

There was also discussion regarding what seems to be a move to “brand” St. Mark’s – who and what are driving this effort, and why now? What’s at stake for us as a community by embracing a “signature project”? Also, by embracing the progressive understanding of an “open communion,” we are in violation of the Canons of the Episcopal church – it is important to find out who is doing this and build a link with those parishes.

How these ideas figure in with the St. Mark’s mission statement was also discussed. This statement has changed in recent years, the most recent developing from an impetus to be open v. exclusionary; to embrace Paul’s distillation of active faith into an expression of love and justice; and to link with our roots through the practice of radical hospitality – how to take the peace, spirit and love we receive during the Eucharist out into the world, something which should reflect our roots in open-ness with each other. Also, why is there not perhaps a stronger connection with the Center for Progressive Christianity?

It was determined that there are a number of questions here requiring further discussion, including the motivational factors, relationships to other programs, and sustainability. The driving force seems to be an organizational principle centering on what makes St. Mark’s special, and possibly capturing a shift in paradigm from inward- to outward-looking.

Hospitality

Jane Michael and Elizabeth Long

Jane Michael led a discussion about the role of the Hospitality Committee and ideas her committee would like to see implemented. Simply stated, it is the way we attract new people, who bring with them ideas, energy and financial support in exchange for a sense of belonging to a community. Our communications efforts – website, ads, and sign board have been successful in attracting people, but identifying them and keeping them continues to be difficult.

Suggestions included: wearing nametags; circulating fliers during Holy Day seasons; printing business cards with contact information and service times; having a more visible and prominent sign for the Welcome Table; using Vestry and Beadles to distribute and collect visitor information cards (as opposed to the current tear sheets in the bulletin); visitor information cards as well as a “contact us” e-mail available on the website. Vestry members were reminded to be more responsible about reaching out to newcomers and to give a clearer indication as to where the Parish Hall is located for coffee or pub lunch. *See attachments RE: Newcomers and Greetings.*

Christian Education Finances

Pete Carlson

The Christian Education program is out of funds (*see attached*). The most significant drains on the budget are 1) the rising cost of retreats, 2) discounted fees for all participants and, last year, full subsidization of spouses to encourage higher participation in the LCF class, and 3) lost deposits as a consequence of cancelled

classes. These deposits must be paid a full 6 – 12 months in advance and are non-refundable if the class fails to materialize.

The Christian Ed program has been losing money since 1999. This year's Christian Ed Co-Directors have taken several steps to address this shortfall: fees for classes with retreats have been increased, there is a more disciplined approach to collecting fees for all classes, alternative sites for retreats are being investigated including sites where participants prepare the meals, and they have prepared a detailed budget.

The Finance Committee will review this situation and make a recommendation to the Vestry on how to respond. However, there are remaining issues that will require further discussion, specifically, the preparation and review by the vestry of budgets for *all* off-budget accounts and year-end reports; whether or not, as a matter of policy there should even be off-budget accounts; what our budget commitments should be for key programs at St. Mark's; and how to manage classes such as the Life, Community, and Faith class that are integral to the St. Mark's culture, but do not pay for themselves. A further question is what to do once the Penniman Fund is depleted.

Lengthy discussion followed. Points raised in addition to those regarding off-budget accounts included accountability – how responsive to the current community are Christian Ed offerings – who's taking classes? How many people become pledging members following their LCF experience, and for how long? How are the increased fees and other innovations implemented by the Co-Directors working? What additional information would be helpful to have in reviewing the 2008 budget and making informed decisions? The Senior Warden encouraged leaving policy and structural decisions regarding the program to the Christian Ed Co-directors. The point was made that this is an example of the weakness of the current pillar structure, both in terms of "pass off" and the disconnect between programmatic and financial decision-making.

November 9-11 Vestry Retreat Planning

Louise Walsh

Woody Osborne has been engaged to lead discussions at the retreat which will focus on material that Kenn Allen prepared from the parish-wide September 30 Small Group Discussions on poverty, race and "the other;" the role of the vestry; and the fabric of the community – what is it, how to welcome others into it, and how to sustain the community as responsible stewards.

In response to a question about desired outcomes, Louise Walsh specified the identity of a path for 2008 – something that is responsive to parish discussions, some of which may or may not require a budget; possibly consensus on some organizing issue. Kenn Allen further defined these outcomes by pointing to themes that emerged from the September 30 meetings:

- 1) Partnering with other organizations – the need to look at existing programs, both at St. Mark's as well as beyond – what are they doing and how are they working; and

- 2) Defining our aspirations – do we want to become a multi-cultural, diverse community?

While we need to think about immediate goals and outcomes, it needs to be remembered that implementation and results are a multi-year proposition and that the role of the Vestry is to continue to raise the issues, over and over again.

