

Discerning the Roles of our Circle Members

The Next Step in Our Journey as a
Total Common Ministry Congregation at
Christ Episcopal Church,
Anacortes Washington

August, 2010

The Road Traveled So Far

The Rev. Terry Kylo

In 2008 about thirty people participated in a Lenten study to increase our skills at the practice of discernment. Discernment is the art of deep reflection about our calling to every-day ministry.

In this reflection we look with deep honesty at ourselves. We try to filter out what we have always been told about ourselves and to see more clearly who we are in God's eyes. We ask the question: given that my life is limited and precious, what is the most meaningful way to focus my energies?

In this reflection we look at the world about us with its beauty and pain and ask how our gifts and calling can interact with the world in such a way that we participate in God's mission of healing the world.

In the fall of 2008 we began a discernment group at Christ Church, led by Rita Yribar. We also began a conversation about Christ Church becoming a Total Common Ministry Conversation. Bishop



Rickel and Joan Anthony joined us for conversation and prayer and we had many times for congregational conversation.

In January of 2009 the Bishop's Committee presented to the congregation a resolution that the Bishop's Committee would vote on in March. The Bishop's Committee wanted a period of reflection and a time for members to share their input from the congregation. After receiving

that input, the Bishop's Committee voted for Christ Church to become a TCM congregation.

In May of 2009, the congregation invited 14 people to consider being a part of the Ministry Support Circle. Five people accepted that invitation: Carol Rodin, Dale Ramerman, Eric Johnson, Betty Anne McCoy, and Diane Ramerman

In the last year, the Circle have completed their first year

of formation and in the fall are now preparing for Clinical Pastoral Education.

We have covered a lot of distance on this road. Now we prepare for the next part of the journey.

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Quotes on Discernment, Life, and Faith

The place God calls you to be is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.

- Frederick Buechner

What is Next

The next step is for Christ Church's Bishop's Committee and clergy to make their recommendations to the Commission for Ministry of the Diocese and to Bishop Rickel as to the specific roles of the Circle.

We can't do that until we gather your input on an important question:

To what roles are the members of the Ministry Support Circle called?

After nearly two years of conversation, the discernment group at Christ Church is ready to share what they have learned.

The discernment group works on behalf of the whole church as well as Christ Church. Their task is to listen deeply, to question courageously, and to help members of the group to clarify their calling. The discernment group is also charged with making recommendations to the Bishop's Committee and to the Diocese when members of their group are considering a call to ministry.

They have made their recommendations now, and you can find them on page four and five and six. A list of potential roles for members of the Circle is on the second column of page six.

In the coming weeks, you will receive a letter from the Circle regarding their sense of what roles they are called to.

We want your input as to the roles of the ministry support circle. The Bishop's Committee of Christ Church and the Clergy want you to share your observations and insights as we consider the recommendations of the Discernment Group.

You are invited to share your input with the Bishop's Committee and Clergy in several ways:

1. Talk to us in person
2. Send mail or email to the clergy or to the Sr. Warden, Val Long:
valtine@comcast.net
13078 Sunset Lane Anacortes, WA 98221
3. Listening sessions with Bishop's Committee
Members who will be available in the parish hall

(times to be announced).

4. Participate in the Congregational Meeting on September 12 after worship.

After the Bishop's Committee and Clergy have gathered the input of the congregation, we will meet together with the Ministry Support Circle to hear their perspective.

Then the Bishop's Committee and the Clergy will spend a week in prayer and reflection and make our recommendations to the Diocese.

Calendar:

August and Early September

Time for congregational prayer, reflection and feedback to the clergy and Bishop's Committee

September 12th

Congregational Meeting after worship

September 13th

Meeting of the Bishop's Committee with the Circle

September 20th

Bishop's Committee and Clergy make their recommendation and inform the Circle, Commission for Ministry, and the Bishop

October 1st

The Circle submits their applications for postulancy to the Canon for Vocations

The soul is like a wild animal—tough, resilient, savvy, self-sufficient, and yet exceedingly shy. If we want to see a wild animal, the last thing we should do is to go crashing through the woods, shouting for the creature to come out. But if we are willing to walk quietly into the woods and sit silently for an hour or two at the base of a tree, the creature we are waiting for may well emerge, and out of the corner of an eye we will catch a glimpse of the precious wildness we seek.

— Parker J. Palmer

Please Follow These Steps



Step One:

Daily Remember Your Baptismal Identity

You are God's Holy and Beloved Child, marked with the cross of Christ, and sealed by the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is who we are as baptized people.



Step Two:

Pray Daily for the Ministry of Christ Church

Keep the ministry and people of Christ Church in your daily prayers and continue to explore your own ministry in both daily life and in the official ministries of the church.

