



Episcopal Diocese of Michigan

Vestry Day

Saturday, February 14, 2026

Opening Prayer

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquillity the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

What's On Today's Agenda?

- Opening Prayer
- Purpose of Gathering
- Vestry 101
- Diocesan Staff Overview
- Anti-racism and Safe Church
- Facets of Vitality

Vestry meetings aren't events we need to just get through, but rather one way we come to be a part of the risen body of Christ.

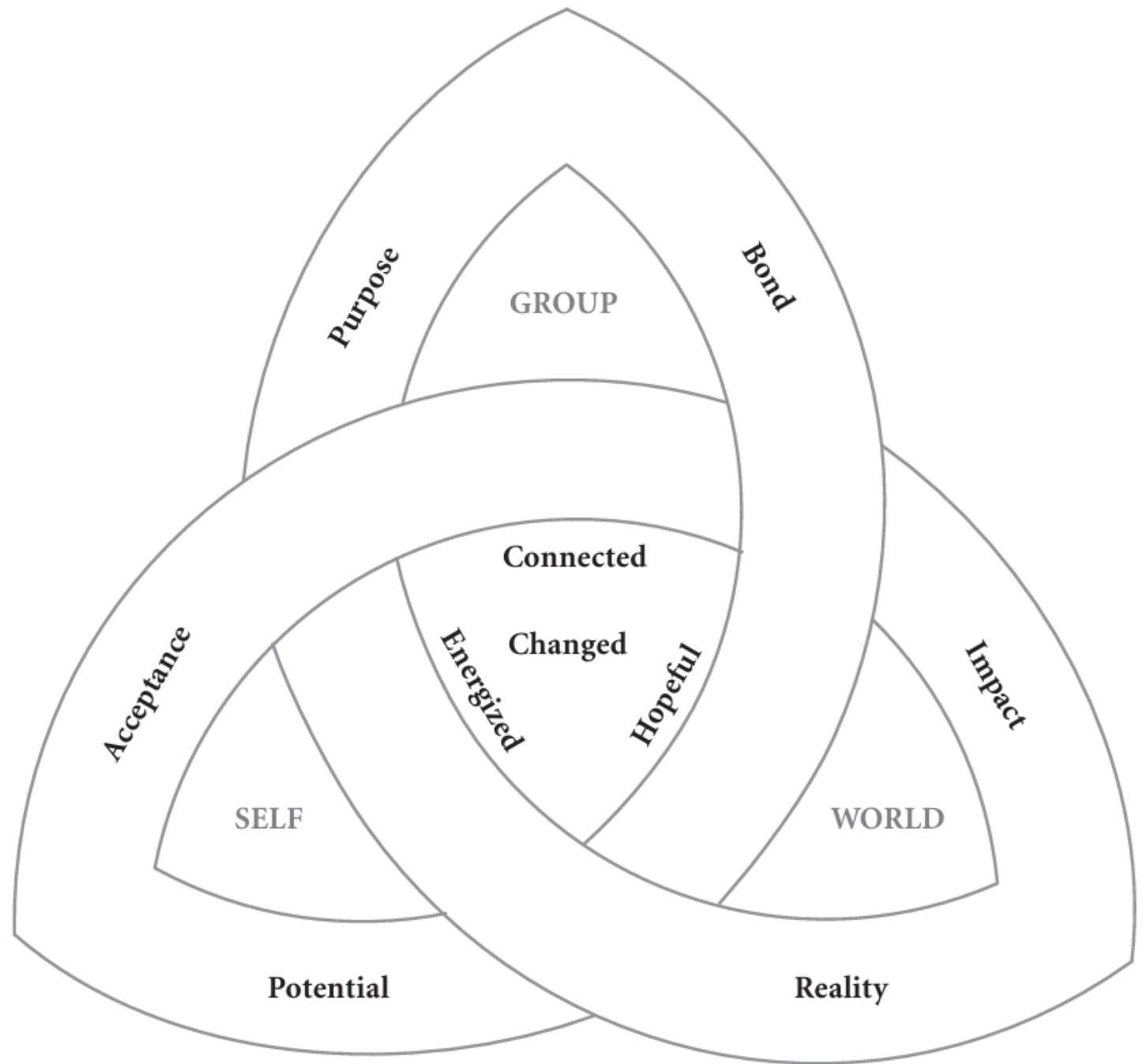
We could think
about Jesus
walking through
the locked doors
in the upper
room as the first
vestry meeting....



Why what we do on
Vestries/Bishop Committees
matters:

For Ourselves, For our
Congregations, For the wider
world

Group Needs Model



Then we the people
of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan,
can create transformational Communities of Faith;

Vital and viable Communities of Faith
that are Christ-like and whose actions
draw all of us closer to one another
and our world closer to the reign of God.

The Power of a Good Meeting

Let's see how a good vestry meeting
can get us closer to each other, closer
to God and help improve our world.

Bit by bit.

Meeting by meeting.

Seriously!