Vestry Reports and Votes

Register's Report

The September 16 Vestry minutes were approved with minor corrections.

Senior Warden's Report: E-Votes

E-votes since the last Vestry meeting to support the Washington Early Music Festival in 2008 and to endorse David Willson as co-Chair Manager of the Endowment Fund and Mike Townsend as the Investment Fund Manager, both passed.

There will be an e-vote to approve new money counters.

Acting Treasurer's Report

The report was approved with minimal discussion.

Junior Warden's Report

Jim Michael presented a report illustrating potential major expenses for safety reasons (wrought iron fence and windows in classroom doors) and deferred maintenance (kitchen and bathroom upgrades and Baxter House improvements).

What's New / What's Working

- The \$25,000 Barnes bequest has been received and is to be used to preserve the original details of the building. The Finance Committee will present a recommendation.
- Sian Jones has been working hard and extremely well with the youth programs – she has led 2 retreats that were well attended, but has concerns about the continuing disparity between “wants” and available help as well as liability issues to enable ad hoc activities.
- Jack Richards and Rick Warfield should be thanked for their help in installing the new kitchen freezer.
- Susan Block is preparing a reimbursement timeline for those submitting expense vouchers.

Closing Prayer

Doris Burton

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Thigpen
Acting Register
ATTACHMENT A

The Open Communion Project *presented by Steve Dalzell*

Shrine Mont 2007: Group 8

Referred to Curley's Law of "Just one thing" [From the movie City Slickers, Jack Palance as Curley]-- saying that it (the one thing) was not yet known, but to get there, we must reach out to every part of our congregation. (The group drew a circle with a number one in the center. Around the circle, with arrows pointing to and away from it were these separate topics: MDG (Millenium Development Goals), "Support our leaders in the big effort", DC Region Individuals (leaders), International Congregations, Youth, Understanding, Shared Space, Theology, Arts. A note in upper left corner noted the work they did Saturday morning (who we are and what we offer) and said we should "know our selves and know our values."

The facilitator later emailed us one major initiative for St. Mark's: **The Open Communion Project**

1. **Concept: Build a project, spanning all of St. Mark's pillar and focus areas, that highlight and deepen our understanding of the practice of Open Communion (OC). We become "The Church of the Open Communion"**
2. Subprograms. Examples of how this would be implemented would include the following:
 - a. **"This we believe" statement**, including tenets such as
 - i) OC as a historically valid pillar of Christian life going back to Jesus' own day – more deeply and clearly rooted than many other "historical" practices
 - ii) What we mean by OC
 - iii) OC as a symbol of how we see community in the 21st Century.
 - iv) This statement would then be prominently featured in bulletins, websites, and advertising.
 - b. **Intellectual foundations**, studying how OC connects to findings from historical-Jesus research, church history, current divisions among denominations, etc.
 - c. **An arts program interpreting our ideas of OC** in graphic arts, drama, etc. ("Guess Who's Coming to Communion"? "My Dinner with Anyone"?)
 - d. **Outreach programs applying OC in new and unusual settings**, as a practice of radical hospitality. A St. Mark's Juice Cart taking food and drink into the world – with Honduras waiting for day jobs, parents watching kids play T-ball, staffers getting fresh air at midday, the injured at Walter Reed...
 - e. **Events with other churches to discuss what communion means** to each of us, and why they do or do not put their own limits on who receives.
 - f. **Looking to partner with international programs that reflect this value, focusing not just on the delivery of food as a commodity but on its distribution and**

consumption as a process that can overcome rivalries, divisions, and discrimination. There's got to be someone!

Attachment B

Hospitality Statistics and Recommended Greeting *presented by Jane Michael*

**Newcomer Statistics – Year-to-Year Comparison
2007 (2006)**

	# cards collected	# HH added for reason other than Newcomer card *	# adults (removed and not removed)	# kids (removed and not removed)	total # HH (removed and not removed)	notes
January	2 (7)	4 (4)	8 (14)	0 (0)	6 (11)	
February	1 (9)	1 (3)	5 (17)	0 (3)	4 (12)	
March	0 (8)	0 (0)	13 (10)	5 (5)	7 (8)	
April	1 (3)	1 (1)	1 (6)	0 (3)	1 (4)	
May	2 (7)	2 (0)	2 (11)	1 (2)	2 (7)	
June	1 (2)	1 (2)	1 (6)	1 (2)	1 (4)	
July	11 (4)	5 (2)	5 (22)	4 (0)	16 (6)	
August	4 (2)	4 (0)	11 (3)	2 (1)	8 (2)	
September	6 (4)	6 (6)	17 (18)	2 (9)	12 (10)	
October	0 (3)	3 (2)	5 (7)	3 (1)	3 (5)	data only through 10-13-07
November	0 (4)	0 (0)	0 (6)	0 (0)	0 (4)	
December	0 (1)	0 (3)	0 (6)	0 (0)	0 (4)	
TOTALS	28 (54)	27 (23)	85 (109)	18 (26)	60 (77)	

NOTES:

people do not always list all family members on their cards -- so these stats are only as good as the info on the cards ----- ALSO -cards from out-of-the-area visitors are not included

* Names from the Newcomer Class, checks, and Otis' list



VESTRY WELCOME TO ST. MARK'S

Before the first service:

- Put out the “visitor suitcase.”

