

TREC-CT Task Force for Re-imagining the Episcopal Church in CT

In our previous sessions, we outlined a brief history of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut and The Episcopal Church generally, and saw how each was organized as a “Missionary Society” to plant churches and spread the Gospel. And we learned that as the church took on a more corporate identity in the 20th century, these missionary societies became “holding companies” for assets. Now, as we claim our call to live truly as a “missional church” in the 21st century, we have begun to reexamine what a missionary society in Connecticut might look like. We’ve asked participants at our listening sessions in late May, at the meeting of the leadership bodies of The Episcopal Church in Connecticut in June, and in a day long gathering of clergy, where and how people have most powerfully experienced God in their communities and churches, and what they needed to support those experiences. We also asked what it meant to be a “missionary society” in the 21st century, and we have begun to dream how we might form ourselves to be that missionary society. With all that in mind we return to the questions of how we experience and participate in God’s mission in the world as we continue to develop a vision for what the Episcopal Church in Connecticut might become. We will spend some time tonight dwelling in God’s word, and then listening to the word made flesh in our own lives in one on one conversations. As we share what God in Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit is doing in our own lives in the world, we will ask together how the Church is called to support and extend that witness in specific ways now and into the 21st century in our local contexts and across Connecticut.

SCHEDULE for the Listening Sessions: Who are we and who do we want to become?

7:00 - 7:05pm Opening Worship - *Litany of Mission* (below)

7:05 - 7:20 Dwelling in the Word on Transfiguration (Luke 9:28-43) (below)

7:20 - 7:45 One on One Conversations

Tell about your best experience of God’s Mission out in the world. Where are you most connected with God?

7:45 - 8:30 Sharing stories from One on Ones - make connections with structures of Episcopal Church in CT - What resources of the Episcopal Church in CT would you need to thrive in that ministry? What resources of the Episcopal Church in CT would help you increase collaboration within your ministry?

8:30 What do the listed resources say about the Body of Christ in CT? Who are we and who should we become? - How can we connect this list with possible scenarios?

Closing Prayer - *Collect for the Church (BCP)*:

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 tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were being 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.*

Litany for Mission

Gracious God,

We're recognizing a new age where our world is radically shifting — from how we communicate to how we live in community...

Keep us grounded in your Word

We're discovering an ever-expanding network of digital tools shaping and supporting our relationships...

Keep us connected to the Body of Christ

We're realizing our need to relate to one another in community is as strong as ever ...

Open our hearts to collaborative relationships

We're accepting that our church is not immune from these changes ..

Help us focus on Your mission

We're confronting profound questions of church identity in the 21st century ...

Give us clarity in our call to serve.

Gracious God,

We seek to acknowledge ...

Where we've been by embracing the wisdom of the past and carrying forward the best of our traditions.

We seek to understand...

Where we are by being present to the wisdom of new possibilities.

We seek to appreciate...

Where we are going by discerning how to be faithful to Your mission.

Gracious God,

Today we have explored what it means for us to be a Missionary Society as Episcopalians in Connecticut in the 21st century

Open our imaginations, Fill us with courage, Inspire us to move forward, innovate, and expand our thinking.

May we courageously leave behind what's out-moded and useless to fearlessly participate in Your mission.

Help us identify our needs, appreciate our desires, and focus our efforts to serve as a covenanted band of Christians, reclaiming our past and looking to the future as a renewed Missionary Society in the 21st century. Today we recommit ourselves to You and to each other to be about this good and holy work.

Amen.

Litany created by the Rt. Rev. Laura Ahrens with great editorial additions by the Rev. Tim Hodapp

Dwelling in the Word

Luke 9:28-43

