**These stations are designed in conjnunction with the ECF Vestry Handbook, for use as a centering activity for Vestry Retreat, and may be adapted. All scriptures are from Eugene Peterson, *The Message.***

**Set up & Supplies**

**Station LIGHT**

\*Copies of LIGHT instructions

\*Large candle in clear glass holder (such as sanctuary candle)

\*Sharpie Markers

(Candle may be lit at Vestry Meetings througout the year.

**Station THIRST**

\*Copies of THIRST instructions

\*Small pieces of paper or cardstock

\*Pens

\*Small cup

\*Pitcher

**Station GROWTH AND BURY**

\*Copies of GROWTH AND BURY instructions

\*Small tree or plant in dirt

\*Tongue Depressors

\*Sticks with “fruit” attached, or BBQ skewers with fruit cut outs.

\*Pens or sharpies

**Station SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

\*Copies of SPIRITUAL GIFTS insturctions

\*Puzzle made of cardstock (one piece of each vestry member)

\*Names of Vestry members writte on cardstock (one per piece)

\*Pens

\*Puzzle pieces may be used as prayers during the year. Each Vestry meeting, choose someone else’s puzzle piece. Pray for them throughout the month, bring the puzzle piece back to the next meeting and exchange.

**Station WELCOME**

\*This station built on a particular vision of one congregation, you may choose to create your own for a particular vision of your parish.

\*Welcome instructions

\*Copies of Worksheet for each participant

\*Pens

**Welcome to Vestry Retreat.** Please enter quietly and enjoy coffee, pastries, and prayer stations in peace. Please rotate as necessary (in no order) to ensure no more than 2 per station at a time.

There are five stations.

**LIGHT**

1. Read quote and scripture
2. Follow activity.

**LIGHT**

“The most important [of the shared responsibilities of the vestry and a rector] is discernment. The primary tasks for a vestry are discerning what God is calling your faith community to do and articulating a hopeful vision of the church and the world as God’s mission.”

 -Vestry Handbook, Page 4

“Vestries today need to see beyond the quick, technical fixes and tackle the more complex issues that ultimately can strengthen the congregation. That slower, more difficult work of transformational leadership requires a shared understanding of what God is calling the community to do. And that path to a shared purpose begins with these questions: Why are we here, in this particular place? Why do we do what we do? … Where is Jesus in all of this? What is he calling us to do?

 -Vestry Handbook, page, 26.

**Salt and Light – Matthew 5**

**13**“Let me tell you why you are here. You’re here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You’ve lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage.

**14-16**“Here’s another way to put it: You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand. Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.

Through our baptism, we receive the light of Christ. We, as church leaders, are called to be God’s beacon of light at Saint Patrick’s and the world. In what ways do you wish God’s light would shine through Saint Patrick’s in 2018? What is your greatest prayer? Your greatest hope for Vestry, or for Saint Pat’s this year?

Distill this prayer to a few words, and write your prayer on the prayer candle. We will use this candle each Vestry to remind us we are the light bearers, and we pray for God’s light in Somerset and at St. Pats.

**THIRST**

1. Read and meditate on scripture & quotes
2. Follow activity

**HUNGER AND THIRST**

“As Vestry members, we can wring our hands and bemoan the changes and challenges [of our church and world], or we can open our eyes to the hunger for meaning and the need in our communities and the world around us. We can roll up our sleeves and get to work on finding ways to live discipleship authentically and figuring out Jesus’ mission for our congregations today.”

 -Vestry Handbook, Page 3

Least of These. Matthew 25

 **34-36**“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Enter, you who are blessed by my Father! Take what’s coming to you in this kingdom. It’s been ready for you since the world’s foundation. And here’s why:

I was hungry and you fed me,
I was thirsty and you gave me a drink,
I was homeless and you gave me a room,
I was shivering and you gave me clothes,
I was sick and you stopped to visit,
I was in prison and you came to me.’

**37-40**“Then those ‘sheep’ are going to say, ‘Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and give you a drink? And when did we ever see you sick or in prison and come to you?’ Then the King will say, ‘I’m telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me.’

**Who Thirsts in our midst?**

On the paper front list those who are hugry and thirsty, spirtually or physcially in our midst.

On the paper back: list ways we water and feed them.

Place your paper under the cup.

Pour out some water to symbolically remember them.