Your Agenda and How It Shapes Your Impact

High Energy

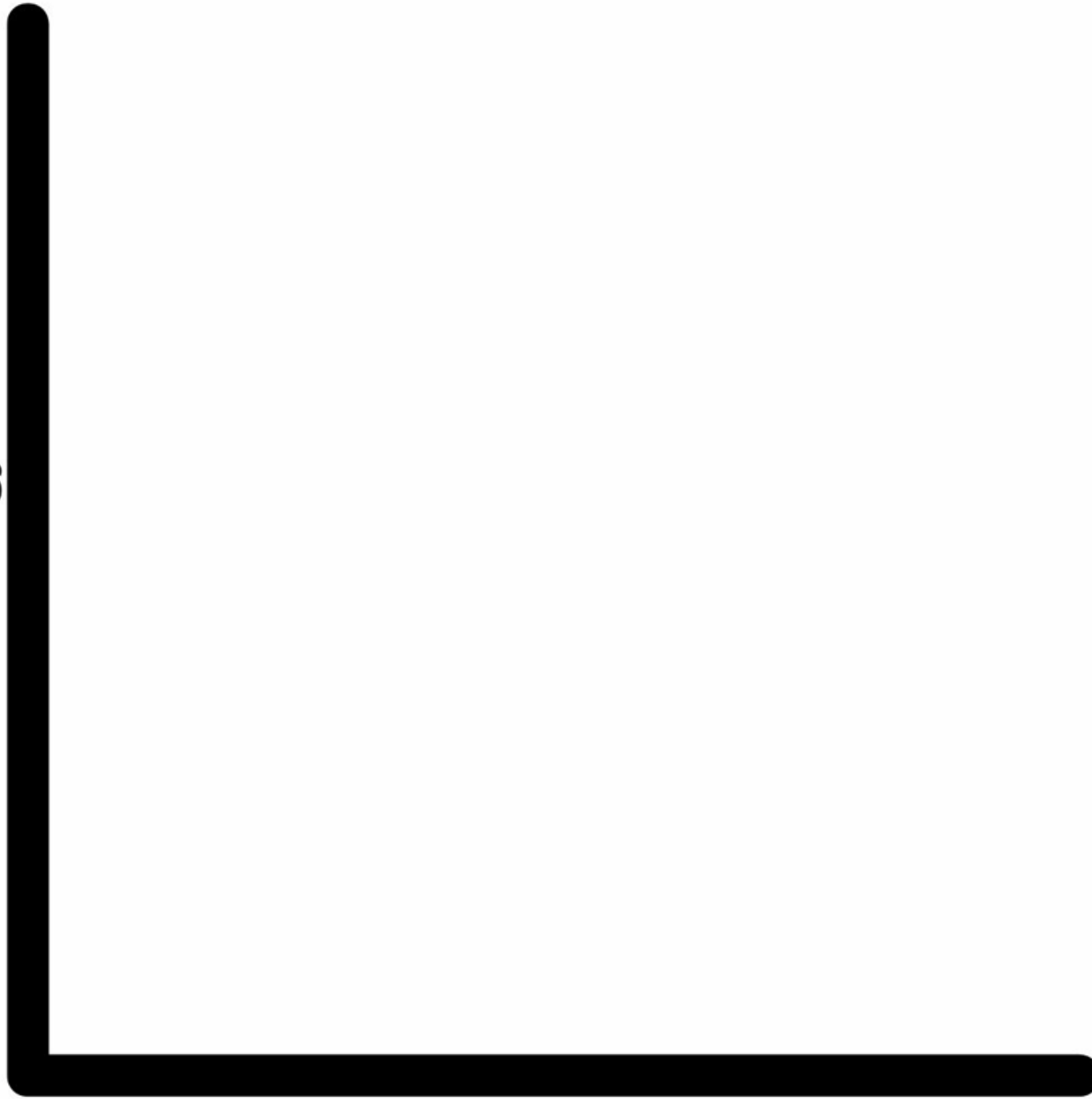
Energy

Start

TIME

End

Low Energy



High Energy

Energy

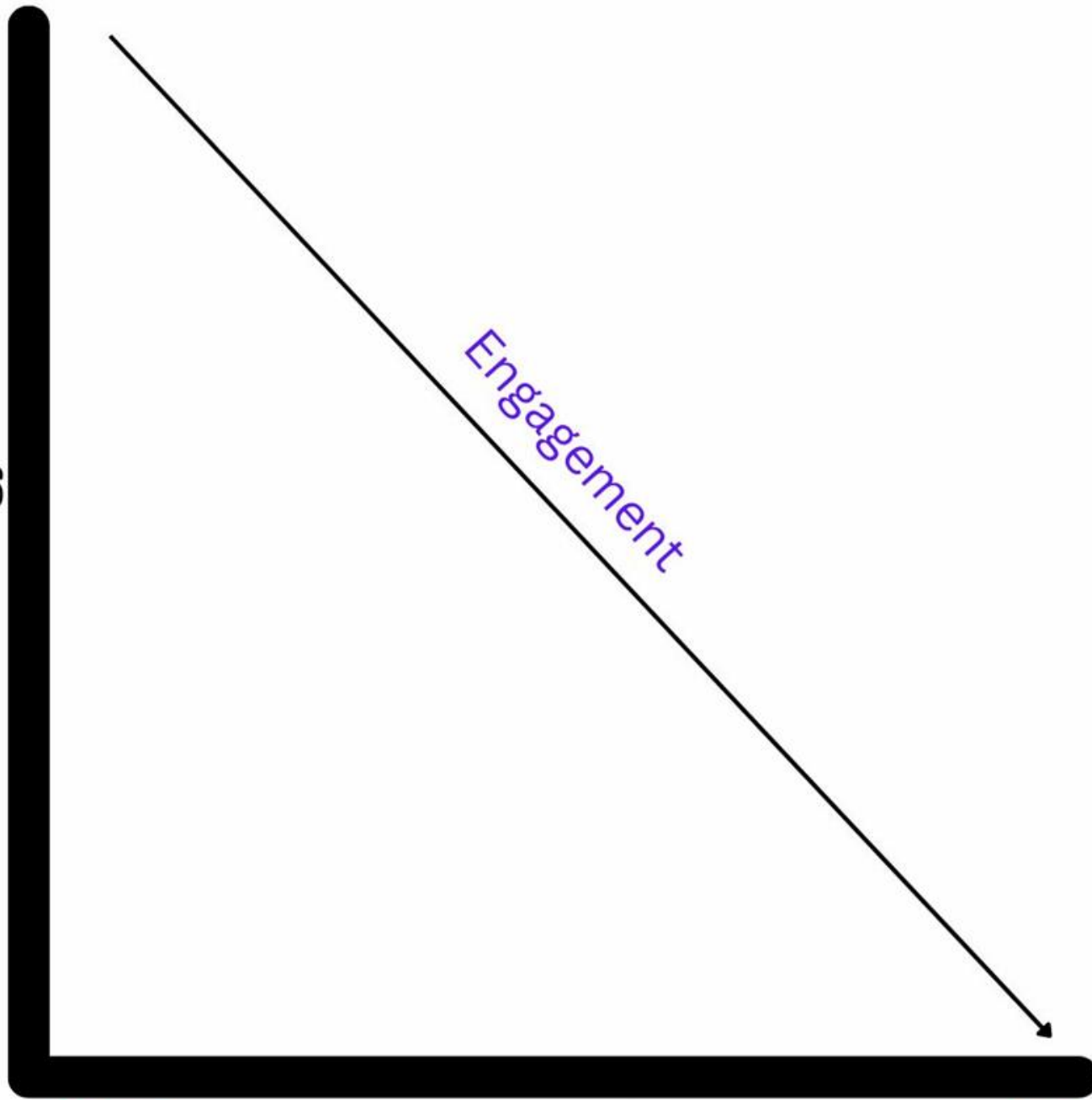
Engagement

Start

TIME

