

Possible Futures for a Merged Parish

Discuss these “possible futures” in your small group. Which most appeals to you? Which would be “healthiest” for this parish to open itself to? There is not a “right” answer. You may find that the choices help you in creating an additional “future”.

A Possible Future

What do you like about it? What concerns you? How might you modify it?

1. The parish stays largely as it is but gives more attention to membership growth. We use one of the existing buildings without much change except for incorporating treasured items from the other parish. Incremental change and improvements continue to take place. The parish attracts the percentage of people in the area who are easily drawn to the Episcopal Church. We lose the normal number of people that other parishes do over time. We slowly attract new members if the area's population increases. We create a web site. We advertise in the newspaper, in leaflets, by word of mouth, stressing the positive characteristics of a small parish and in particular, this parish.

2. We create a new parish. We redesign the worship space. We create something that incorporates some of the most important art and objects from both congregations but also is something new; a liturgical space that is beautiful, works well for today's liturgy, and is attractive to younger people. We create this together as a new parish using the help of people skilled in liturgical space. We develop an outstanding web site and do some imaginative advertising to interest people (and to get them to look at the web site). We get a few people training to do Godly Play or Catechesis of the Good Shepherd with children (programs requiring the teachers to carefully prepare; helps children connect with the Episcopal Church's approach to liturgy and prayer).

3. We go through the issues involved in a merger and have a parish life that is much like what we have known. We focus on the pastoral needs of the congregation, create a strong parish community, and engage in some service ministry outside the parish. We accept that there is not much potential for membership growth in this area; but remain open to new people as they do come. If something changes in what is possible about growth we try to work with that.

Indicate the degree to which you think this would be a satisfactory approach.

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	Low			High	
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	Low			High	
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