**GROWTH AND BURY**

1. Read Scripture & Quotes
2. Meditate and Pray
3. Follow activty on back of scripture

**GROWTH AND BURY**

“The Spirit is full of energy and surprises. And there is no doubt that if your work to discern and move your mission forward takes off, you’ll be in for an exciting period of growth and change – a result that is bound to create resistance in your faith community. When this happens, your task as congregational leaders shifts to helping the congregation deal with disruption and discomfort that accompanies new life.

Change always involves letting go of the way things were. It asks us to innovate, to rethink our roles and our sense of purpose. It might also make us uncomfortable. Your role as a vestry at such times is to remain firmly focused on mission, to be patient and hopeful with those struggling in the transition, and to manage your own resistance, trusting in what fourteenth-century mystic Meister Eckhart called “the magic of beginnings.”
 -Vestry Handbook, page 24

**The Vine and the Branches - Matthew 15**

**15 1-3**“I am the Real Vine and my Father is the Farmer. He cuts off every branch of me that doesn’t bear grapes. And every branch that is grape-bearing he prunes back so it will bear even more. You are already pruned back by the message I have spoken.

**4**“Live in me. Make your home in me just as I do in you. In the same way that a branch can’t bear grapes by itself but only by being joined to the vine, you can’t bear fruit unless you are joined with me.

**5-8**“I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you’re joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated, you can’t produce a thing. Anyone who separates from me is deadwood, gathered up and thrown on the bonfire. But if you make yourselves at home with me and my words are at home in you, you can be sure that whatever you ask will be listened to and acted upon. This is how my Father shows who he is—when you produce grapes, when you mature as my disciples.

**9-10**“I’ve loved you the way my Father has loved me. Make yourselves at home in my love. If you keep my commands, you’ll remain intimately at home in my love. That’s what I’ve done—kept my Father’s commands and made myself at home in his love.

**11-15**“I’ve told you these things for a purpose: that my joy might be your joy, and your joy wholly mature. This is my command: Love one another the way I loved you. This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends. You are my friends when you do the things I command you. I’m no longer calling you servants because servants don’t understand what their master is thinking and planning. No, I’ve named you friends because I’ve let you in on everything I’ve heard from the Father.

**16**“You didn’t choose me, remember; I chose you, and put you in the world to bear fruit, fruit that won’t spoil. As fruit bearers, whatever you ask the Father in relation to me, he gives you.

**17**“But remember the root command: Love one another.

**Growth and Bury Activity**

Knowing that God grows good things in us, and prunes things that are no longer necessary, think about Saint Patrick’s in the context of what needs to be grown and pruned.

 **Growth**

What is God calling us to grow into?

Of everything that we could be, as a Church what would be most fruitful to Christ’s life and ministry?

*On the “fruit” write ways in which God is asking Saint Pat’s to grow. List programs, ideas, thoughts, ministries, patterns of thinking, new behaviors, and/or concrete ways you think God is calling Saint Patrick’s to grow this year. Place your fruit in the tree.*

**Bury**

On the “stick” write things that you pray will be pruned this year. What things in our common life together might God be calling us to let go of? What do we need to cut off? What we need to stop doing?

Are there patterns of behavior or thinking that are not fully allowing us to grow into who God calls us to be?

*On the stick, list programs, ideas, thoughts, ministries, patterns of thinking, and old behaviors and concrete things, that you believe need to be pruned or burried. Use as many sticks as you would like. Place them in the dirt for “burrying”.*

**Spiritual Gifts**

God has given us all gifts to share, for the good of the body!

1. Read and meditate on scripture & quotes.
2. On puzzle piece write the “gifts” you know each person brings.
3. Put the puzzle together to signify our unity in the body.

**GIFTS**

“You bring your faith, your gifts, and your experience in the church and the world to the vestry table – as do the rector and each of your vestry colleagues. This richness brings a wealth of possibilities.... We are convinced that strong lay and clergy teams are a critical need in the church today… Vital teams that honor and use the gifts, experience, and potential of each lay and clergy member are better equipped to address the many challenges that face congregations today.”

 -Vestry Handbook, page 17

**Spiritual Gifts 1 Corinthians 12**

**4-11**God’s various gifts are handed out everywhere; but they all originate in God’s Spirit. God’s various ministries are carried out everywhere; but they all originate in God’s Spirit. God’s various expressions of power are in action everywhere; but God himself is behind it all. Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people! The variety is wonderful:

wise counsel

clear understanding

simple trust

healing the sick

miraculous acts

proclamation

distinguishing between spirits

tongues

interpretation of tongues.

All these gifts have a common origin, but are handed out one by one by the one Spirit of God. He decides who gets what, and when.

