



# Congregational Vitality

## COLLEGE FOR CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CCD)

The College for Congregational Development (CCD) is an intensive two-year program designed for teams of lay and clergy leaders to develop leadership skills for parish growth and health. CCD's goals include helping parishes become more faithful, effective, and healthy. Based in the academic disciplines of congregational and organizational development, CCD is also rooted in the identity, doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Episcopal Church. CCD director Alissa Newton notes: "Episcopal formation and identity is part of what makes a congregation healthy."

CCD originated in the Diocese of Olympia and is recommended by Bishop Wright's office for parishes facing serious challenges who have decided they are ready to do the work to change. Parishes either holding steady or thriving, but still looking for further growth, should also consider this program. Parishes going through a sudden trauma or crisis are not the best candidates for this program. The bishop will direct the Canon for Ministry or some other consultant to aid them through the crisis time before they consider CCD.

Parishes considering CCD should speak with the Canon for Ministry to confirm they are ready to make the commitment to move forward towards health. The Canon for Ministry will work with the existing parish leadership to find the best candidates to attend the training, which consists of two 7-day intensive sessions over two consecutive summers.

As a partnership between parish and diocese, the bishop's office will pay a portion of the tuition based on the annual budget of the parish. For parish budgets under \$400K, the diocese will underwrite \$500/person. For parish budgets \$400K-\$1 million, the diocese will underwrite \$400/person. For parish budgets over \$1 million, the diocese will underwrite \$300/person. The cost is currently around \$850/person for the program, room, and board. Travel costs are extra.

If you think your parish is a good candidate for CCD, contact Canon for Ministry John Thompson-Quartey at the bishop's office. For more information about the CCD experience, contact **The Rev. Sarah Fisher, [mo.sarah@stpat.net](mailto:mo.sarah@stpat.net), 770-455-6523** at St. Patrick's in Dunwoody.

## PARISH BEST PRACTICES

Our purpose is to promote and share parish best practices throughout the diocese, focusing each year on one core aspect of parish life.

We plan to hold 3 events per year: a breakout group at Annual Council, a teaching module at Called to Lead, and an annual Clergy Day. Additionally, we will prepare resources for one or two of their monthly clericus meetings, and monthly discussion questions that vestries may consider using for their formation time.

### 2016-17 TOPIC - STEWARDSHIP

Financial stewardship and fundraising are a crucial part of parish life, and connected to our diocesan purpose to grow spiritually. Without our parishes having appropriate financial resources, they cannot live out their missions. Without our members linking their spiritual and financial lives, they are more likely to be trapped by their love of money.

### THE THREE EVENTS FOR 2016-17 ARE:

**2016 Annual Council:** For this event we welcome the new executive director of Episcopal Charities Foundation, Lindsey Hardegree. Lindsey will present ECF's new planned giving campaign for each parish in the diocese. It is designed to benefit parishes without a planned giving program, to fund outreach ministries across the diocese, and to help the poor and oppressed throughout middle and north Georgia.

**2017 Called to Lead:** Several key leaders of our diocese, including Bishop Wright, were recently trained in a new stewardship and membership program called Project Resource. Those leaders will teach us about this new program and how it can help our parishes.

**2017 Clergy Day:** For this Clergy Day, probably in June, all rectors and priests-in-charge are encouraged to bring their stewardship chairs. In addition to the Project Resource module, we will gather a panel of clergy and stewardship chairs from parishes of various sizes that have seen growth in their financial and spiritual stewardship work. What has worked in their various parishes and what can translate to yours?

For more information about Parish Best Practices, contact **The Rev. Greg Tallant, [tallant@htparish.com](mailto:tallant@htparish.com), (404-377-2622)** at Holy Trinity Parish in Decatur.

## MINISTRY STORIES

The **Ministry Stories Project** conveys how the Episcopal Church in Middle and North Georgia loves like Jesus, serves compassionately, worships joyfully, and grows spiritually. We have two strategies: to collect and record stories of specific ministries, and to find out how each worshipping community engages ministry. The hope is that Ministry Stories will promote self-understanding, mutual learning, and evangelism for worshipping communities, convocations, and the diocese as a whole.

**Recorded Stories:** Using an online survey, we asked for brief descriptions of a time when the worshipping community loved like Jesus, served compassionately, worshiped joyfully, and grew spiritually. We will conduct interviews and record stories to create video snapshots of parishes or ministry themes such as feeding the hungry or welcoming the stranger. These stories give texture and nuance to the quantitative information gathered.

**Census of Ministries:** We asked each worshipping community to tell us about its ministries: what types, how often, and how many people were involved. While these numbers don't tell the full story, they provide a reference point for understanding how we fulfill our purpose.

**Self-understanding:** Each worshipping community has unique gifts for ministry. Ministry Stories will be summarized for similar parishes (i.e. by size, convocation, etc.), for each convocation, and for the diocese as a whole.

**Mutual learning:** Ministry Stories will assemble a shared body of knowledge about our ministries, allowing us to learn from each other so we can strengthen and encourage one another in exercising diverse gifts.

**Evangelism:** There is good news in every congregation throughout this diocese! Ministry Stories allow us to tell each other and the world how God's passion for being among us is evident in the worshipping communities of the Episcopal Church in Middle and North Georgia. We can communicate what good news looks like in this diocese.

**What's Next:** In 2017, we will compile video stories, analyze census data, and deliver findings to rectors/vicars/priests-in-charge, convocation deans, and Bishop Wright.

For more information about Ministry Stories, contact **Shirley Banks, [shirleybanksconsulting@gmail.com](mailto:shirleybanksconsulting@gmail.com), 404-644-4861**