End

Low Energy



High Energy

Energy

Engagement

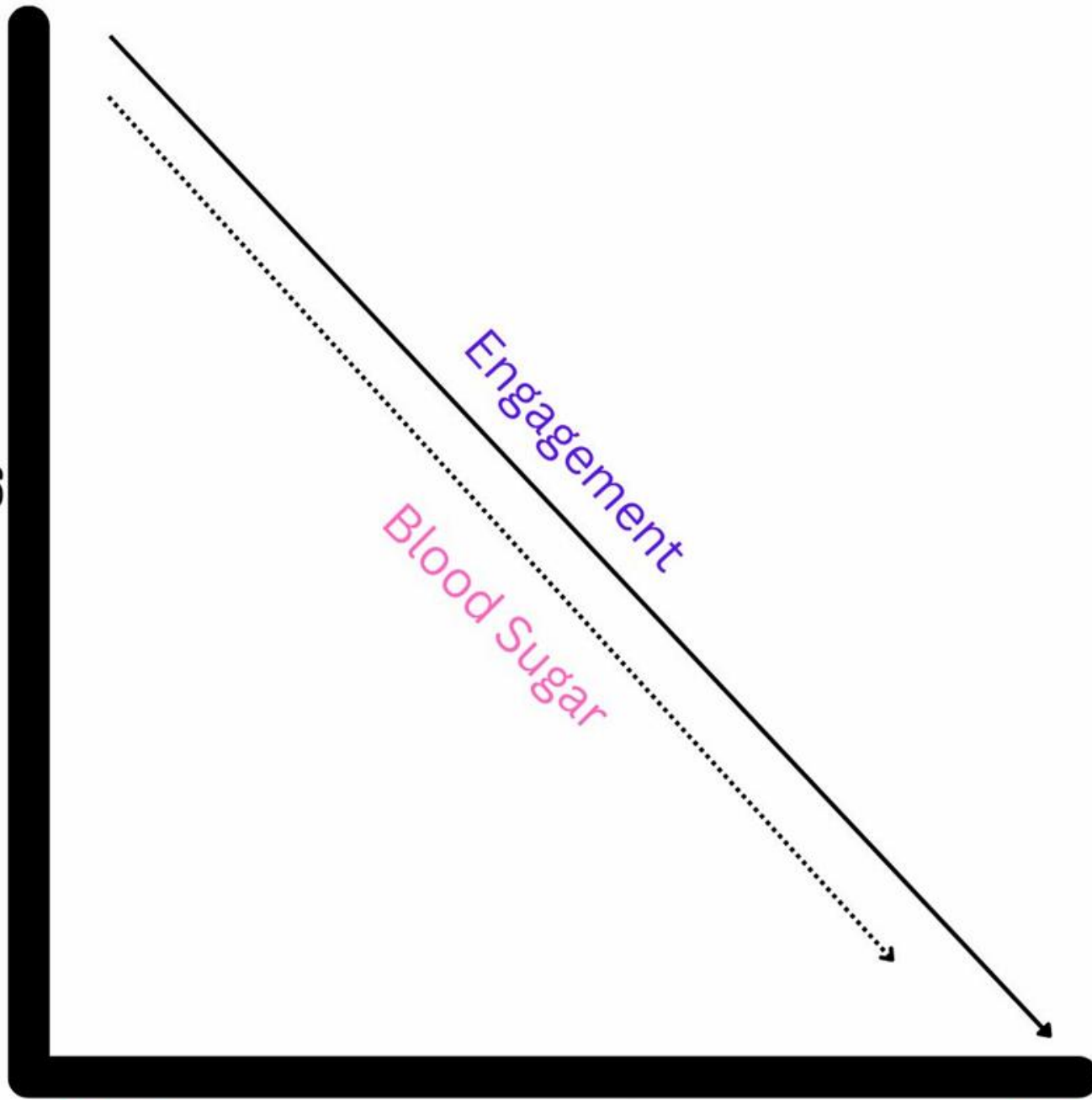
Blood Sugar

Start

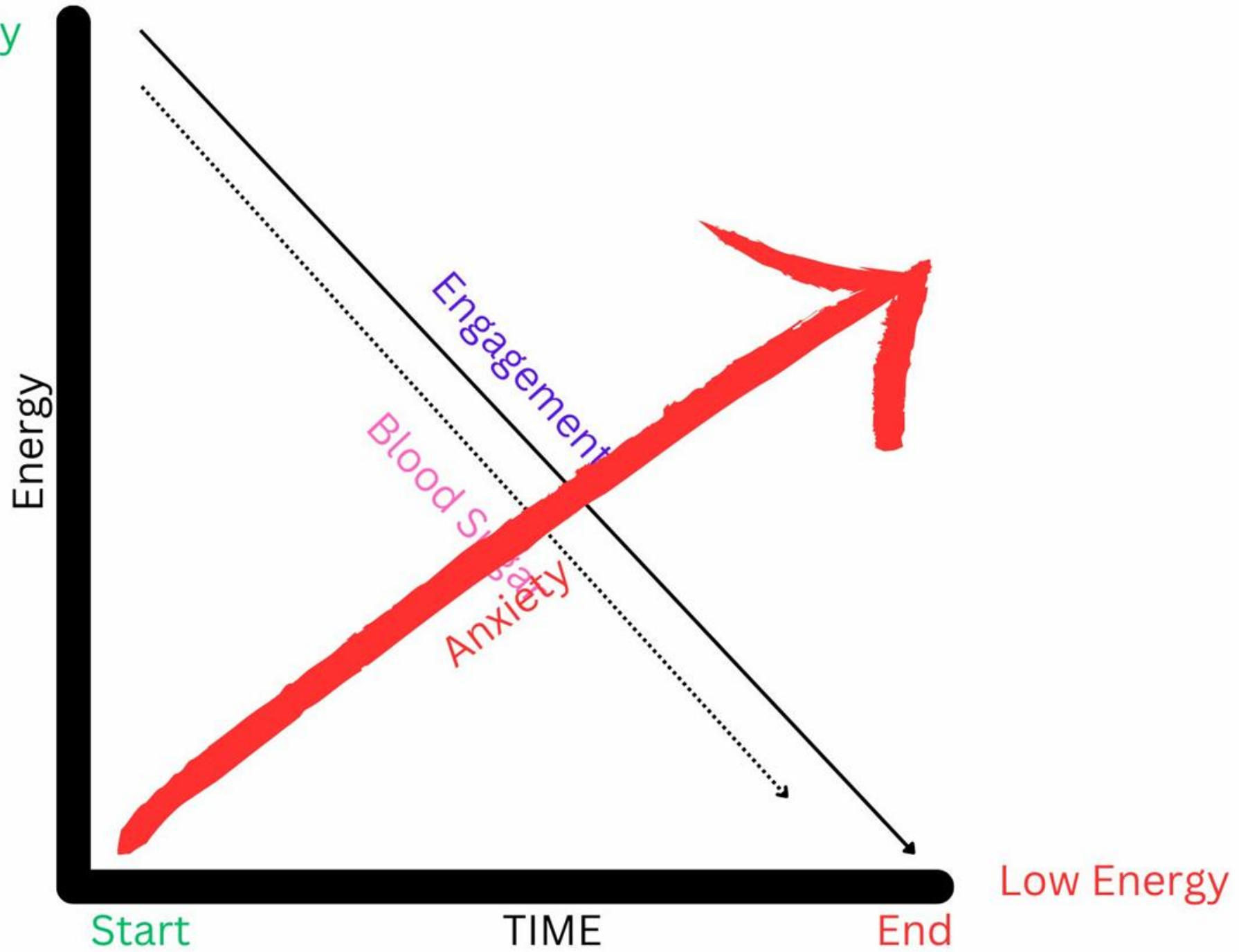
TIME

End

Low Energy



High Energy



Start

