

TRANSITION SESSION #1 – HISTORY – “THE WAY WE WERE”

The first Transition Session was focused on “The Way We Were,” the history of Nativity. The Parish Hall was set up with photos and documents from history, which had been compiled by Emilie Sigel. There was a 24 foot long sheet of butcher paper mounted on tables. The paper was a timeline from 1985 to the present. People were given the opportunity to place themselves on the timeline when they joined Nativity (using paper doll cutouts). Major events of the history were noted, and people were encouraged to add others.

It was clear that the people enjoyed seeing the history in pictures mounted on the wall as well as the timeline. We spent a little time on an illustration of how many people had joined the community over the years.

There was then a time of reflection in the large group of memories of good times and challenging times. People honestly expressed their thoughts and feelings about some events of history, including their beloved first Rector and a previous Vicar who had left under difficult circumstances.

Some important learnings of the day were:

- there is strong lay leadership at Nativity
- there is strong commitment to outreach and some wish that there was more of a budgetary commitment (even a set percentage) to outreach
- there are always people to pitch in when something needs to be done
- there is a strong desire for work toward cultivating new leaders, and a realization that it may be difficult for some leaders to invite others to share leadership

1985	dream of a church in North Raleigh
1/7/85	meeting at Black Horse Run Country Club tasks / roles assigned
12/5/85	1 st Eucharist of North Raleigh Mission (BHR clubhouse) Bishop Estill presiding - \$2K gift from Diocese 41 people signed a Charter of Incorporation dedicated to tithing income to outreach
12/15/85	Nativity approved as Parochial Mission of St. Michael's Raleigh by Vestry
1/26/86	Nativity meets at York School
12/31/86	Nativity membership = 92 budget = \$24,840 baptized = 1 confirmed = 14
6/87	First Vicar – The Rev. Rick Calloway
1987	6 acres of land purchased
1988	move to Ravenscroft gym
1/6/91	First Eucharist in first building (Estill House)
2/1991	Vicar Rick Calloway leaves under troubled circumstance
1991	The Rev. Pamela Porter is Interim Vicar conducted congregational healing sessions
9/92	The Rev. Diane Corlett called as Vicar
1/93	Nativity becomes a parish at Diocesan Convention
2/11/2000	Bishop Michael Curry elected Bishop Diocesan

2/27/2000	The Rev. Nancy Titus is Deacon
2001	Nave is dedicated
9/7/2002	Vestry revises mission statement
10/13/2002	Estill House and Corlett Parish Hall are dedicated
2004	The Rev David Buck Associate Rector Faith and Science
2005	Spirituality in the Arts
2006	Plans for Corlett Hall expansion and Pipe Organ Honduras Medical Mission Uganda Orphan Fund
11/16/2007	Organ dedicated
4/2008	Capital Campaign kickoff for Education Building
2009	Budget reductions reduce staff Deacon Nancy Titus retires The Rev. Lois Boney part-time while Rector in recovery from illness The Rev. Dr. George Clifford becomes Acting Associate Rector
1/2010	Search process begins for next Rector The Rev. Sarah Batson becomes Interim Rector
12/5/2010	Dedication of Education Building
5/2011	The Rev. Stephanie Allen called as Second Rector
2012	Nativity Community Garden
3/2012	The Rev. David Lynch called as Deacon
10/2012	Public wireless available at Nativity
1/2013	Three services begun – 8, 9, and 11
2014	Caleb Tabor is Intern Kinder Garden Pride Packs for Leesville Elementary School
2015	
2016	Stop Hunger Now Habitat for Humanity
2017	Rise Against Hunger Solar Project Composting Sam Rodman elected Bishop Diocesan
2018	Zero Waste Church
2019	
2020	Covid pandemic

TRANSITION SESSION #2 – WHO WE ARE TODAY

Theologian Frederick Buechner defines vocation as “the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”

To know where God is calling us to be, we need to know

- our deep gladness
- the world’s deep hunger

For this session, we used a worksheet to answer four questions:

1. What are you passionate about?
2. What do you like to do?
3. What do others say you do well?
4. What needs touch your heart?

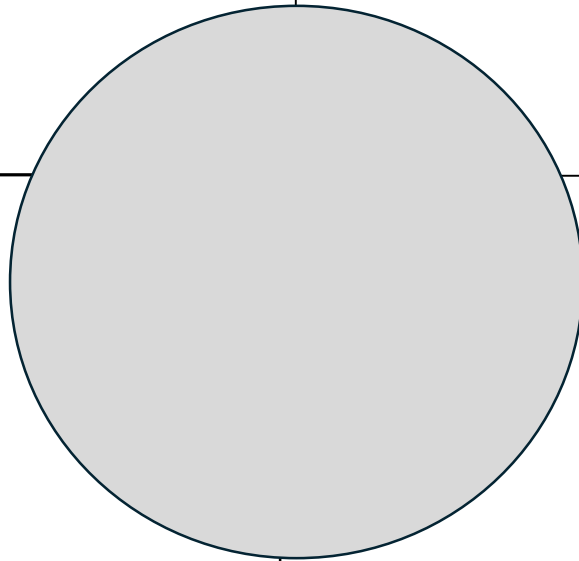
The combination of the answers to these questions helped us identify our ministries. This was a session more intentionally focused on individual gifts expressed in conversation with others.