Step Three:

Reflect on the Gifts of the Circle

Read the letter from the Discernment Group and the a list of some of the possible roles the Circle Members may play in support of all baptized ministry at Christ Church. Reflect on your experience of their leadership and gifts.



Step Four:

Pray for each Circle Member

Pray for each member of the Ministry Support Circle. Ask God to lead them their deep joy in ministry with us at Christ Church and what roles we need for our future ministry.



Step Five:

Participate in their discernment of roles

Communicate with your clergy and Bishop's Committee in person, over the phone, via email, at listening sessions, or at the congregational meeting on September 12th.

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3. Listening sessions with Bishop's Committee Members who will be available in the parish hall (times to be announced).
4. Participate in the Congregational Meeting on September 12 after worship.



Letter from the Discernment Group

Christ Episcopal Discernment Group
Teresa Dahlgren
Sandi Davidson
Rita Yribar
1216 7th Street
Anacortes, WA 98221

August 4, 2010

The Reverend Vicki Wesen,
The Reverend Terry Kylo,
The Reverend Dennis Taylor,
The Reverend Rilla Barrett,
The Commission for Ministry,
Christ Episcopal Bishop's Committee,
The Rt. Reverend Bishop Rickel

To the Above Named Persons,

We are writing this letter in support of five members nominated by the congregation to be a Ministry Support Circle. These individuals are Eric Johnson, Betty Anne McCoy, Dale Ramerman, Diane Ramerman, and Carol Rodin.

Members of the discernment group include: Rita Yribar (facilitator), Teresa Dahlgren, Sandi Davidson, the Rev. Dennis Taylor (chaplain), Eric Johnson, Betty Anne McCoy, Dale Ramerman Diane Ramerman, and Carol Rodin .

This group held its first meeting in September 2008, and meets monthly (approximately 10 times a year). We used *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community* by Suzanne G. Farnham, et. al. as our text. *Parts of Sacred Compass: The Way of Spiritual Discernment* by J. Brent Bill and *Hearing with the Heart: A Gentle Guide to Discerning God's Will for Your Life* by Debra K. Farrington were also used.

The group employed a variety of tools recommended in our readings or on the CD from Diocese of Olympia Commission on Ministry *Helps for the Discernment Process: 2007* to assist us through the process of discernment. To facilitate discernment between meetings we read, took personality tests and inventories, kept journals, prayed and meditated. We established norms that we reviewed at each

meeting for several months until they became second nature to the group. Attached are working copies of some agendas along with the norms and sample handouts.

Each member wrote and then shared their faith story with the rest of the group. We also shared our vision of discernment. A conversation with each member regarding personal discernment also took place. We maintained a nonjudgmental, safe, and confidential place for open and frank discussion about strengths, weaknesses, spiritual gifts, personal and financial requirements, as well as any trepidation about a calling.

As the group began meeting in the fall of 2008, we sensed the nominees' call to ministry and as we worked through our meetings and moved deeper into the process of discernment, the call became more evident. In 2009, this call was evident to the Congregation of Christ Church as well and the nominees were called to the Ministry Support Circle.

As part of the discernment process, all five nominees have come to express their call of service to Christ Church and to the community. Eric has a strong prophetic voice and sense of servant ministry bringing the needs of the community to the church and bridging the wall between the two. Betty Anne has a call to service as a facilitator and vision holder. Dale has a call to service as educator and preacher. Diane and Carol have a strong call of service at the altar and respectively to pastoral ministry and children's ministry.

As committed members of the Ministry Support Circle, the nominees have collaborated with each other as a group and with the Christ Church community to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the commitment and responsibility of the ordained ministry. Their collaboration results in a synergy that is reflected in their mature handling of any difference of opinion. This maturity is also reflected in their making this commitment to the Circle and Christ Church a priority in their lives and their spiritual practice.

The nominees' commitment is exemplified in their active leadership in the Christ Church and the Komo Kulshan Cluster communities. Eric, Betty Anne and Dale have all served as Sr. Warden. Eric,

Dale, and Diane have all served and continue to serve as Worship Leaders and preachers. Carol, Eric, Dale, and Diane are all licensed Eucharistic Ministers. Diane is a licensed Pastoral Leader. Eric, Dale & Diane are licensed Eucharistic Visitors. These individuals already fill many of the functions in our small congregation that have traditionally fallen to ordained clergy. Through their various ministries, they have all been leaders in our parish for a number of years and have all consistently demonstrated both a sense of commitment and wisdom in their roles.

