

# *An Invitation to the Annual Meeting 2017*

*January 22, 2017 at 9:30 am (1 service only)*

A Little Different This Time . . . *HOLY + FORMED*

## Background

It is our privilege to welcome new Christians through Baptism and also continue to learn and grow more and more into the likeness of Christ. From the Service of Holy Baptism, Book of Common Prayer pg. 302, we worship this way:

*Celebrant*

Will you by your prayers and witness help this child to grow into the full stature of Christ?

*Parents and Godparents*

I will, with God's help.

AND

*After all have been presented, the Celebrant addresses the congregation, saying*

Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support *these* persons in their life in Christ?

*People* We will.

So the question is, "Can you ever stop being a child of God?" Since the answer is always NO, it means we are always capable of growing further into the fuller stature of Christ and helping others do the same. With the advice and support of the Diocese of New Jersey, we embarked last year on a journey toward being "Church" in an era when "Church" exists differently than in the recent past, yet the task of growing into the full stature of Christ is ever more important. Especially in a digital age, the project of formation as Children of God (at any age) is the vital purpose of a faith community. Formation into the image of Christ takes place at every stage of life. The "Church" exists to support that formation and that formation is for the purpose of being Christ in a world needing Christ's love, grace, mercy and hope. At this point in my life, I have not time for anything that is not about love, grace, mercy and hope. That's all I want. And that's all I want in a Church. If we are doing anything that isn't that, let's just stop.

Happily (and somewhat proudly) my priesthood exists within a community of other priests (that's you -- ordained at your baptism) who are remarkable for their devotion, commitment, and sacrifice in conspiring to bring about more love, grace, mercy and hope in this world, so that the Kingdom of God might come on earth as it is in heaven. How else do you explain a marathon of Epiphany House Blessings, and the other veritable marathons of mission taking place all the time by so many fellow travelers with Christ?

## Invitation

**You are invited to attend the one service scheduled for this Sunday, January 22 at 9:30 am.** It will be a Holy Eucharist and the Annual Meeting will take place in the midst of our worship. It will be woven with lunch. Child care will be into the fabric of our prayers and songs, readings and proclamations. Every Child of God who considers this Church part of their spiritual life is heartily encouraged to join all the others gathering. We will conclude by 11:30 am, lunch provided. A program with Fr. Philip for all students and younger children is planned.

## What You Can Expect this Sunday

Last Fall we embarked on a journey we called, *Holy+Formed*. It is a way of being church that connects us and integrates all we do across the church year in large themes. It is a way of ordering our common life. Basically, you caught the contagion of Christ's love and so many of you are doing something about it. *Holy+Formed* gives us structure and a way forward together, as we do something about Christ's love.

This Sunday, during service, we are going to break into working groups organized around themes that spark your interest. You will choose which group to visit, each guided by a vestry member, you can listen and contribute for several minutes of project development time. This is a creative moment for the birthing of dreams and ideas. Even if you are a concrete and tactical thinker, your suggestions about application and details will be most welcome. If this kind of event does not seem to be your cup of tea, I hope you can still join us. Your voice is needed! This is your church.

The main themes for the next 18 months of parish life together across 2017-2018 are:

**Winter/Spring 17:** (Modules previously announced) Charter Church; Becoming the Story We Tell;

The Good Earth; Year in Review NOTE: MODULES VARY IN LENGTH – from 3-8 weeks

**Summer 17:** Conspirators: Life in the Holy Spirit (Bible studies, missions trips, Frisbee camp)

**Fall 17:** Welcome and Hospitality, Harvest & Growth

**Winter 18:** Mission/Papa Panov, Who am I – Identity in Christ, We Care-Christian Caregiving

**Spring 18:** Rule of Life-Lent /Holy Week, The Good Earth –Spring & Renewal

We apply the same elements, values and principles to each of the above themes.

INTEGRATING GENERATIONS Though not rigidly, our programming is geared toward all ages being together

A CULMINATING EVENT The theme season concludes with a big fun event

MUSIC & WORSHIP A theme hymn and reading are included

MID-WEEK NON-HAYTOWN Getting out into the world for a wider community experience (see next item)

TIE-IN TO MAJOR COMMUNITY EVENT Find and participate in the civic events that dot the calendar

TIE-IN TO OUR MISSION It must further our mission and be action oriented

INVITATIONAL & EXPERIENTIAL The themes can be ones you'd want to invite others to join in

TIE-IN TO SUNDAYS Through sermons and music and prayers

CELEBRATORY REFLECTION & DEBRIEF At its conclusion, we need to reflect on what we learned

DOCUMENT & UPLOAD Everything we do needs to find its way to our website

COME READY FOR OPEN MINDED, PLAYFUL, BUT SERIOUS PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND as a bonus

**We will elect a new vestry and present reports and a budget!!!**

**Please join us!**

*Fr. Philip +*