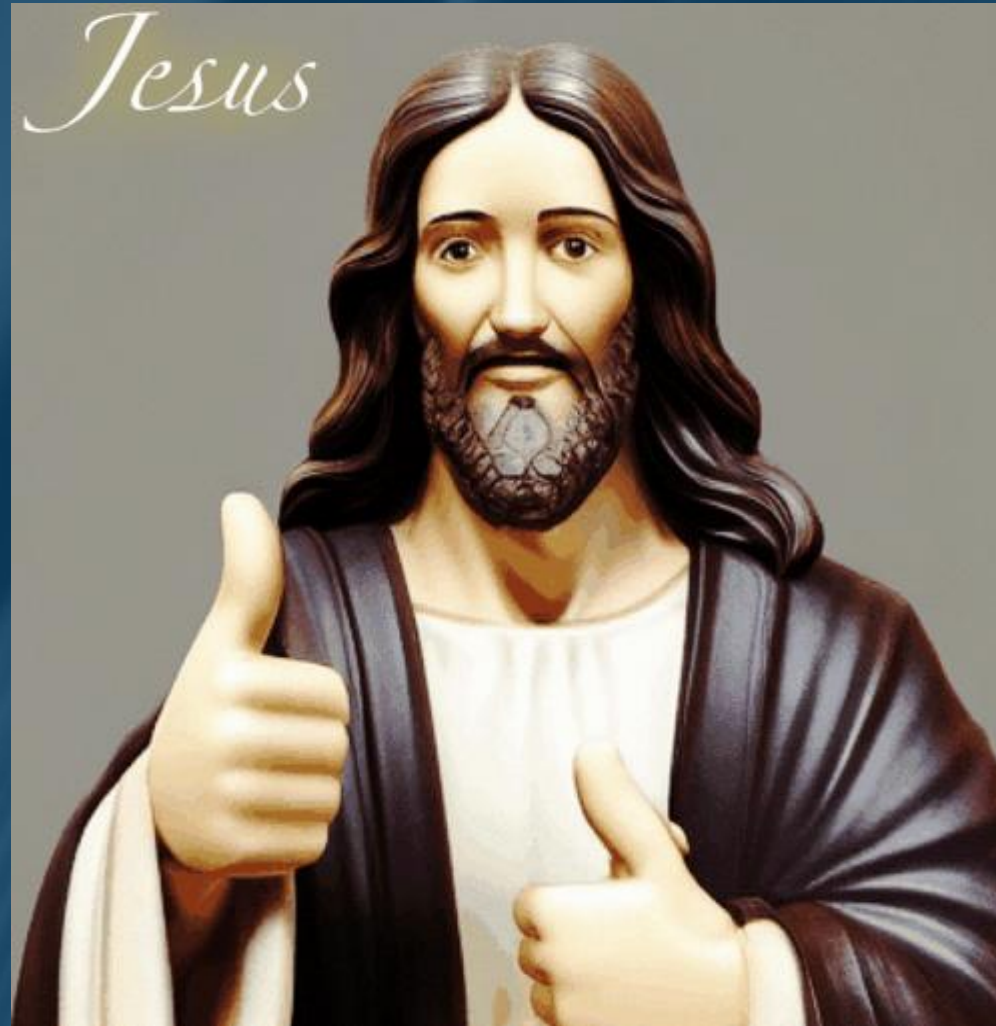
TIME

End

Low Energy

When is it that you want to
have your most important
conversations?

Early
in the
meeting...?



Or late in the
meeting...
when people are
tired and blood
sugars are
low...?

