

From: **St. Francis Episcopal Church** vicar@stfrancisva.org
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St Francis



March 15, 2017

Start Your Engines

And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.

Jeremiah 3:15

Two Personal Matters

1. As most of you know, I did spend time last weekend in the emergency room and hospital for what has turned out to be non-cardiac chest pain. The good news is that I have a very strong, clear cardio vascular system! The bad news is that something else is causing the trouble. So, I will be seeing more doctors. In the meantime I am very thankful for all of your prayers. I am feeling well and have returned to normal activity.
2. I sent out an announcement about our upcoming Learning Community in last week's newsletter and in other messages to the congregation. I must admit that I did a very poor job communicating in those announcements. They are more confusing than enlightening. So, I have reworked, simplified, and discussed with the vestry a new schedule which you will find below.

Wisdom and Understanding

This morning in the reading from Jeremiah we see God's description of a shepherd after his own heart: one who "feeds" others with wisdom and understanding. The idea is not that the pastoral leader of a congregation learns facts and content of the Bible and then shares it with everyone else. The idea is that the pastoral leader makes sure that everyone is able to receive wisdom and understanding from God for themselves through their own relationship with God, thier relationship with other Christians, and thier relationship with others in the world. For example, an inspiring sermon can lose its effect in a very short time. A discipling relationship can provide wisdom and understanding that grows and lasts for a lifetime. The call of a pastoral leader is to provide through the power and provision of the Holy Spirit the means for all to grow together in the grace of God.

Engines and Vehicles

One of the important aspects of growing together in the grace of God is to have both the means and the power to do what God asks us to do. It is like the car in the factory pictured above. We might have a very expensive and fancy car, but if there is no engine in it the car goes nowhere. We might have some very good, insightful ideas about what to do but if there is no power, no engine, to do them we go nowhere. To extend the metaphor- the vehicle is our ministry plans and efforts, the engine is discipleship. The

great and wonderful thing about St. Francis is that we have a beautiful vehicle in mind: a sustainable, multiplying network of missional communities. We need to put an engine in that vehicle. The right engine for that vehicle is discipleship.

The Learning Community

The Learning Community is the means of building the engine which will power our vehicle. It is the means of developing a discipleship culture that will power our missional communities. I am inviting you to join the vestry in building a discipleship culture which will power our network of missional communities. There will be a larger group meeting four times over 2017 which considers the dynamics of a discipleship culture as it applies to us here at St. Francis. There will be some preparation for these meetings. There will be small group leadership huddles meeting for a short time twice a month. We will learn and practice the ways of discipleship in those meetings. No additional preparation is needed for the huddles. Here is the schedule:

Larger Meetings at 6:15pm

April 18 "What is our discipleship culture at St. Francis?"

June 13 "What is a missional leader at St. Francis?"

September 12 "What is a missional community at St. Francis?"

November 14 "How do we sustain a network of missional communities through St. Francis?"

Leadership Huddle

First and third Tuesdays of the month. One is beginning starting March 21, 5:45pm-6:30pm

Is God asking you to join in this year? Please let me know
vicar@stfarcisva.org

Coming Attractions

Sunday, March 19, 2017 Worship at 10:00am. Carol Maher teaching on "Creativity and hearing God"

Monday, March 20, 2017 5:00pm Evening Prayer

Tuesday, March 21, 2017 5:45pm Leadership Huddle

Sunday, March 26, 2017 Worship at 10:00am

Caritas is changing for St. Francis. We will provide lunch for April 7th. If you wish to donate funds or bake/buy cookies or snacks please be in touch with Jenna Nelson jneslon561@gmail.com; Janice Nelson jlrn2610@comcast.net; or Evelyn Staples erstaples@yahoo.com. The Caritas team (Jenna, Janice, and Evelyn) will be preparing the bag lunches.

Please bring non perishable food to worship to be distributed to the Food Pantry of the Goochland Free Clinic and Family Services

Centerville Circle of Prayer

For Caldwell and Gregory, Bob Dinnie, President, that business would increase.

Diocese of Virginia

For the people of St. John the Baptist, Ivy; Christ Church, Middlesex; All Souls, Atlee; St. Gabriel's, Leesburg that they would continually walk in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Grace and Peace,

John Maher

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