Participants were seated in groups of four or five and given time for each person in the group to answer one of the questions. Following each question was a time of sharing with the group what surprised them or what they discovered about themselves, others, or ministry.

While there are not many notes of this session, it was clear that people were engaged in this activity designed to encourage conversation about our gifts and how they are used in ministry. The question about what others say you do well was particularly enlightening for many. There was much energy in the room and deep engagement in conversation.

What is your
passion?

What needs touch
your heart?



What do you like
to do?

What do others say
you do well?

As participants were leaving the session, they were asked to make notes on newsprint in the following categories:

What gifts does Nativity use well?	What are some gifts I think Nativity needs?	What needs does Nativity answer?
liturgy that is beautiful and not too stuffy	community building among families with small kiddos	hunger – Pride Packs, Interfaith Food Shuttle
open-mindedness and willingness to learn	ministry opportunity “fair” so we know what are can-do or needed	Creation Care
bringing people into community especially across “divides”	more \$\$funds\$\$	Outreach
welcoming!	end of life care	Liturgical teachings
stewards 4 environment	administrative → job descriptions, paid and volunteer	fellowship
people resources to fulfill many tasks	photographer (like Emilie)	end of life care – hospice/other
music	family welcomed events (picnic, outdoor services)	companionship
thought-provoking programs	multi-generational social opportunities	welcome and place to belong and be missed when absent
	young(er) volunteers on committees	community fellowship

TRANSITION SESSION #3 – FUTURE VISIONS

We traveled in a Time Machine to the year 2027. COTN's time of transition is just a memory, and now part of its history. COTN is fully settled with their new Rector. When we arrived in 2027, we were asked

- what do you see as you walk around?
- what sounds do you hear?
- what does it feel like?
- who is here with you?
- what are people doing?

Then we talked in pairs about the community we imagined; in a larger group (6 – 10) we noted ideas to be shared with the whole group. Highlighted items are the two or three top ideas from each group to be shared – all ideas generated are listed.

- COTN has become more overtly welcoming – there is Catechism – education / formation about being an Episcopalian – for people entering the community
- There are lots of young people, children and youth
- More community building events are happening (fun events both for the COTN community and the wider community)
- Demographic diversity
- Doing what we were doing well, on a bigger and more diverse level, with more activity during the week
- An unlimited or very generous budget (enabling the connection of buildings)
- Lots of interaction with parents of kids – families feel comfortable
- More joy in the pews
- Being a beacon of hope for ourselves and others
- engaging kids, supporting youth group
- Youth participation in Sunday mornings
- There is an information hub
- Diversity of programs and people at the programs
- Recreational programs
- Continued outreach
- More use of COTN's space
- More connection with greater community and marginalized people
- Creation Care continues, expanded
- Physical changes to the campus – it is maintained and improved
- Weekday service is held
- Ministry grown and more intergenerational
- Solar panels
- Interfaith get togethers
- Bell choir
- Labyrinth on the property
- COTN is a LOUD VOICE in the Diocese
- Interfaith Creation Care
- Better sound / acoustics in all areas
- Larger rooms for choir and clergy

- Broad and diverse clergy and staff
- Lots of lay involvement
- All signups are filled
- we are studying the history of our property and its link to the Chavis family
- our ministry is fed from a deeply spiritual prayer life
- we are challenged by good sermons

While we were in 2027, we picked up newspapers and noticed the following headlines:

COTN SETS THE STANDARD IN FINDING A PLACE FOR EVERYONE

By achieving active engagement with the community and intentional expansion of programming, Nativity has exceeded goals for being an inclusive faith community

NATIVITY WINS NOBEL PRIZE FOR CREATION CARE (NY TIMES)

Nativity achieved this Nobel Prize through its community care and outreach programs.

NATIVITY EXPANDS ITS CREATION CARE MINISTRY ACROSS DIOCESAN LINES

COTN SOLVES WORLD HUNGER, HAS METHOD TO ACHIEVE WORLD PEACE

COTN MEETING UNDER GREAT OAK, CHURCH @ CAPACITY

COTN LEADS LOCAL CHURCHES IN ENDEAVOR FOR WORLD PEACE

COTN YOUTH LEAD CHURCH IN SOCIAL JUSTICE REFORM

COTN: A BEACON OF LIGHT IN A WORLD OF CHAOS

COTN: PARISHIONERS ARRESTED PROTESTING XYZ

COTN: A MULTIGENERATIONAL HAVEN

REFLECTION

It is most important to realize that this type of reflection is likely only possible when there are two Interim Rectors, or when a parish engages a consultant to provide this program. I was granted the freedom to concentrate on the process of transition while my colleague was carrying the majority of the responsibility for the oversight as well as the operations of the parish.

The participation in the sessions was very high, with naturally diminished numbers as we progressed. There were 75 at the first gathering, about 60 at the second, and 34 at the third. In each gathering, people were engaged and energized.

Aspects that were not as successful as we would have liked include a limited sound system and personal preference for the topics.

It appears that this type of processing in the transition of a parish can be helpful, as the regular reporting of a search committee often leaves people feeling as if they are not part of the process.

I am deeply touched by the engagement that the people of Nativity demonstrated and the openness to asking hard questions I observed. These qualities often bear the fruit of lightened spirits in a stressful time and new energy for a new chapter in the life of the body of Christ in North Raleigh we call Church of the Nativity.