

Forum Remarks – Profile Committee – October 29, 2017

As a parish, we can help in two ways in supporting the recruitment of a rector. One is to describe the status and trends of the institution of Trinity Church: its history, programs, and finances, the demographics of its members, and their participation in worship, learning and stewardship. Important and straight forward information.

There is a second offering that we as a community can make to this search process. It is a portrait of us that goes beyond demographics and activities. It is to give a picture of not only who we are, but also a picture of what we seek through this faith?

What doubts, needs and hopes in our lives and for the lives of others do we bring to this church to affect?

What are the challenges of walking the way of our faith in all of the places and relationships of our lives?

What are our hopes for this community to deepen our spiritual lives and support one another in living our faith?

Reflecting on these questions is a tall order. It will require introspection and vulnerability. But it is important work. Examining our spiritual needs and how we meet them will help our community more effectively give each other the courage to love. Certainly in my lifetime, never has it been so important for a community to give me that courage.

We live when money is the measure of merit. We live when glamour and greed outshine gratitude. We live when truth that challenges is fake, and those who don't measure up to our particular view of the world are deplorable. We make others the scapegoats of our own failings. We struggle to get the balance right between individual and collective responsibility. We sense the loss of goodness in our society.

In the secular sophistication of this city, we can find ourselves looked at askance if we dare to declare: "I'm a Christian". That's not surprising. Under the banner of Christianity wave placards of hate. Human rights and science are denied. Membership declines in nearly all denominations, including our own.

Yet we show up. We yearn in the whirl of violence, greed, and narcissism for something foundational. We yearn for courage to confront demons within and without. We yearn to walk the way of our faith. It takes courage to love ourselves and others. It always has.

That is the essence of our participation in this body of people, functioning under the name of Trinity Church. It is here that we support one another in tapping into the courage yielding, Love of God. We seek a deeper spirituality. Trinity is the

community in our lives that convenes with the intent to transform all who come together. This community is a treasure for us and for generations to come.

So we propose gathering in Circles of Hope for we all have brush strokes to contribute to the portrait of who we are as a community. Guided by facilitators we will have an opportunity to speak and listen. No doubt, we will discover much in common in our desires, hurts and hopes that we bring here. We will articulate the challenges of carrying the faith into all the settings and relationships of our lives. We will reveal what supports and what does not in what we do here now. We will express our hopes.

We will collect and synthesize what is said in our circles to produce a portrait of the spiritual us. Contemplating that portrait will help the search committee select a rector who can lead us to build our capacity to support one another in deepening our spirituality and living our faith more fully.

Why circles? For millennia we humans have gathered in circles when surrounded by doubt and demons and darkness. Sitting shoulder to shoulder we see all present and are fortified by coming together. At the center of a circle is a sustaining fire of hope and warmth – the love of God in unbreakable covenant with us. We in turn are in covenant with one another, a promise to honor the dignity of each.

We are blessed with a written covenant to guide ourselves as we gather around the campfire of God's love. It was written nearly four years ago by a few from within our community who were called to articulate what it means to be in covenant here and now. It is ever more salient. I invite you to take it in as promise to one another during this time of transition.

So we invite and encourage you to participate in these circles of hope, to gather around a fire of love. We invite you to participate in a preparing a portrait of why at the deepest levels we come here, what we seek through faith, what challenges that faith, what we long for through our spiritual life, and how together we can strengthen one another to love. It will be a portrait for search committee and candidates to stand before and fully take in.

Bill Walch