

GETTING STARTED WITH *RENEWALWORKS*

In the summer of 2020, the Vestry approved the adoption of *RenewalWorks*, a ministry of the Episcopal Church, whose mission is to reinvigorate the life of the church.

THE GOAL

Create a church culture devoted to the renewal of our spiritual growth in the love of God and our neighbor.

THE PROCESS

- Form a leadership team composed of an administrator and two facilitators.
- Create a *Renewal/Works* workshop team, who would agree to engage in 6 curriculum-based workshops.
- Enlist parish participation in the Spiritual Life Inventory (SLI).
- As a workshop team, follow the *Renewal/Works* curriculum by studying the SLI data results and determine the best path to achieve our goal:

Develop a church culture engaged in the renewal of spiritual growth in the love of God and neighbor.

WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT US

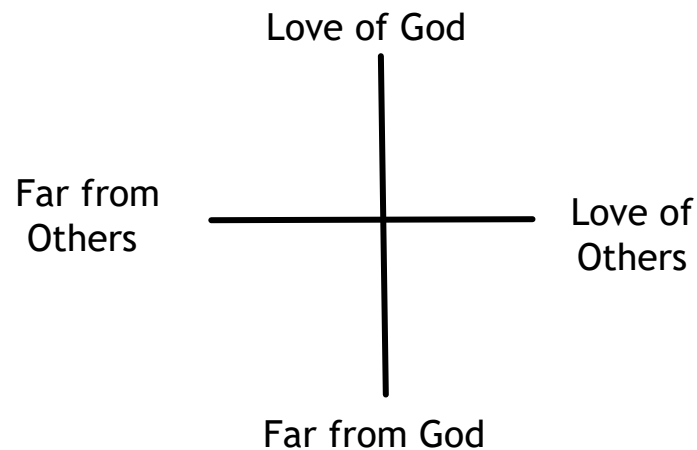
FROM OUR PARISHIONERS AND EACH OTHER

- Although our paths are unique, we are all engaged in finding a way to further our journey toward a deeper relationship with God & our neighbor.

FROM TWO GRAPHS BASED ON THE SPIRITUAL LIFE INVENTORY DATA

The Spiritual Continuum

The more we love God, the more we love others. The more we love others the more we grow in loving God



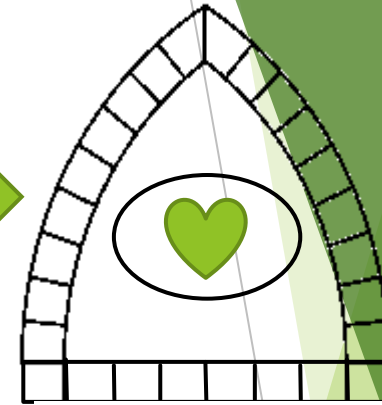
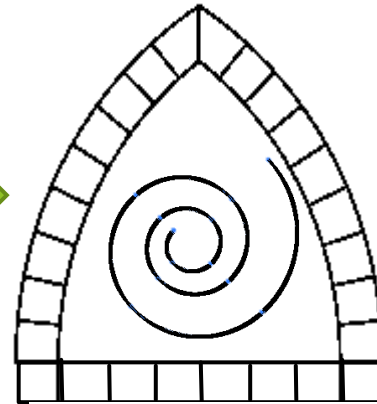
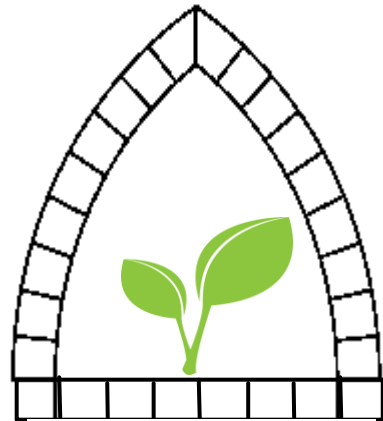
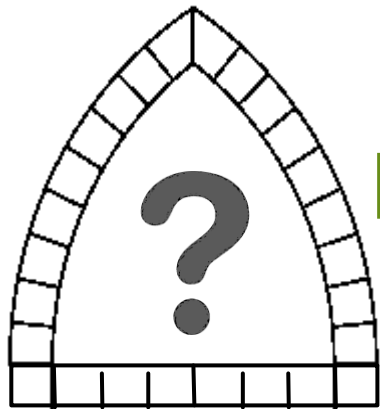
The Vitality Index

shows how our vitality as a congregation is measured.



