

Senior Warden's Annual Meeting Speech

In 2013, all the mending and healing we went through in 2012 took hold, and every thing just seemed to come together.

Fr. Bob had been called as our Interim Rector in October 2012 and had fully engaged us. His wonderful sermons enriched our spiritual lives, his inclusive leadership style bound us closer together and empowered us, and his warm smile helped us all smile again.

With his guidance, we elected an enormously diverse, energetic and creative Profile Committee, which labored through the spring and summer and produced a remarkable Parish Profile that paints us as we are but also as we feel called to be.

And we elected a Discernment Committee of thoughtful, deliberative parishioners from all reaches of our congregation, which already is well underway using the Profile Committee's marvelous work product to discern God's will in this vital endeavor. You will hear more from its Co-Chairs, Andy Rosenberger and Denny Bacon, later in this meeting.

At mid-year Rev. Vicki was called to fill our critical needs for an Associate Rector and for leadership of our youth and family ministry as Leslie Huber's wonderful tenure came to a close. I doubt there is anyone at All Saints who has not been touched by Vicki's encompassing ministries—new Sunday School and Family Feast formats, our first broadly Parish School-inclusive Christmas Pageant, with all those "littlest angels", the Sound of Music Sing-Along, Thanksgiving, Christmas and St. Valentine's Day dinners, "Bible and Babble" Monday morning Bible study, adult education following Eventide supper, the Book Club, the Book Table and more.

And in the pulpit and enriching our varied ministries we have been blessed by the return of Rev. Michelle, the steadfast presence of Fr. Don Stivers and the arrival of Fr. Paul Collins, while the tireless dedication of our wondrous lay Staff-- Robbie Boyd, Steve O'Connor, Cynthia Breen, Padric Davis, Anne Hopkinson, Miguel Ruiz, Temmo Korisheli and Kevin Rose -- has made all things possible.

One gauge of the vitality of a congregation is its Christian stewardship. In common with many churches, our Giving Campaigns in 2009 through 2011 saw a steady decline in pledging, both in number of pledges and in the amount pledged. Then in 2012, despite all the body blows we suffered that year as a Parish, the number of families pledging actually rose, certainly a sign of this Parish's resiliency.

And in the campaign we are just completing, even with 30 regular pledging households not yet heard from, the total amount given by All Saints parishioners has actually increased by 8%, with 74 households increasing their amount by an average of 23% and 26 households pledging for the first time. That sort of commitment is what made possible the very strong 2013 financial performance and 2014 budget that you'll be hearing about in a minute from Fred Allen.

Another gauge of a congregation's strength is how it reacts when one of its own is in need. There have been many examples of our Parish coming together in this way during the past year, but I want to recognize one in particular—the terrible series of events that overtook our Brother Carlos Ruano and his family. Their courage and dignity through all that happened has been inspiring, the love and support rained upon them by the All Saints community has been awesome, and Alan Hopkinson's tireless efforts to rally and coordinate that support, keep us all apprised of developments, and help guide events toward a survivable conclusion have been nothing short of saintly.

Finally, a good gauge of a congregation's strength is the depth and breadth of its commitment of time and talent to the leadership and ministries of the church. In one of the Discernment essays we wrote for the national data base, we said that in any group of All Saints parishioners, if all the people actively engaged in one of the leadership organizations stood up, there would not be many folks left seated. I wonder if you would bear with me for a moment to test that proposition.

I'm going to call out, in alphabetical order, the committees and organizations that make All Saints what it is, and I'd appreciate it if you would stand up, and remain standing, when yours is called. If I miss any, please excuse me-- or better yet, call it out:

- Acolytes
- Altar Guild
- Befrienders
- Budget and Finance Committee
- Choir
- Discernment Committee
- Flower Guild
- Greeters
- Holy Huddle
- Investment Committee
- Lay Readers
- Lay Eucharistic Ministers
- Outreach Committee
- Pastoral Visitation Ministry
- Prayer Circles
- Profile Committee
- Refreshment Table
- Sunday School Teachers and Assistants
- Transition House Suppers
- Ushers
- Vestry
- Welcomers
- Wise Women

Thank you. The proposition is proven. In the words of Fr. Bob's sermon this morning, you are the builders of All Saints.

So, I think the state of our church is very good. Nonetheless, 2014 will be a challenge, of course.

- As you will hear from Denny and Andy for the Discernment Committee, a huge amount of work lies ahead to prayerfully discern God's choice for our next Rector.
- And we need to constantly search for opportunities to make All Saints attractive to youths and young families, including by expanding our programs to invite Parish School families more fully into the All Saints fold.
- And we will continue our careful and deliberative steps to move forward as a Parish with our Sanctuary Readiness Project. In early March the Capital Campaign Feasibility Task Force and the Vestry

will receive and consider the results of parishioner interviews conducted over the past 6 weeks, and we will be scheduling another Town Hall Meeting to present this study as well as more developed architectural plans and a project cost budget. We are taking baby steps, and we are committed to being open and transparent at each decision point, so that where ever this project goes, we will all go there together.

Thank you and God bless.