During the service:

- Welcome visitors on behalf of the vestry and St. Mark's.
- Ask them to stand so we that we can greet them. (Give them a little time.)
- Try to note who they are and where they are sitting, so that you can remember them later.
- Show them the visitor card and ask them to fill it out
- Tell them where you will be after the service.
- Explain about Pub Lunch—when and where it is and how they can participate as our guest.

After the service:

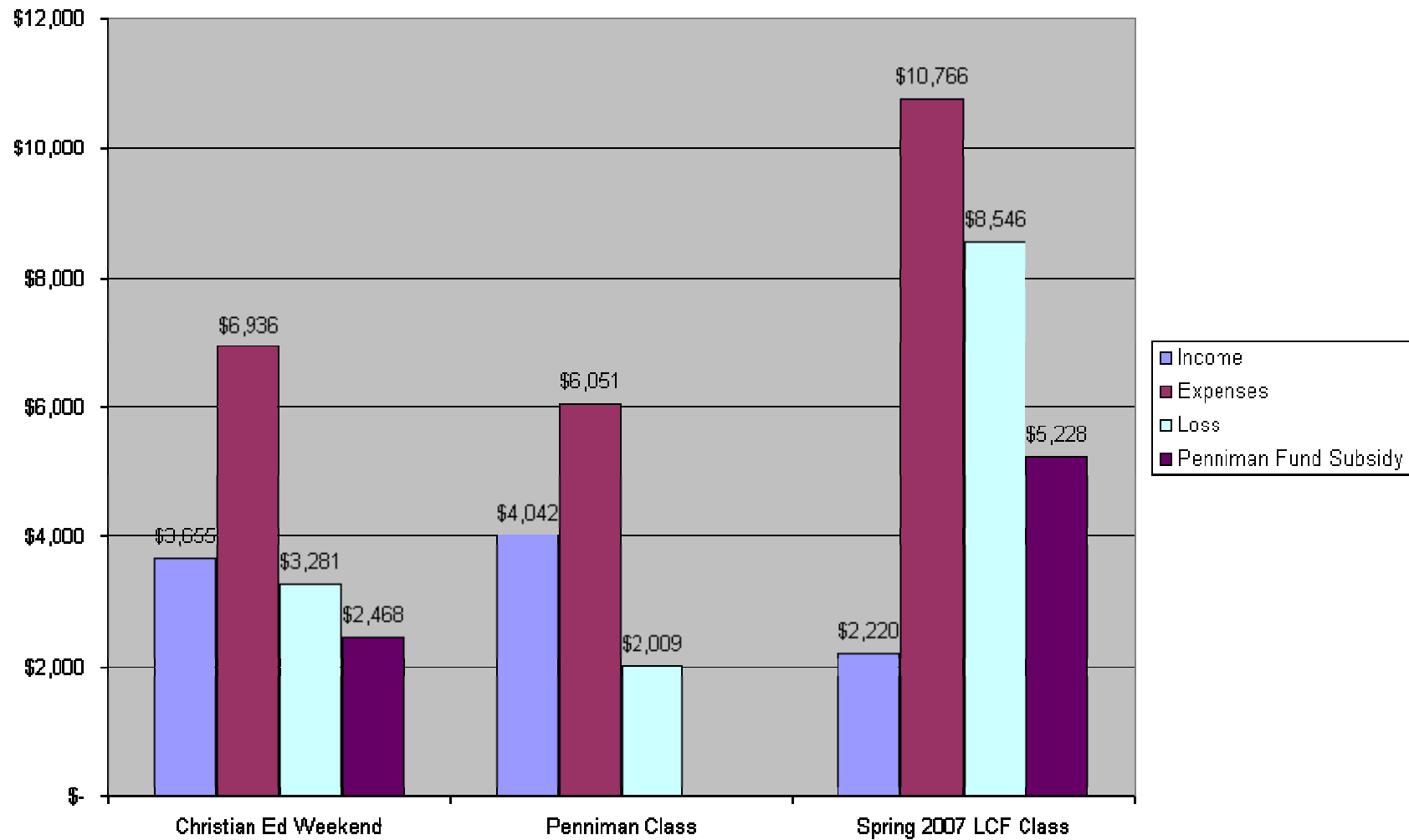
- Be at the meeting place to talk to the visitors.
- Give them any materials they may want from the “visitor suitcase” including any of the white packets that are there.
- Put your name and any notes on the card and place it in Susan Block's box by the Sacristy.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