THE SPIRITUAL LIFE CONTINUUM

Most of us are in the **Growing** stage of the continuum



EXPLORING

A LIFE WITH GOD IN CHRIST

People in this group are taking the first small steps in an intentional spiritual journey.

20%

Episcopal Norm	18%
All Norm	10%
# Parishioners	14

GROWING

A LIFE WITH GOD IN CHRIST

People in this group are more committed to their Christian faith but still have questions.

54%

Episcopal Norm	53%
All Norm	40%
# Parishioners	38

DEEPENING

A LIFE WITH GOD IN CHRIST

People in this group have a faith by which they rely on God's presence and power in their lives.

20%

Episcopal Norm	24%
All Norm	26%
# Parishioners	14

CENTERED

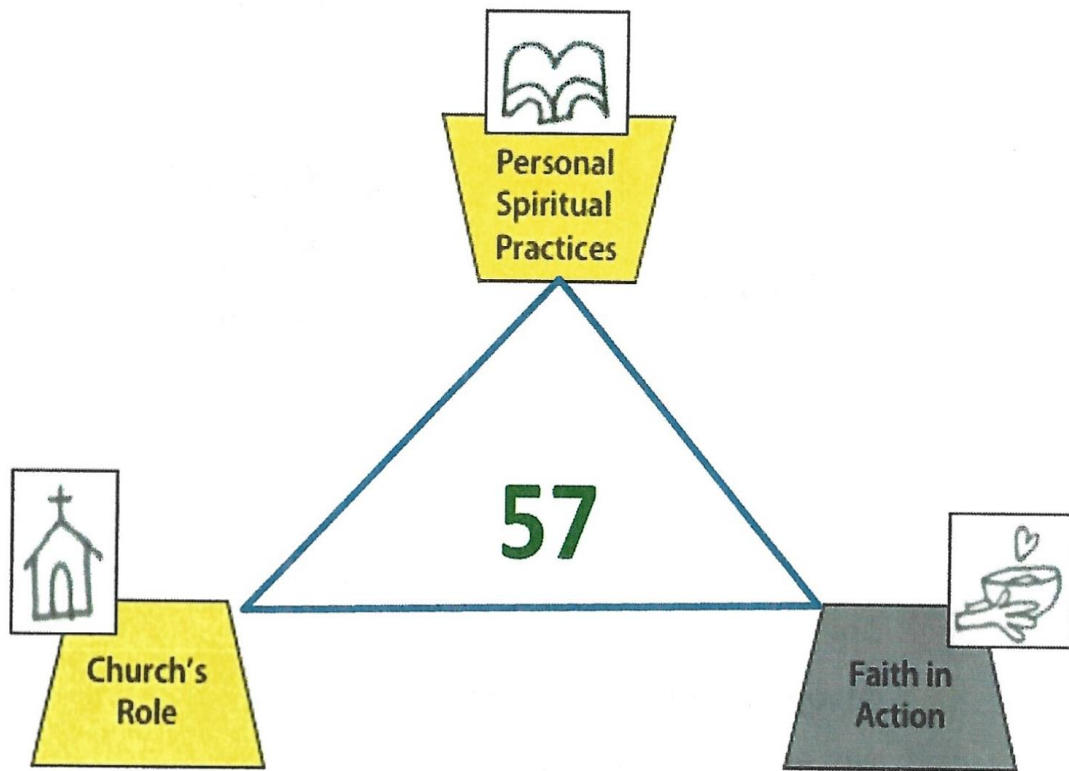
IN A LIFE WITH GOD IN CHRIST

For people in this group, their Christian faith relationship is the most important in their lives.

