

Making the Most of Your Vestry Retreat

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Alban at Duke Divinity

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The Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF)



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Think back to the most beneficial
vestry retreat in which you
participated. What made it
beneficial?
(Post answers in the chat box.)

*Making the Most of Your
Vestry Retreat*

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OUTLINE:

Making the Most of Your Vestry Retreat

- Movement One | Why a vestry retreat?
- Movement Two | What can we accomplish?
- Movement Three | How can we evaluate it?

Movement One:

Why a vestry retreat?

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- The decision to have a vestry retreat begins with a needs assessment process.
 - What is it you hope to accomplish during the retreat?
 - **What is it that the parish needs to have happen during this time?**

Movement One: Why a vestry retreat?

- There are many good reasons to have a vestry retreat, and there are many good goals for a vestry retreat.
 - Who we are and how we will work together:
 - Team building / relationship cultivation.
 - Defining ways of working together in the year ahead (DTR conversations.)

Movement One: Why a vestry retreat?

- There are many good reasons to have a vestry retreat, and there are many good goals for a vestry retreat.
 - Goal-setting and prioritizing:
 - Defining strategic priorities for the year ahead and assigning responsibility for executing against them.
 - Developing a plan to address one or two significant opportunities or challenges in the year ahead (capital campaign launch, physical plant renovation, ministry to and with the community).
 - Catalyzing new strategies for a problem, opportunity or challenge.

Movement One: Why a vestry retreat?

- There are many good reasons to have a vestry retreat, and there are many good goals for a vestry retreat.
 - Accomplishing other important work:
 - Mutual ministry review or evaluation.**
 - Longer conversation about substantive questions than what is normally possible.
 - Learning opportunity with an outside presenter.

Think back to the most beneficial vestry retreat in which you participated. What made it beneficial?

Movement One:
Why not a vestry retreat?

- There are also a few reasons why a vestry retreat can be a bad idea.
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Movement One: Why not a vestry retreat?

- There are also a few reasons why a vestry retreat can be a bad idea.
 - If there isn't some attention to the spiritual life and health of the vestry members themselves.
 - If what you really want or need is just a long vestry meeting -- if the agenda looks like the agenda on any other Monday night.
 - **If well-worn ways of engaging one another around conflicted questions will continue. If all you're looking for is just a longer fight with predictable sides, a vestry retreat will just do harm.**

Movement Two:
What can we accomplish?

- A few principles of design:
 - **You have less time that you think you do.**

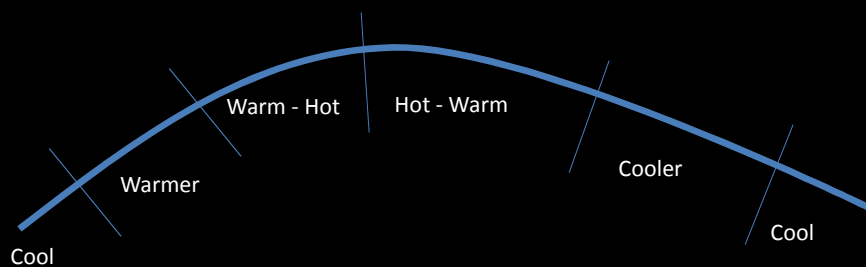
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 - **Less is more.**

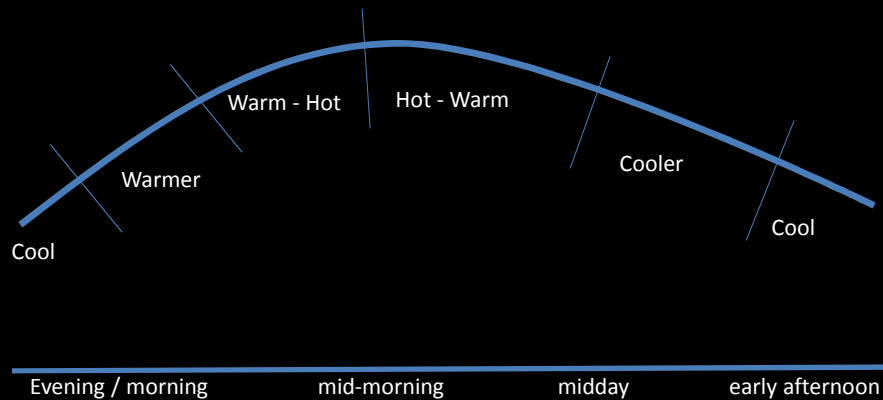
Movement Two: What can we accomplish?

- A few principles of design:
 - You have less time that you think you do.
 - Less is more.
 - **Pay attention to the arc.**

Pay attention to the arc



Pay attention to the arc



Movement Two: What can we accomplish?

- Four elements should be present:
 - Attention to spiritual practice;
 - Boundary markers / touchstones / ground rules;
 - Efficient agenda that pays attention to multiple intelligences and personality preferences; and
 - Evaluation.

**Movement Three:
How will we evaluate it?**

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- My basic conviction: evaluation is an under-utilized tool in parish life.
- Use the parish retreat as an opportunity to practice evaluation.

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 - Plus: what worked well
 - Delta: what I wish had been different

Movement Three: How will we evaluate it?

- Two essential dimensions of evaluation:
 - **Short-term evaluation:**
 - Quick and easy ways of doing this (Plus / Delta)
 - Plus: what worked well
 - Delta: what I wish had been different
 - More complicated and controlled ways of doing this (SurveyMonkey...)
 - Appreciative question(s)
 - Constructive question
 - Personal question(s)

Movement Three: How will we evaluate it?

- Two essential dimensions of evaluation:
 - Short-term evaluation
 - **Longitudinal evaluation**
 - Usually done at some distance from the experience (3-4 months out)
 - Questions of “staying power”

Movement Three: How will we evaluate it?

- Two essential dimensions of evaluation:
 - Short-term evaluation
 - Longitudinal evaluation
- Model these practices and then encourage vestry members to take them into their areas of ministry.

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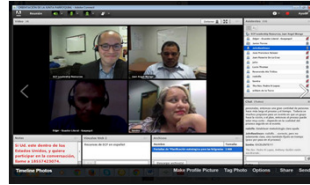
Upcoming ECF webinars

Go to episcopalchurchfoundation.org/calendar for more info and to register!

Basics of a Capital Campaign

February 17, 2016 from 7-8pm ET

Learn the step-by-step understanding of the methodology that has led hundreds of Episcopal parishes to success using a flexible three phase process: Discernment, Feasibility Study, and the Gifting Phase.



Models for vestry leadership of faith formation

March 8, 2016 from 7-8pm ET

Lisa Kimball and Kyle Oliver from the Center for the Ministry of Teaching will help vestries in being stewards of their faith formation ministries. In this webinar, they'll share four "developmental stages" of vestry leadership of faith formation and make practical suggestions for each approach.

Making Developing a Leadership Covenant

March 10, 2016 from 7-8pm ET

David Keck, author of *Healthy Churches, Faithful Pastors: Covenant Expectations for Thriving Together*, will explore a theological understanding of "covenant" and presents strategies for developing a covenant within a vestry.