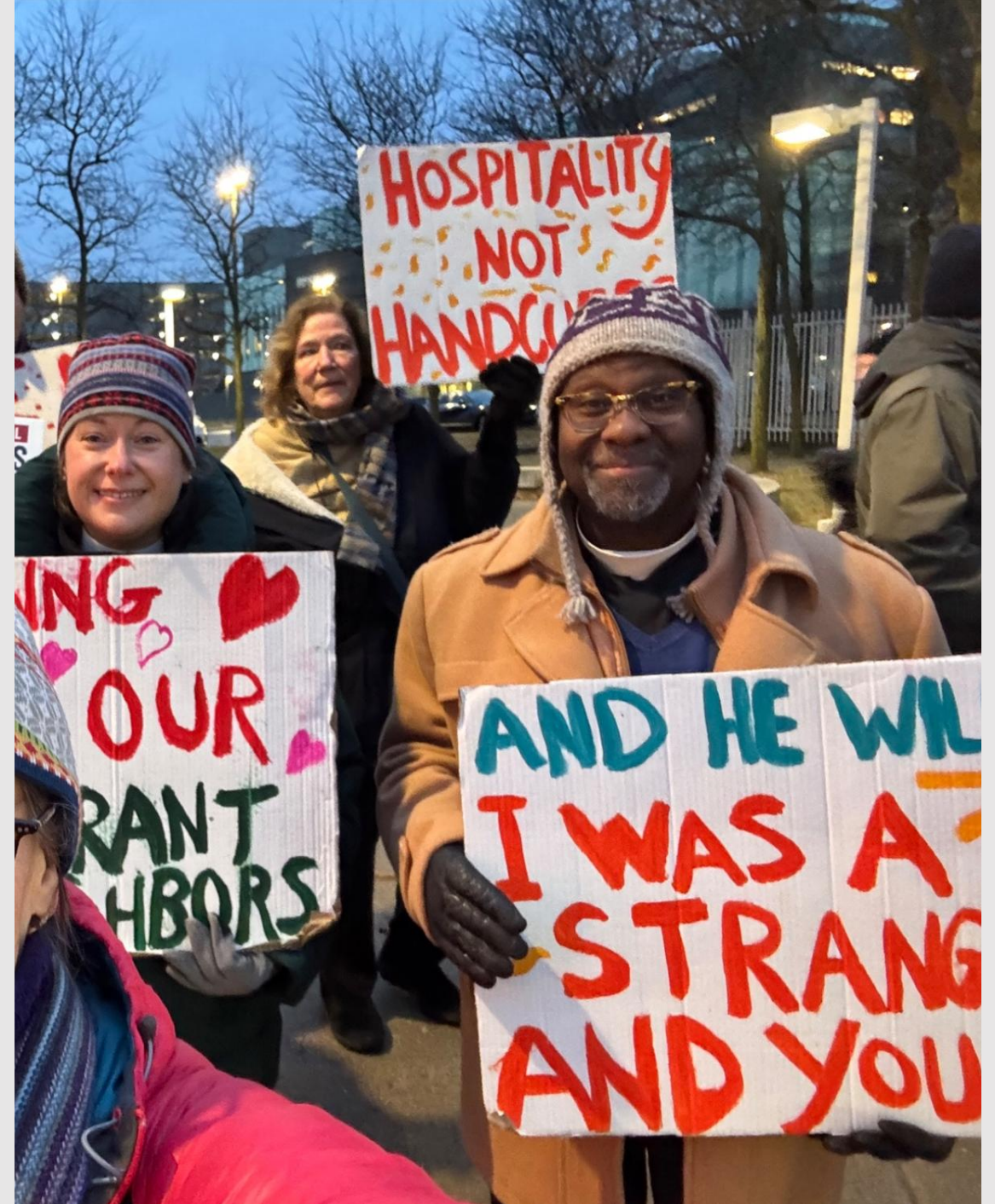


What are going to be the most important areas in which you all engage?

Outward facing mission and ministries

How are you tangibly addressing a hurt in the world?

How are you offering hope to a sad people?



Think about your vestry's agenda:
what are the first two significant
pieces that you address.

Not approving the minutes or agenda....

The Vestry/Bishop's Committee
is the church's business
meeting...

What is the business of the
Church?

Prayer

We are in the praying business.

Bible Study: African Method

Opening Collect

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Any piece of scripture will do. In my previous life we liked to use one of the readings for the upcoming Sunday.

One person reads the scripture aloud for the group, from one of the versions offered.

Ask the group to think about a word or phrase that stands out in the reading. Then share the word or phrase aloud.

Exodus 24: 12-18 NRSV

12 The LORD said to Moses, 'Come up to me on the mountain, and wait there; and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.' **13** So Moses set out with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God. **14** To the elders he had said, 'Wait here for us, until we come to you again; for Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a dispute may go to them.'

15 Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. **16** The glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud. **17** Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. **18** Moses entered the cloud, and went up on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

Then a second person
reads the text from a
different version.

This time when the person is reading the passage, be mindful of where God is calling you and where in your life and or the world you desire prayer.

Exodus 24: 12-18 Message translation

12-13 GOD said to Moses, “Climb higher up the mountain and wait there for me; I’ll give you tablets of stone, the teachings and commandments that I’ve written to instruct them.” So Moses got up, accompanied by Joshua his aide. And Moses climbed up the mountain of God.

14 He told the elders of Israel, “Wait for us here until we return to you. You have Aaron and Hur with you; if there are any problems, go to them.”

15-17 Then Moses climbed the mountain. The Cloud covered the mountain. The Glory of GOD settled over Mount Sinai. The Cloud covered it for six days. On the seventh day he called out of the Cloud to Moses. In the view of the Israelites below, the Glory of GOD looked like a raging fire at the top of the mountain.

18 Moses entered the middle of the Cloud and climbed the mountain. Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

Offer to the group
where in your life or in
the world you desire
prayer.

Then we pray for each other. Going around the group, pray for the person to the right of you aloud, naming and remembering what the where the person desires prayer. Go around the circle, praying.

*Maybe promise to pray daily for the person you prayed for in the meeting for in the upcoming month.

End your time of prayer with the entire group offering the Lord's Prayer.

Basic Structure of the Bible Study

I. Opening Prayer

II. Read - word or phrase that stands out

III. Read- where does this passage touch your life today? And where in your life do you need prayer?

IV. Pray for each other

V. Close with Lord's Prayer

This will take 30 to 40 mins and it will be THE most important part of your time together.

It will deepen connections. Increase care. Remind all of us that we are not alone and offer insight into the cares, and joys of our colleagues who are on the vestry. Trust me. The business of church is prayer. And you have now done that.

Your Agenda and How It Shapes Your Impact

Vestry Agenda

- I. Prayer**
- I. Wins and Snacks**
- I. Mission and Conversation**
- I. Information and Decision**
 - A. Buildings and Grounds**
 - B. Finances**
- I. Review of Action Items & Upcoming Dates**

Vestry Agenda

September 15, 2026

7 p.m. - Prayer

- Bible Study and Praying for Each other

7:30 p.m. - Wins and Snacks

- St. Swithins 5K Run
- Bishop's Visit & Confirmation
- Sunday morning Teacher and Backpack Blessing
- Verna's and Archie's 60th Wedding Anniversary Party
- Signing Thank You Notes

7:40 p.m. - Mission and Conversation

- Newcomer Packet and Welcome and Hospitality Ministry
 - Gather-Transform-Send
 - Next Steps

8:20 p.m. - Information and Decision

- Approval of Minutes
- One-on-One Conversations
- Buildings and Grounds
- Finances

8:40 p.m. - Review of Action Items and Upcoming Dates (*Who is doing what?*)

- Diocesan Convention October 23 & 24
- Parish Contemplative prayer retreat Nov 1 2:00 to 4:00
- Stewardship Party, "All the Saints and All the Souls giving!" Saturday November 7 at 7:00
- NEXT VESTRY TUESDAY, October 20TH AT 7:00

845 p.m. - Adjourn

Questions

Who Ya Gonna Call?

Who To Call



The Rt. Rev. Dr. Bonnie A. Perry
11th Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan
bishopperry@edomi.org

Any Emergency Event at your Congregation

Clergy Pastoral Care

Thinking Partner for:

- **Congregational Development**

- **Fundraising**

- **Stewardship**

- **Capital Campaigns**

- **Exciting Developments at your Church**

Who To Call

Holly Angell

Bishop's Executive Assistant

hangell@edomi.org



- All things involving the Bishop's Calendar
- You need to schedule time with the Bishop.
- A visit, confirmation, or parish event that needs coordination.
- For question concerning the Bishop's Visitation
- When clergy need to Schedule their Birthday Chat with the Bishop.