20%

Episcopal Norm	5%
All Norm	24%
# Parishioners	4

Spiritual Vitality Index



Yellow: an area of opportunity for our church.

Gray: an area where primary focus is not needed.

Episcopal churches tend to score between 45 and 75, on a scale of 1-100.

Church's Role:

The Church

- Sets clear & high expectations for spiritual growth;
- Finds ways to encourage parishioners on their spiritual journeys;
- Embeds scripture in activities and meetings.

Personal Spiritual Practices:

Parishioners

- Engage in personal spiritual practices.

Faith in Action:

Parishioners

- Participate in opportunities to serve God understanding it to be an expression of *love of God and neighbor*.

WHAT THE *SPIRITUAL LIFE INVENTORY* DATA TELLS US ABOUT WHERE WE ARE

We have a ...

- positive feeling about our clergy.
- sense of complacency among our parishioners.
- desire to maintain the status quo rather than further ourselves on a spiritual journey.

Since we are happy as we are and have become complacent,

- we may be stuck.
- we are an older congregation with long-time members.
- we seem to lack the drive to deepen our relationship with God and neighbor.

WHAT ARE SOME KEY TAKE-AWAYS FROM THE INVENTORY?

BELIEFS

- We value tradition in worship.
- We value interfaith conversations.
- We think relationships are more important than engaging with scripture.

PRACTICES

- We value relationships and have a strong desire to be together again.
- Prayer is part of our identity.
- We consider engagement with scripture more important than belief in its importance.
- We put a low priority on tithing, daily Bible reading, and using *The Book of Common Prayer*.

SERVICES

- We have a low engagement in serving the needy as a church.
- We have a high engagement in serving the community as individuals.
- Spiritual friendship with individuals and groups on our spiritual journeys is important.

HOW DO WE USE WHAT WE'VE LEARNED TO REACH OUR GOAL?

The answer is connected to understanding Best Practices

What are Best Practices?

A set of guidelines representing the most efficient way to achieve a goal.

They work by

- determining the best strategies to reach those goals;
- implementing them, and
- holding people accountable for putting them into practice.

Determining RenewalWorks' Best Practices

By talking with leaders in churches that demonstrated vitality and spiritual engagement, researchers found that there were five basic practices common among them.

1. THE HEART OF THE LEADER

Spiritual leader & those lay leaders working with him are single-mindedly engaged in championing spiritual growth as the priority for the parish.

2. GET PEOPLE MOVING

Communicating that we are all part of a congregation on a spiritual journey, no matter where we each might be.

3. EMBED THE BIBLE

As the single most transformational factor for spiritual growth, begin each meeting and gathering with a prayer and scripture reading.

4. CREATE OWNERSHIP

Establish an expectation that every individual will grow in relationship with the church, in their own spiritual practices, and in service to the church and community.

5. PASTOR THE COMMUNITY

Engagement in different levels of services provides opportunities to grow in Christ, create new relationships, and deepen existing ones.

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

- We identified what was most important to St. Thomas based on the data from the inventory.
- We chose 4 strategies based on the *Best Practices* presented in the curriculum.
- We made sure that the strategies were manageable, measurable, and sustainable.

What follows is a graphic showing our 4 strategies.

The graphic also shows how our strategies align with the basic themes that *RenewalWorks'* researchers identified as the *Best Practices* used by congregations focused on their spiritual journeys.

Strategy	Heart of the Leader	Get People Moving	Embed the Bible	Create Ownership	Pastor the Community
1. Develop a Parish Prayer for use with regular scripture reading at all meetings and gatherings.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Introduce the regular use of Instructed Eucharists	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Create a Parish Rule of Life that encourages people to embed the Bible in their daily lives.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4. Connect with other local churches through conferences, retreats, & youth programs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