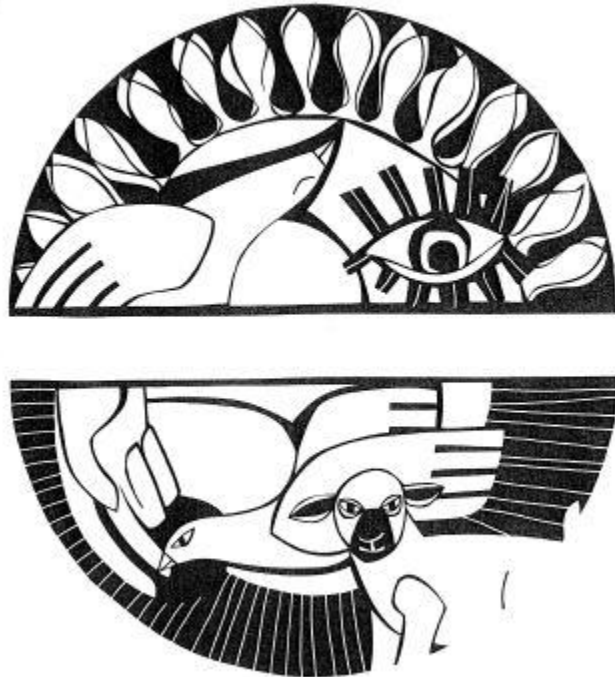


Festival of Christian Spirituality

A Vision for Ministry



All Saints' Episcopal Church

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Dear Friends in Christ:

The dream of offering an annual Festival of Christian Spirituality is thrilling and a little daunting. At this time, we are still talking about what God might be calling us to undertake, and watching the dream unfold. Bishop Mary is very interested in this ministry, so the task force will be in conversation with the bishop and her staff. We invite your comments and questions.

The proposed festival will be an annual event, similar to several other events that take place in Carmel and the surrounding area. In addition, we also envision offering ways for participants to stay connected throughout the year, in order to deepen relationships and continue conversations. The festival community might unite participants from several different years.

The annual festival integrates presentations by experts in various fields who are assembled around a common annual theme. Participants are given the opportunity to choose from lectures, conversations, worship, traditional Christian spiritual practices (contemplative prayer, praying before an icon, daily offices), singing, musical presentations, poetry, drama, and various other art forms.

The purpose of this festival is to bring the Gospel to bear on relevant issues that are critically important to the contemporary world. The festival engages the complexity of the issues and explores the profundity of the answers God provides. Participants will be challenged and stretched. People from a wide background, both within and beyond the Church, will be attracted. Speakers and presenters will contribute from a variety of professions, including leaders from other religious traditions, who will deepen the reflections and enrich the conversations. The gatherings will engender the hope of our faith, and demonstrate that the Good News addresses the needs of the world today just as much as it brings salvation beyond.

Vestry Members:

Nan Borreson, Susan Britton, Allan Groves, Nancy Jones, LeAnn Keaton, Donald Kirk, Tom Livelli, Marcia McCleary, Mike Touse, the Rev. Daniel Green, the Rev. Rick Matters

Discernment Group:

Al Alvarez, Nancy Collins, Bill Reed, Canon Jesus Reyes, Greg Troxell, Fr. Rick Matters

Vision and Mission

We believe that God's purpose for the Festival of Christian Spirituality is to generate a community that is committed and equipped to fulfill Christ's mission for creation and human society in our day. The festival represents a means by which God may set free the redeeming power of the Holy Spirit. We foresee its mission not only to be a means to a future salvation, but to be an event of God's redeeming love. We prayerfully anticipate that the festival will be a means by which God will transform and restore the world one relationship at a time, with exponential dynamism.

The intent of the Festival of Christian Spirituality is to enable participants to engage the risen Lord with such intentionality that we are caught up in the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Those who participate in the festival will be inspired to serve Christ as life-long learners and leaders.

We envision that the festival will address the most vital aspects of our lives, starting with the quality of our relationships and including the critical issues facing contemporary people and threatening our world, such as poverty, terrorism, and the health of the planet.

The gatherings will assume that God's original purpose and culminating *telos*, or goal, for the world is expressed most perfectly in the historical Jesus Christ. It will assume God's love for all people and God's revelation through world cultures and religions. Each aspect of the festival will be predicated on the belief that through Christ God continuously offers redemption incarnated in social structures, in commerce, and in relationships.

The festival will witness to the full power of Christ, thereby transcending the disagreements and internecine debates among Christians. It will be evangelical through its demonstration, witnessing to a Christian perspective that is generous and respectful, and thereby seeking to heal the dangerous false dualities we create out of fear or greed.

Participants in the Festival

The festival will encompass an ever-growing community of individuals of people who strive to engage the Gospel in contemporary society. Even though the actual gatherings occur at a specific time each year, we anticipate that many participants will choose to participate throughout the year. Thus the festival will become a social network of people in continuous formation over a lifetime of service and discipleship. Groups of participants may choose to meet in diverse alternate locations either to participate in the annual festival or to gather throughout the year.

We trust that the community that forms will incorporate both conservative and liberal Christians, and draws all people together through the example of respect and forbearance. It is precisely the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ that motivates us to respect people of various religious traditions, as well as people who claim no religion, and to establish relationships of mutual accountability with them. At the same time, the festival will maintain the historic Trinitarian faith articulated in the ecumenical creeds and affirmed in various expressions of reformation.

The Structure of the Festival

The festival will incorporate both annual gatherings and continuous follow-up. Some people might attend as part of their continuing education, civic duty, or corporate

commitment. Others might plan their vacation in order to attend an annual gathering. Still others might connect via the Internet and interact through other forms of technology. The offerings will be accessible to people of various ages and learning styles, and without apology will include deeply intellectual and profoundly spiritual offerings that challenge the serious.

At the annual gatherings, members will participate in some combination of lectures, workshops, discussions, reflection, and debate. The festival will present the spiritual resources of the Christian tradition that are often not known or are misunderstood.

Each year's theme will further the festival's mission of celebrating Christ's love and equipping people for healthy, life-giving relationships in the contemporary world. Experts from diverse fields will lead components of the festival, drawing on the diverse traditions both within and beyond the Christian faith. Simultaneous interpretation will permit famous international thinkers, spiritual leaders, and politicians to participate in seminal discussions. Such guest speakers will offer a wide range of opinions and differing religious perspectives addressing life's deep and urgent issues.

The Organization and Finances of the Festival

The festival will be an outreach of All Saints' Episcopal Church, and will be a chartered organization of the parish. At some time in the future it may exist as a separate non-profit corporation. We expect the festival to have its own endowment, which will help sustain its operation. We envision that the festival will be run by a small paid staff, whose offices are located at All Saints' parish. Funds will also be generated through fees, underwriting, grants, and sales (publications, tapes, and other items).

Conclusion

We envision that The Festival of Christian Spirituality will be a manifestation of the Church interacting with the world by participating in an ever-expanding community invested with spiritual depth and intellectual rigor. This festival community will respond to opportunities for redemption in our day through the resources and formation received at annual events and continuing interactions. We envision that the extended festival community will experience the transforming power of the Holy Spirit and, in turn, will become God's agent for transforming the world. We envision exemplifying the Church at its best by engaging people at fundamental levels and over critical issues, and thus becoming a conduit for the living hope of Christ's resurrection.