Who To Call

The Rev. Canon Ellen Ekevag

Canon to the Ordinary

eekevag@edomi.org



Resources, Coaching, and Thinking Partner on
Congregational Development

Special Congregational Projects

Mutual Ministry Reviews

Diocesan Processes

Fresh Start

College for Congregational Development

When you don't know who to call...

Who To Call

The Rev. Canon Susie Shaefer

Canon for Transitions and Formation

sshaefer@edomi.org



Clergy Transitions

Commission on Ministry

Whitaker Institute Programming

Lay Licensing

Diocesan Liturgies

Who To Call



The Rev. Dean Aponte-Safe
Missioner for Rural and Small Church Vitality
dapontesafe@edomi.org

- Small Congregation Vitality Work/Sunday Supply
- Total Ministry and Shared Ministry
- Lay Leader Support and Formation
- Whitaker Institute Programming
- Environmental Justice/Climate Care Work

Who To Call

The Venerable Timothy Spannaus

Archdeacon

tspannaus@edomi.org



- The Diaconate
- Local Formation
- Commission on Ministry

Who To Call

The Rev. Canon Sister Vee Dunbar

Canon for Spirituality and Race

sistervee@edomi.org



Anti-racism

Civil Rights Pilgrimage

COM Chaplain

Reparations

Indigenous Ministries

Advent and Lent Book Study

Who To Call

Canon Carmen Piggins

Canon for Ministry with Young People

cpiggins@edomi.org



- Resourcing Young People's Ministry in Congregations
- Diocesan Trainings (Godly Play, Forma)
- Camp Ministry
- Youth Events
- Safe Church
- End Gun Violence Michigan
- Diocesan Youth Council
- Campus Ministries Liaison

Who To Call

Canon Dennis Boyd Jr.

Canon for Communications

dboyd@edomi.org



Communication Support for Congregations

- Website
- Social Media
- Audio/Video
- Direct Mail

Weekly Connection

· Event Registration form Issues

· Diocesan Website Updates

- Digital Resources: PowerPoint, Event recordings, etc.

Who To Call

Susan Mason

Diocesan Program Administrator

smason@edomi.org



- Change of Canonical Residence
- Archival Support
- Questions regarding Diocesan Events and Registration
- College for Congregational Development Administrator
- Administration for Standing Committee, Diocesan Council, Trustees and other Diocesan Task Forces

Who To Call

Crystal Ramirez

Director of Human Resources

cramirez@edomi.org



- Church Pension Fund
- Benefit Enrollment including Medical and Dental
- Group Life Insurance
- Background Checks
- Payroll

Who To Call



Chris Ventura

Chief Financial Officer

cventura@edomi.org

- . Budget Assistance
- . Growth and Income Fund
- . Treasurer questions

Who To Call

Kara Chapman

Accountant

kchapman@edomi.org



- . Billing
- . General Accounting Questions
- Tretheway Downs Children's Fund

Who To Call

Tony Perez

Diocesan Property Manager

tperez@edomi.org



- Congregational Property Support
- Diocesan Property Management
- Rental and Leases Support and Coordination
- Property Grants

Who To Call

Jamal Dillman-Hasso

Archivist and Historiographer

archives@edomi.org



Requests for records of closed congregations
Baptismal, confirmation, marriage

Who To Call

Canine Tali Perry

Canine to the Ordinary

tali@edomi.org



- . Discerning suitable treats
- Designing Agility Courses

Who To Call

Jasper Perry

Associate Shepherd in Training



- . If you need soulful looks and love
- And a cold nose to touch your warm hand

Who Do You Call When...

- A) We want to rent our building**
- B) Our young people want to stop gun violence**
- C) Our priest is retiring**
- D) Our clergy person was admitted to the hospital**

Put your Answer in the Chat

Who Do You Call When...

We have an amazing food pantry that serves 500 families a week, is there some money to help us buy more food?

- A) Diocesan Trustees
- B) Diocesan Council Social Justice grants
- C) Bishop's discretionary Fund
- D) Other churches with Grant programs

Put your Answer in the Chat

Who Do You Call When...

We are going to have a capital campaign and will need a line of credit

- A) Bishop**
- B) Standing Committee**
- C) A & B**
- D) No one—it's our business**

Put your Answer in the Chat

Anti-Racism Curriculum

Part of ongoing spiritual formation
to become beloved community
and to care for one another

This is how we equip ourselves to
serve those we encounter in our
neighbourhoods, pews, and
ministries

An essential tool to learn how to
pray and how to act in the way of
love



Act of of General Convention 2018-A045

Reaffirmed 2000-B049 which first called for anti-racism formation

We acknowledge that the work of dismantling racism is an essential part of spiritual formation

[T]he lay and ordained leadership of The Episcopal Church are also expected to engage in ongoing spiritual formation and education focused on racial healing, justice, and reconciliation as part of our Church's commitment to Becoming Beloved Community





[T]he 79th General Convention re-affirms the necessity and importance of anti-racism training for the lay and ordained leadership of The Episcopal Church, including all ordained persons, professional staff, and those elected or appointed to committees, commissions, agencies, task forces, and boards

The Four Quadrants of Becoming Beloved Community:

Truth-telling: Telling the Truth about Our Churches and Race

Proclamation: Proclaiming the Dream of Beloved Community

Formation: Practicing Jesus' Way of Healing Love

Justice: Repairing the Breach in Society and Institutions

<https://www.edomi.org/antiracismcurriculum/>

Module 1:

Thursday, March 19, at 6:00PM

Saturday, March 21, at 10:00AM

Module 2:

Thursday, May 21, at 6:00PM

Saturday, May 23, at 10:00AM

Module 3:

Thursday, November 12, at 6:00PM

Saturday, November 14, at 10:00AM

Continuing education
opportunities include:

- Diocesan Book Study
- Civil Rights Pilgrimage
- Study within congregations
- Sacred Ground

The Four Quadrants of Becoming Beloved Community:

Truth-telling: Telling the Truth about Our Churches and Race

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Formation: Practicing Jesus' Way of Healing Love

Justice: Repairing the Breach in Society and Institutions



Truth-telling

Truth-telling in our current climate is an act of faithful resistance. We are striving to gather our stories in their fullness - so that by understanding where we've been, we can better discern where God is leading us to go.

Truth-telling within the steps of Becoming Beloved Community leads to Reparations. By understanding our history, we can better recognize and repair the harms whose legacy remains with us today.

