**
- **What long held norms exist / existed at Calvary** (write each norm on a post-it)
- **What has changed / what new norms have formed?** (write each norm on a post-it)
 - **Group 1** – initially hoped we'd all be on the same page; Calvary norms that have been taken away are what make Calvary, Calvary; vision of Calvary as a big, jolly, welcoming person; intentional laser-focusing on those things which is most important to us
 - **Group 2** – Reforming – Innovation - Example of Basement Church and technology that lets us share and continue to share as services can be replayed; We are a very tolerant and accepting congregation
 - **Group 3** – Continuum of re-norming / performing / re-norming / performing; Norms of all things together / in-person; rituals of marriage/burial/baptism affecting all phases of life; membership affected positively and negatively by technology (skills and the lack thereof); used to just “show up”, now must go through some hoops / jump some barriers to be there
 - **Group 4** – Reforming and performing; elements of storming as we've dealt with challenges; well-organized to make many changes reality; multi-generational congregation; technology has allowed those who've not been part of Calvary before to now be “present” on an ongoing basis; outreach programs have brought in volunteers from other congregations
- Things to think about moving forward: how we dress; where we sit; the various things “insiders” know and others may not
- Norms (Post-Its) – Long held Norms / New Norms
- Unhelpful / Uncomfortable Norms
 - See the Kat's notes to see all post-it-notes from the retreat
 - Racial segregation (Memphis is 55% Black; congregation does not reflect that); First Congo and Hope Church are among the only truly integrated congregations
 - Dressy vs Casual Attire
 - **Norms are important for building a culture** – must understand **the why** in order to determine more about whether or not it becomes a “healthy” norm . . . *Important to determine what people need to know and when do they need to know it*

- Moving forward, during face-to-face and zoom gatherings, pay close attention to what we consider “norms”
- Important to Acknowledge what we want and to look for opportunities to make those things happen . . .

Where are we going? (Personal reflection and Small Group Discussion) - - - ***Post Pandemic, and Calvary has been assembling generally in person for a little while now . . . and we are thriving!***

- What do you observe? How can you tell?
- Who is impacted and how?
- What about the in-person assembly experience makes the vestry high five?

Wrap up of the day: *What did you like best about the day? What was most surprising or interesting today? What one action can you take within the week to make this vision a reality?*

Clerk’s note: because of acoustics, some responses (or parts of responses) were missed

- Zach - How in sync we all were; continue to connect with those who are interested in Calvary
- Lisa – all of us being on the same page in terms of what we want; organize these thoughts in my head
- AK – theory behind the patterns or norming / storming, etc. . . . Talk to other parishioners about what’s important to them
- Laura – step back and think about what’s next
- Greta – similar visions as well as different; ...
- Elizabeth – separate groups came back with similar visions; keep doing what I’m doing and do more; consider a little library for our park
- John – outdoor options; call a few families to let them know what’s happening at Calvary
- James – working together in person as a group . . . reflection on the day
- Jerry – everyone showed up on a sunny Saturday! Gather more data about the 38103 demographic
- Will – dimension and planning of Calvary’s life discussed today . . . share our excitement with others in the Calvary Family
- David – I’m a newbie to the group and delighted by the dedication and commitment to the church; amazed by the complexity of Calvary . . . talk to others
- Kathryn – optimism about what we can accomplish and about the future; reprogramming my brain to think about being at Calvary
- Nancy – basement church says it all for me
- Paul – diversity of Calvary
- Madge – emotion of The Lord’s Prayer; promote calvarymemphis.org
- Scott – excitement of diversity discussion; offering the Youth Ministry Director job to an exciting candidate

Kat’s Reading . . . Closing Reflections on thinking about Calvary, the Calvary Block, and Welcoming People to Calvary . . . “The Process of Repair” . . .

Think about streets with cars parked on them, parking lots, long corridors, waiting rooms, the path between the front door and the street, the garage, the closet underneath the stairs, the bathroom, the windowless front hall of the house. All these places are made with the mistaken notion that you are only

there in limbo, in between the moments of living - - - as if they were way-stations between the few places where you are actually meant to be alive.

But these gaps must be healed and made as whole as the parts on either side of them.

In a town or building which is whole, there are no places like this; and in a life which is truly lived, there are no moments like this either.

In a life which is truly lived, there are no moment which are “in between” or “out of life” – every moment is lived fully. The Zen master says, “when I eat, I eat; when I drink, I drink; when I walk, I walk.” A building or a town which is alive, as the same quality.

In a building or a town which is alive, and which supports a life that is fully lived, there are no places which are way-stations between moments of living; every place is made in such away that life can be savored fully there. Every square inch of it has some valuable purpose, and is able to support some moment in a person’s life which is truly lived; and for this reason every part of it is whole, and every place between two wholes is also whole.

Slowly, as the “process of repair” repairs the gaps between the wholes, the structure becomes complete and whole at every level.

This goes vastly beyond the normal conception of repair.

In the commonplace use of the word repair, we assume, that when we repair something, we are essentially trying to get it back to its original state. This kind of repair is patching, conservative, static.

But in this new use of the word *repair*, we assume, instead, that every entity is changing constantly; and that at every moment we use the defects of the present state as the starting point for the definition of the new state.

When we repair something in this new sense, we assume that we are going to transform it, that new wholes will be born, that indeed, the entire whole which is being repaired will become a different whole as the result of the repair.

These Minutes and the attached notes from Kat Gordon are to be read together to capture the thoughts and activities of Part One of the Vestry Retreat (Barth House). Part Two of the Retreat was held Tuesday, March 22nd.

Respectfully Submitted,

Madge L. Deacon
Vestry Clerk
Calvary Episcopal Church