**12-13**You can easily enough see how this kind of thing works by looking no further than your own body. Your body has many parts—limbs, organs, cells—but no matter how many parts you can name, you’re still one body. It’s exactly the same with Christ. By means of his one Spirit, we all said good-bye to our partial and piecemeal lives. We each used to independently call our own shots, but then we entered into a large and integrated life in which *he* has the final say in everything. (This is what we proclaimed in word and action when we were baptized.) Each of us is now a part of his resurrection body, refreshed and sustained at one fountain—his Spirit—where we all come to drink.

**WELCOME!**

Keeping in mind that Jesus us welcomes us with open arms..

1. Read scriptures & quotes.
2. Complete the worksheet.

**WELCOME**

“Discernment of mission and vision doesn’t end with the vestry. It offers an opportunity for conversation in the congregation about its day-to-day life and future. This is an important conversation to have annually to help renew and refresh your shared identity, purpose, and direction.

Whatever the process, you’ll want to give people a chance to talk about what the church is doing now and what they sense God is calling them to do. You’ll need to cultivate an open and accepting environment that encourages deep listening and values everyone’s input. Conversation should consider your congregations own life and mission and also the needs and opportunities of the surrounding neighborhood, city, or town.

The idea is to find out where there is meaning and purpose in your life together and imagine how it will affect your future. Your mission, what God has called you to do, can be stated simply. It is a description of what your church does in your specific location within the larger community.”

 -Vestry Handbook, p. 28

The Mission and Vision Committee, has determined WELCOME is one word which describes what Saint Patrick’s is, and what God is calling us to become.

The Story of the Lost Son. Luke 15

**11-12**Then he said, “There was once a man who had two sons. The younger said to his father, ‘Father, I want right now what’s coming to me.’

**12-16**“So the father divided the property between them. It wasn’t long before the younger son packed his bags and left for a distant country. There, undisciplined and dissipated, he wasted everything he had. After he had gone through all his money, there was a bad famine all through that country and he began to hurt. He signed on with a citizen there who assigned him to his fields to slop the pigs. He was so hungry he would have eaten the corncobs in the pig slop, but no one would give him any.

**17-20**“That brought him to his senses. He said, ‘All those farmhands working for my father sit down to three meals a day, and here I am starving to death. I’m going back to my father. I’ll say to him, Father, I’ve sinned against God, I’ve sinned before you; I don’t deserve to be called your son. Take me on as a hired hand.’ He got right up and went home to his father.

**20-21**“When he was still a long way off, his father saw him. His heart pounding, he ran out, embraced him, and kissed him. The son started his speech: ‘Father, I’ve sinned against God, I’ve sinned before you; I don’t deserve to be called your son ever again.’

**22-24**“But the father wasn’t listening. He was calling to the servants, ‘Quick. Bring a clean set of clothes and dress him. Put the family ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Then get a grain-fed heifer and roast it. We’re going to feast! We’re going to have a wonderful time! My son is here—given up for dead and now alive! Given up for lost and now found!’ And they began to have a wonderful time.

**25-27**“All this time his older son was out in the field. When the day’s work was done he came in. As he approached the house, he heard the music and dancing. Calling over one of the houseboys, he asked what was going on. He told him, ‘Your brother came home. Your father has ordered a feast—barbecued beef!—because he has him home safe and sound.’

**28-30**“The older brother stalked off in an angry sulk and refused to join in. His father came out and tried to talk to him, but he wouldn’t listen. The son said, ‘Look how many years I’ve stayed here serving you, never giving you one moment of grief, but have you ever thrown a party for me and my friends? Then this son of yours who has thrown away your money on whores shows up and you go all out with a feast!’

**31-32**“His father said, ‘Son, you don’t understand. You’re with me all the time, and everything that is mine is yours—but this is a wonderful time, and we had to celebrate. This brother of yours was dead, and he’s alive! He was lost, and he’s found!’”

Least of These. Matthew 25

 **34-36**“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Enter, you who are blessed by my Father! Take what’s coming to you in this kingdom. It’s been ready for you since the world’s foundation. And here’s why:

I was hungry and you fed me,
I was thirsty and you gave me a drink,
I was homeless and you gave me a room,
I was shivering and you gave me clothes,
I was sick and you stopped to visit,
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**37-40**“Then those ‘sheep’ are going to say, ‘Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and give you a drink? And when did we ever see you sick or in prison and come to you?’ Then the King will say, ‘I’m telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me.’