- Archives
- Oral histories
- Congregational histories

Congregational Vitality

...

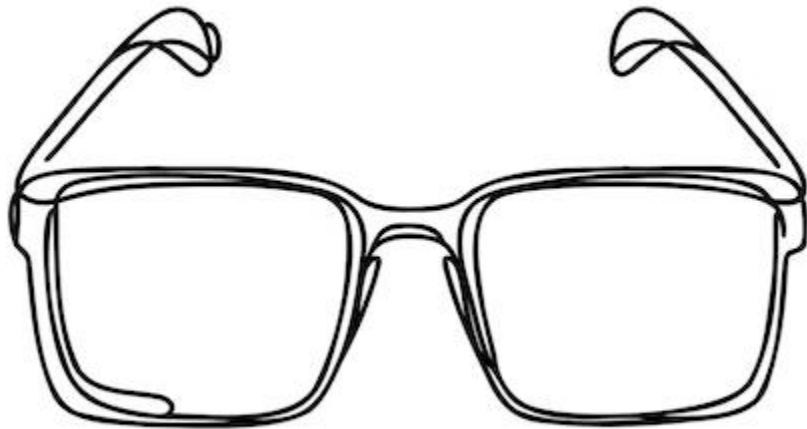
Content Overview

- What is Congregational Development
- Facets of Vitality
- About CCD

What Is Congregational Development?

Congregational development is the development of congregations of all sizes, locations, and conditions into more faithful, healthy, and fruitful.

What is a Model?



In congregational development work, we make an important distinction:

- **Vitality** is about identity, purpose, and impact and how faith is expressed dynamically through worship, community, leadership, and outward engagement.
- **Viability** is about capacity: resources, finances, buildings, and systems that support ministry.

Research consistently shows that vitality and viability do not automatically correlate.

Vestries Need to Work on Both

Vitality is not something congregations create through effort alone; it is something they notice, receive, and respond to as God's life takes shape among them.

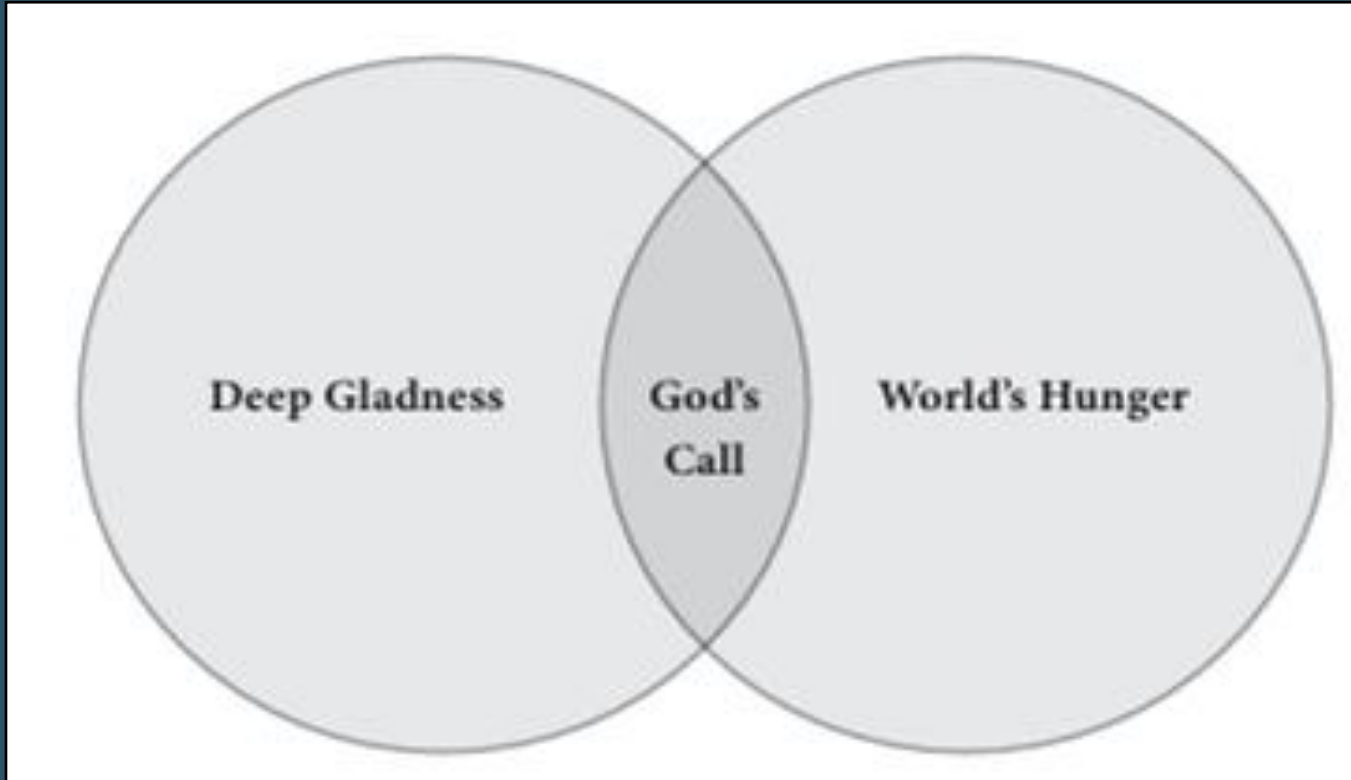


FACETS OF VITALITY

Congregational Vocation

Congregational Vocation

“The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”
- Buechner



Key Ideas

- **Identity:** Articulating a clear sense of who you are as a church, the gifts you have to share with the world.
- **Purpose:** Why does your church exist, what is it there to do?
- **Outward Focus:** Serving and being in relationship with neighbors. *(This is a predictor of church growth. This is largely the focus of Year B at CCD)*