The nominees' past and current dedication to their ministries demonstrates their obedience to the direction and leadership of the bishop. They will, of course, question authority to reveal the truth, but recognize when to follow direction. Again, their ability to collaborate with each other, clergy, and the congregation reflects this obedience.

Not only have the nominees participated fully in the activities of the church, but they have continued their studies in church history, philosophy and the Scriptures. Betty Anne, Dale, Diane, and Eric have exhibited diligence in the study of the Scriptures by completing the four year distance learning program from Sewanne Education for Ministry and serve as mentors and Carol is completing her third year in the program. As students of EFM, they spent two years studying the Scriptures as well as the two independent study units in the TCM curriculum.

Along with their leadership roles, the nominees demonstrate a spirit of reconciliation in their daily spiritual practice. They have testified to this spirit of forgiveness, peace and harmony in their faith stories and in their willingness to open themselves to the scrutiny of the group, the clergy, and the congregation. This spirit is another reason why the congregation selected them to be part of the Circle.

The nominees reveal a welcoming openness and inclusiveness in their spiritual practice and their daily lives. Eric works with other local congregations in helping the homeless and other diverse groups of people through his work with Kiwanis. Eric, Dale, and Diane attend to the needs of the elderly and infirm as Eucharistic Visitors. Betty Anne works with older people with a variety of physical and mental challenges at Gentry House. She also works with many members of the local community and the Church community through her work at the

Red Door Thrift Shop. Carol works with children from our congregation, members of the Cluster, and children who come to Godly play and do not have a church. She also works with the Hispanic members of La Iglesia de la Resurreccion. Dale also works with a diverse group from the local community at the Red Door Thrift Shop. Diane assists many different populations as a volunteer chaplain at the local hospital.

The nominees would perhaps be least comfortable serving those whose views are politically/socially very conservative. However, their faith stories and their behavior show them to be aware of this discomfort. They all have shown themselves to be skilled listeners and have the maturity to be sensitive to differing viewpoints.

As it should be, all nominees are committed to their families and at times will have to meet the challenge of balancing family and obligation to the Circle with grace. At this time, they are all certainly able to handle this challenge. All nominees have support from their families and from friendships outside the church. Carol and Diane are currently working with a Spiritual Director.

The nominees see the potential challenges before them. They have discussed the need for good communication amongst themselves and the importance of using communication to avoid problems. They have also discussed and plan to continue discussing ways to establish this communication. They have also discussed the need to share information with and educate the congregation.

The nominees will continue to develop a greater insight into themselves and others. They continue to learn to work together as a cohesive unit and to act on decisions as a group rather than making unilateral decisions.

The nominees need an awareness of and sensitivity to the perceived authority that might be placed on them by the congregation. It will be necessary for the nominees to focus on the supportive role the Circle plays in allowing church members to better serve out their own baptismal vows. The nominees see the need for the Circle to lead by



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serving and will need to avoid to the pitfall of pushing things along by force of will.

Ongoing discernment will allow them to discover a deeper understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and to release the need to control outcomes. The nominees have discussed that not everything has to be done in an instant or by them personally.

Sincerely,

Rita Yribar

Teresa Dahlgren

Sandi Davidson

Some Possible Roles for our Ministry Support Circle Members

- Sacramentalists
- Liturgists
- Preachers
- Parish Life Ministers
- Outreach Ministers
- Minsters of Congregational Development
- Youth Ministers
- Stewards for the Ministries of the Red Door, Gentry House, Christ Church campus
- Pastoral Care Ministers
- Pastoral Mentors