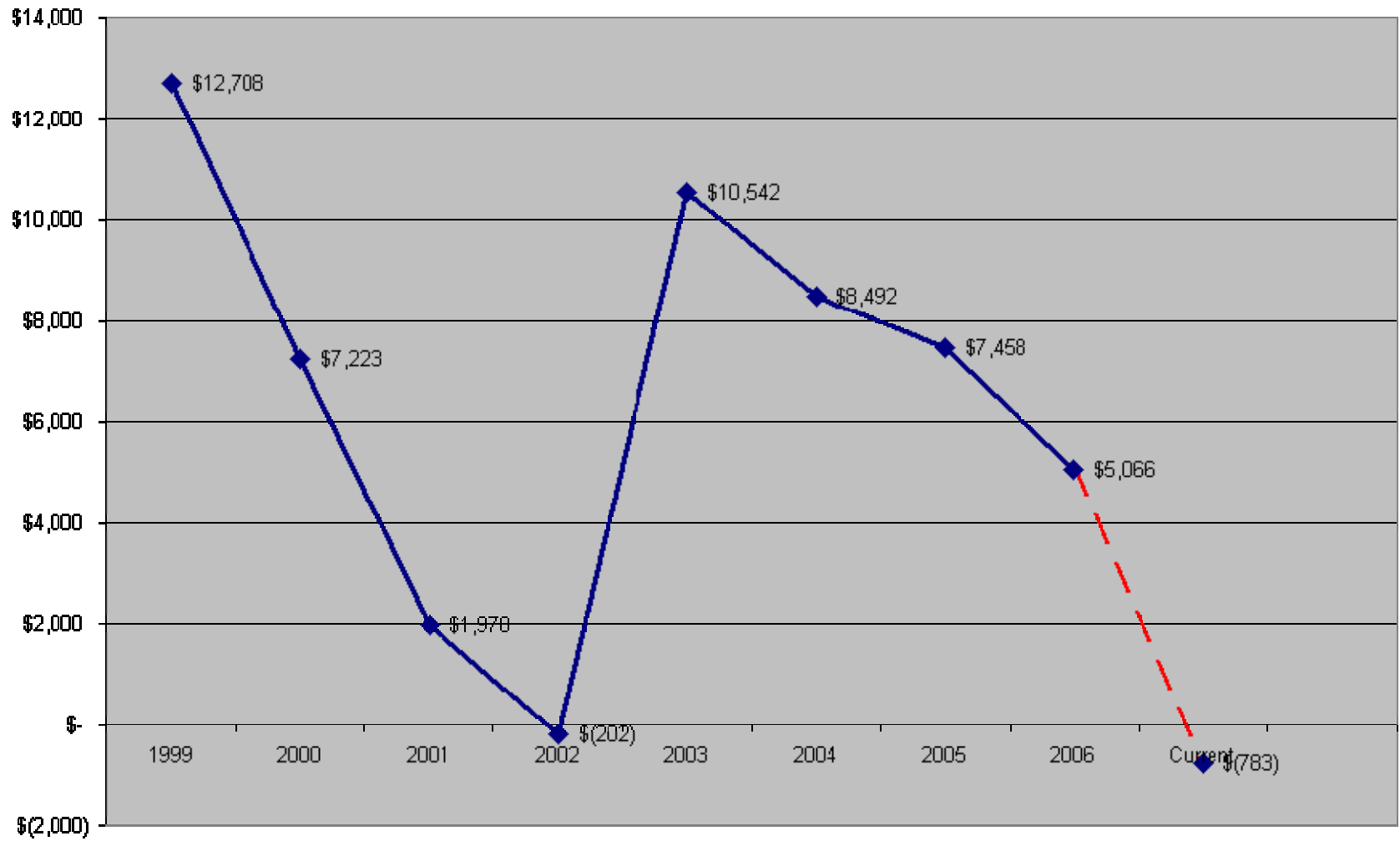
Example:

Good morning, I am _____representing St. Mark's. We are glad you are here, and we particularly welcome visitors. If you are visiting or new to St. Mark's, please stand so we may greet you....thank you! We ask you to complete the contact information in the back of the bulletin and return it to me. After the service I will be at the welcome table at the front to welcome you and answer questions. You are also invited to be our guest at Pub Lunch in the Parish Hall after the service.

Losses for Christian Ed Classes with Retreat Weekends



Christian Ed Designated Fund



Christian Ed Vestry Account