Transformational Experiences

Worship
Formation
Belonging
Action

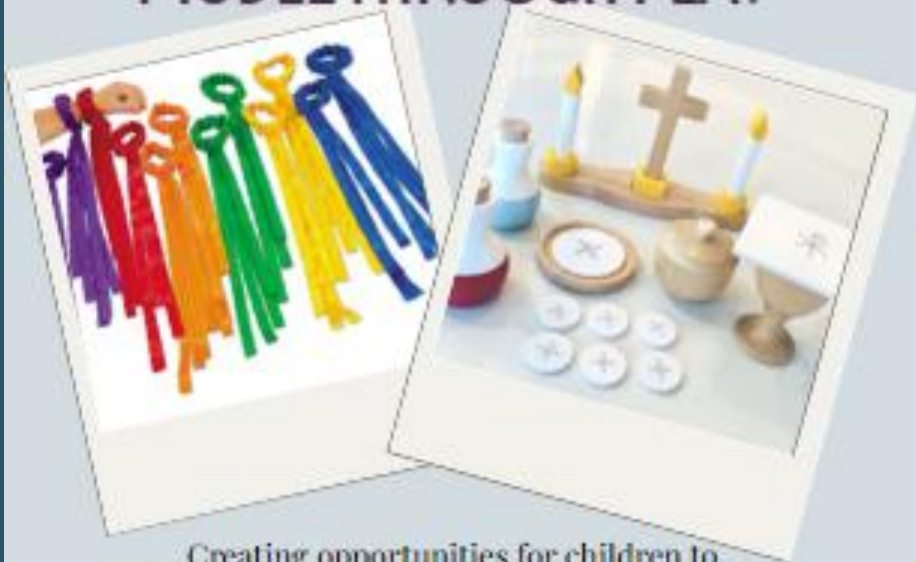


What does this look like for our youngest members?



Worship

MODEL THROUGH PLAY



Creating opportunities for children to engage, play, and fully participate during worship.

ART RESPONSE



Allow for students to respond to parts of the liturgy through drawing. Such as Prayers of the People.

Formation



What does formation look like?

Who is it primarily for?

How do we create accessibility?

How do we create choice?

Belonging

ON-RAMPS



Create on-ramps and entry ways
for children and youth to
participate in the life of the church
(ie ushering, hospitality, choir,
acolyte, lector, etc.)

*to all members
and visitors*

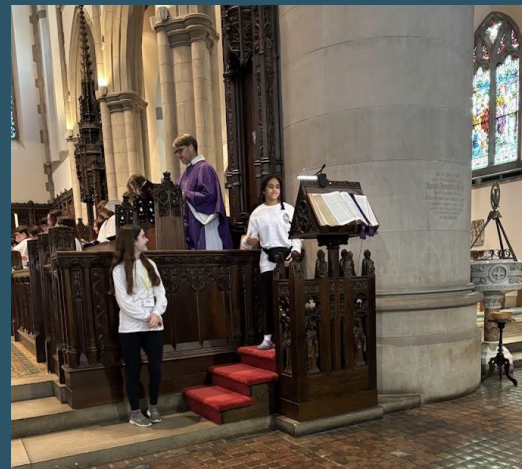
The presence of children is a gift to
St. James and they are a reminder that
our church is growing.

Remember that the way we welcome chil-
dren in church directly affects the way they
respond to the Church, to God, and to one
another. Let them know that they are at
home in this house of worship.

Please welcome our children and give a
smile of encouragement to their parents.



To parents of young children →



Discernment and Organizational Practices

Discernment and Organizational Practices

Key Ideas:

- **Shared Leadership:** Leaders collaborate and make decisions together and share responsibility for action.
- **Discernment Practices:** Intentional practices for listening experimentation, reflections and adaptation. *(This is a predictor of church growth This is largely the focus of Year A at CCD)*

Discernment and Organizational Practices

Do we begin with Prayer at our meetings?

Do we have regular ways of listening to the congregation?

Do people feel safe giving honest feedback?

Do we gather data before making major changes?

Do we have shared norms for how we handle disagreement?

Can we disagree without damaging relationships?

Do we experiment with new ideas?

Do we learn from mistakes?

Appreciative Stance

Curiosity
Build off Strengths
Assume Good Intent



Facets of Vitality

- Congregational Vocation
- Transformational Experiences
- Discernment and Organization Practices

The College for Congregational Development

...

Summer Intensive: (Year A) July 12th-17th
Cathedral Church of St. Paul

CCD Summer Intensive continued...

Who is CCD for? _____

Clergy & Lay Leaders

Best practice is: Clergy + 1-6 Lay Leaders

Individual participants (both clergy or lay) are also welcome.

It is a 2 year Intensive (*days are generally 8:30am-6pm*)

CCD Summer Intensive continued...

2026 Summer Intensive:

July 12th-17th *(We Begin Sunday at 5pm and End Friday at 12pm)*

At the Cathedral Church of St. Paul

Cost \$350 *Includes materials, lunches, and resources*

(overnight accommodations are available at no extra cost if needed)

Appreciative Mindset

FOR VESTRIES AND
CONGREGATIONS



Biblical Grounding

From Philippians 4:8: “Finally, beloved, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

Living in “Negative Bias”



We live in difficult times. Politically and socially, we are primed for negativity as we watch what is happening in our world, as we doomscroll and as we respond online, and as we have conversations with our neighbors. Neuroscience indicates that our brains respond more intensely to stimuli that it perceives as negative.



This response matters: such fear-or-anger-based responses can keep us safe and out of harm's way. It helps us to notice when something feels wrong. **It is deeply important, especially now, that as leaders we curate times and spaces where our anger can be heard, lamented, and processed** with and for our congregations.



And, a caution: living in negative bias can also impact, in serious ways, our ability to be in community with one another. We become what we talk about, and the stories we tell. This shifts the tone of our community, and how we show up for each other.



Building Appreciative Mindset in Congregations

As Vestries and as leaders in your settings, how we talk about our places and our ministries matters deeply – to building a sense of forward movement, in expressing gratitude for one another, and to building a cohesive community, even across difference.

Because we experience negative stimuli so strongly, researchers suggest that for every one negative comment received, five positive comments are needed to shift our focus away from the negative to the positive.

In this coming year, I invite you all as leaders in your communities to practice giving each other: fellow leaders, and members of your congregations, positive feedback and compliments.

Abundantly, lavishly, and joyfully.

Even, and particularly when, it can be awkward!





Some Examples:

In Vestry meetings:

"I really liked it when you raised this question because _____."

"One of the things I admire about this body is _____."

In worship:

"I saw our congregation come alive when _____."

In debriefing ministry events:

"I was impressed when I saw _____ because _____."

"One thing I'm grateful for is _____."



Why This Matters

Appreciative mindset helps us **to move from strength to strength**. It acknowledges individuals, and times in the community that were important and names why they were valued.

It acknowledges **the mustard seed**. Something I say to the congregations in my care all the time: "I see you, I value you, I hear you." No matter how small, you are making a unique and important contribution.

It helps to build **common purpose, accord, and can help us to move toward consensus**.

Particularly in these times: appreciative mindset assumes that we are moving toward positive decisions, changes, and ministry.

As Vestry leaders, your community is noticing your influence and action. **You have power in what you say and do**. How you share and speak also affects how your communities will likewise respond. Thank you for your dedicated and faithful and compassionate leadership.