

Outreach and Mission – Facilitator: Connie Melahoures, Christ Church Plymouth.

Our discussion ranged between the philosophical and specific examples. We focused on the following questions:

- Is outreach directed by a specific goal?
- Is it a collection of individual projects?
- What is the overall goal of a parish as it relates to outreach?

Outreach projects often start from an individual's passion. When there are a number of people with different passions, it can sometimes feel a bit out of control – especially for new clergy entering a parish.

Outreach committees provide a way to coordinate the different efforts/initiatives in the parish and provide guidance to Vestry on suggestions for distributing outreach funds. Not all parishes have outreach committees.

Mission statement for Outreach Committee at Church of the Messiah:

The Outreach Committee at the Church of the Messiah focuses on local, national and global needs of the human community. We review information about areas of need that have been brought to our attention through the parish. In addition, from time to time, we share some of the information or resources that focus on an area of need in a particular place. It is our responsibility to make recommendations to the Vestry as to where funds are either distributed, or in the case of our Easter and Christmas offerings, what institution or program they might be sent. Our focuses range from educational and health issues to specific needs facing individual groups, as well as many areas in between. We are motivated by God's call to serve one another on this "fragile earth, our island home."

The Diocesan assessment formula 'rewards' parish spending on outreach by excluding outreach dollars from the base used to calculate the parish assessment.

St Mary's Barnstable: Amazing Grace Camp began through the passion of parishioners at this parish. It is now a stand-alone non-profit supported by many communities of faith and others across the Cape and Islands and beyond.

Local Projects:

St Barnabas: one passion is serving the homeless. Last year was the initial year for Belonging to Each Other (St Barnabas and other parishes in Falmouth), an Ecumenical/community effort to provide housing and meals in the winter to local (Falmouth) homeless folk. Last year, the guests were housed in motels. This year, they have a house. The initiative is now becoming a stand-alone non-profit.

St Peter's on the Canal: one major focus area is food and food security. They host weekly Monday night community dinners "friendly kitchen" – open to anyone who wishes to attend. There are 4 rotating teams to prepare/serve/cleanup for this weekly event. Teams do not need to be parishioners. The parish also has a food pantry with prepared bags of food for the clergy to hand out to those in need. They also provide meals to the Village at Cataumet.

Church of the Messiah: Village at Cataumet is one major recipient of local outreach. The parish hosts a 'Day of Science' for Boston Epiphany School kids.

St David's South Yarmouth runs a Paper Pantry for those items that are not covered by WIC/foodstamps. Many parishes have donated to this pantry.

Christ Church Plymouth: has run a food pantry for close to 30 years. Their involvement with Overnights of Hospitality has transitioned to the Plymouth Task Force on the Homeless, now a stand-alone non-profit, providing shelter and meals for homeless men in Plymouth. Resource: Meal Train for scheduling volunteers and food providers.

St Barnabas has started a Youth Service Corps – intergenerational: cooking meals which youth/families take to homebound parishioners.

St Mary's Barnstable joined **Holy Spirit's** Food 4 Kids program last summer. Provides lunches each day to kids mid Cape and out throughout the summer vacation. Holy Spirit includes a book for each child. Program has become its own non-profit and is supported widely by the communities it serves.

St Mary's Barnstable: Youth-focused projects. St Mary's Barnstable and St Christopher's Chatham host joint Evensongs sung by their junior choristers. Barnstable youth participated in Youth Streetreach in Hyannis. They also have a Giving Tree and participate in All Our Children.

Ecumenical Community-based projects:

Village at Cataumet (Family Shelter): Church of the Messiah provides monthly dinners, Christmas tree with cards with shelter needs – parishioners take cards and bring in the items for delivery to the shelter (pillows, bedding, towels, brooms, children's books and craft supplies, etc. – whatever the shelter lists as needs). St Peter's on the Canal also supports Village at Cataumet. In addition to meals, last Christmas they provided gifts for the Shelter's children to give to their parents. St Peter's also takes luggage to the shelter on a regular basis for the families there.

A number of parishes have participated in local **Habitat for Humanity** builds.

The **Falmouth Service Center** is strongly supported by the Falmouth community. St Barnabas and Church of the Messiah also support the Service Center in numerous ways.

Financial Outreach Projects:

Easter and Christmas Offerings:

Church of the Messiah and St Barnabas (among others) identify causes (usually no more than two per festival) and the entire offering for those services are donated to these organizations.

St David's South Yarmouth has a goal of 20% of their budget to be spent on outreach. They also participate in the Stop & Shop cards where a portion of the proceeds goes to support the Housing Assistance Corp.

Church of the Messiah and St Barnabas are 2 of the 7 local Falmouth communities of faith (interfaith) in Falmouth that run an **Alternative Gift Market** each November. There are between 20 and 30 causes represented each year. The steering committee picks local and global projects. Some projects provide physical items for purchase. Many of the projects are supported through 'gifts in honor' where donations are made and a slip of paper with a description of the project is provided for the donor to include in a card to give as a gift. Raises about \$50,000 in one weekend.

Global/Millennial Development Goals projects:

Church of the Messiah: Runs an annual Middle East peace and justice lecture series each summer. Supports school and women's initiatives at the Women's Learning Center in the Burj el Barajneh refugee camp in Beirut, Lebanon.

St Mary's Barnstable: annual youth service trip to Rosebud reservation in South Dakota – other parish's youth are welcome to join as long as the parish also sends an adult chaperone.

St Barnabas Falmouth supports two different childrens/education programs in Africa.

Youth trip to the **Heifer International Farm** in Western Massachusetts.

Our Deanery supported Natalie Finstad (**Tatua**) and earlier we supported missionaries in Maseno North (Kenya) at **St Philip's theological college and hospital**. These efforts were led by St Christopher's Chatham and St Andrew's Edgartown.

Question came up: What resources are available for learning more about the Sanctuary Movement and **Sanctuary Parishes**? Diocesan resources are available, but good source of information is Episcopal City Mission.

Resources:

1. Meal Train (<https://www.mealtrain.com/>) and how to use in an outreach project: Christ Church Plymouth/Connie Melahoures.
2. Community Meals: St Peters on the Canal, Good Shepherd Wareham.
3. Homeless initiatives: Christ Church Plymouth/Connie Melahoures; St Barnabas Falmouth/Ellie Shaver.
4. Community-wide projects: Falmouth/Woods Hole parishes of St Barnabas and Church of the Messiah.
5. Involving youth in outreach/intergenerational projects: Sophie Gibson (DYC rep), Colette Potts, St Barnabas Falmouth.
6. Mission Trips: St Mary's Barnstable.
7. Opioid training for clergy: Gosnold in Falmouth offers many trainings. Bridgewater has a 129 program that could be a resource.
8. Alzheimer's and their care-givers training: St Gabriel's Marion held a training recently – provides possibility on how parishes could provide service. Marilyn Macmillan (St Barnabas Falmouth) attended.