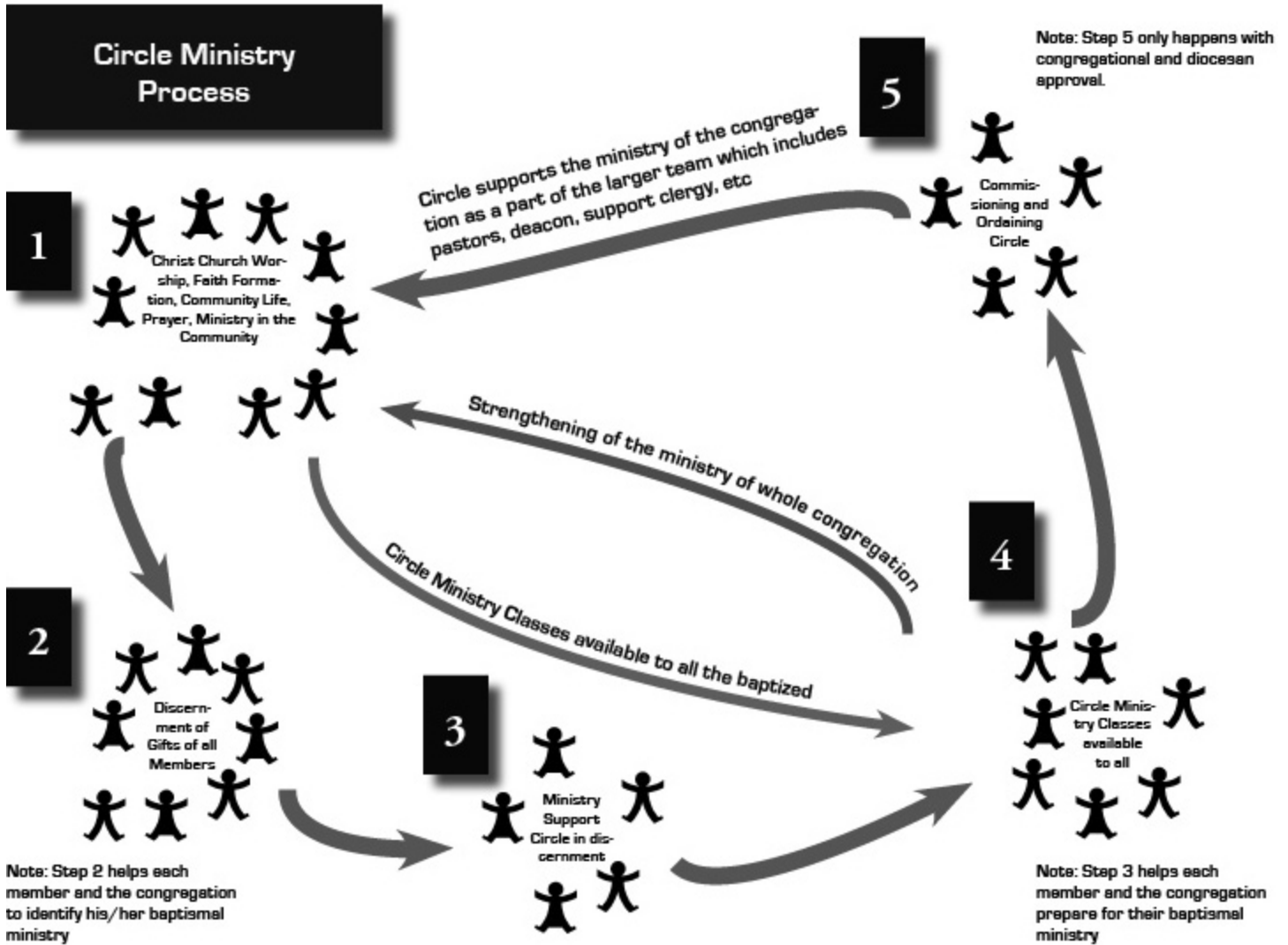


Quotes on Discernment, Life, and Faith

When you come to the edge of all the light you have, and must take a step into the darkness of the unknown, believe that one of two things will happen. Either there will be something solid for you to stand on—or you will be taught how to fly.

- Patrick Overton

Circle Ministry Process



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Quotes on Discernment, Life, and Faith

Our strongest gifts are usually those that we are barely aware of possessing. They are part of our God-given nature, with us from the moment we drew first breath, and we are no more conscious of having them than we are of breathing in.

- Parker J. Palmer

Some History of TCM at Christ Church

2004

First conversations about TCM

2005-2006

Cluster wide conversations about TCM with
The Rev. Joan Anthony

Lent 2008

Learning about individual discernment

May 2008

Congregational discernment with Bishop
Rivera

June 2008

Meeting with Joan Anthony about TCM

Fall 2008

Discernment Group formed

Fall 2008

Congregational Conversations about TCM in-
cluding conversation with Bishop Rickel about
TCM and Gentry House purchase

January 2009

Proposed resolution given to the congrega-
tion for input to the Bishop's Committee

March 2009

Vote of the Bishop's Committee to approve
Christ Church as a TCM congregation

May 2009

Congregational process to invite members to
become a part of the Circle

July 2009

The Rev. Canon Joan Anthony commissions
the Circle to begin preparations for their
ministry

August 2009

The Clergy work with the Commission for
Ministry to approve a course of formation for
the Circle

September 2009

The Circle begins formation with classes open
to the congregation

January 2010

The Circle meets with the Commission for
Ministry

July 2010

The Discernment group begins to write its
reomendations to the clergy, Bishop's Com-
mittee, and the Diocese

Quotes on Discernment, Life, and Faith

Better is one hand full of quietness than two hands full of toil and striving after the wind.
- Ecclesiastes 4:6

Then he said to them, "The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath."
- Mark 2:27