



### Don't Try So Hard

by Bill Blizzard  
Vestry Liaison: Communications

That was the advice given to me by a good friend when I was ranting about how hard change was to achieve.

I too like to sit quietly on Sunday mornings, close my eyes and prepare for worship. Then I open them and see a parish full of great people my age, but very few Gen Xers, only a couple of Millennials and a few more Boomlets. This worries me. My thoughts begin to wander to the national statistics of churches in decline, then ascends with Bishop Curry's attempt to stem the tide by urging us to be evangelists, to both increase our numbers and share a deeper relationship with God, then crashes as I remember the August, 2019 article in "Vanity Fair" about L.A.'s booming Hipster Ministries.

"...Soon, preacher Chad Veech takes the stage in a baseball cap, rainbow hued kicks, and a denim jacket that says 'Veech' on the back. He bounces on the balls of his feet referring to Jesus' disciples as 'his crew'.... Veech is part of the new Great Awakening. Interest in Christianity is blossoming in America's biggest cities .... When he asks the non-believers, *mostly Millennials, [italics, mine]* to accept Jesus, nearly 200 raise their hands....they want to make church more approachable ... they want more authenticity."

At this point you should say **"wow"** rather than **"amen"**, according to the article.

Don't get me wrong, I'm NOT looking to recruit Veech as our future Rector one day, far from it. I don't know what the answer is to attract younger members, but I don't think having designer coffee before service will get us there. I do know that change should not be feared, but embraced. Change is not a threat, but represents opportunity. We can take this opportunity to think about the future, rather than simply recreating the past. That said one thing I don't want to change is, **"all are welcome, no exceptions."** This was a big change back in the day. Others will emerge. This is an exciting time for COGS. Apparently, I just need to chill and not "try so hard". Is that possible? Not sure. We'll have to see.



### Ubuntu \*

by Mary Ratliff  
Connect Team, Co-Team Leader

\* "I Am Who I Am Because of Who We are Together" – Exodus 3:14 and Desmond Tutu

### This Month We Welcome Rick Edwards



Rick, we're so glad that you decided to make our family a part of your life. We'd like to get to know you a little better, so tell me, how long have you attended services?

***I have been attending Celtic Kirk and regular services since August 2018.***

Are you coming to Good Shepherd as an Episcopalian? What other churches have you attended?

***No, I am not Episcopalian and I have much to learn. I was baptized at COGS on January 13, 2019. I have been to many different types of churches in my lifetime, mostly in my youth and due to following my own mother on her own spiritual journey. She showed me much in what to accept, not accept and what to feel from a church and its parishioners.***

How did you find Good Shepherd?

***By chance really. I accompanied a friend one day and never left.***

What inspired you to attend?

***When I started to attend, I found such an energy and Spirit within the walls and the parishioners that filled me up, comforted and opened me. It was a feeling and a "calling" of sorts that I could not ignore. Many things came to me from my past experiences with my own mother as I attended more and more. I was definitely meant to attend COGS and become part of its family.***

What would you want to tell others about Good Shepherd to encourage them to come and explore our parish?

***"Come as you are. All are welcome. No exceptions."***

***Never have truer words ever been spoken in a church today, in my humble experiences with churches, their clergy and parishioners. There is a heart, soul and Spirit here at COGS that will comfort you, fill you up and open you... if you allow it to do so. One doesn't have to know all the words, all the right ceremony or even all the history. One just needs to come as you are, walk in Love and enjoy the feeling of being Loved. It is humbling to feel nothing but genuine, loving hearts in the soul of COGS.***

Please tell us a bit about yourself outside Good Shepherd - family, jobs, and hobbies, whatever you like.

***I am a father of 4, originally from the Akron/Cleveland area of Ohio. I have my daughter Carlee Joy (9) and son Cayden (18) here with me in Dunedin.***

***I was born an Artist and that lead into Graphic Design, Web Design, the Print Industry and finally into IT Systems Administration in a Software company. I have lived all up and down the East Coast of the U.S. as my job took me to many places in my younger years. Newport, RI was my favorite of them all. I love to be outside, kayak, swim, hike, bike and cruise in the Jeep with the top off. Adventures to new beaches with kids and one-tank trips to enjoy the State we live in. My children are my world and I feel I can never do enough to help them navigate this world with a skillset other than the ability to download an app that professes to give them a skillset (LOL). I am a very open soul and free spirited person who enjoys making new friends as well as time alone to reflect, focus and Pray.***

***I am always developing ideas for many business and charitable endeavors. I plan on making my leap of Faith into these things that I love to do; that can benefit others as well, sometime in the near future.***



## Peace Park ... Parked

by Dan Depies  
Vestry Liaison: Ministry Support

In late 2016 COGS formed a task force to study the vacant property at the NE corner of Albert St and Edgewater Avenue. The winning entry named it "Peace Park" and we were off and running. Over the past three years, we looked at:

**SHORT TERM** ... uses focused how we could best use the lot today, tomorrow and for the next year.

**MEDIUM TERM** ... uses looked for best opportunities in a 2 to 5-year range. Our goal was to stay connected with the city of Dunedin to determine changes in their needs and be responsive.

**LONG TERM** ... uses looked at ways we might develop a 5-year plan. We obtained feedback from the parish in 2017 through an all member survey. With this we developed a range of options to consider for the long term in concert with city needs.

### At first we checked off the easy ones ...

**Do nothing.** Maintaining the current use of the lot as overflow parking for church functions and as a revenue source was an obvious choice. This seems to work. An army of thirty-five dedicated parishioners wearing orange jackets raised over \$22,100 in 2018 and in 2019 we have already seen year-to-date total of \$13,612.

**Next, sell the land.** Estimates indicated the land may be worth \$700,000 to \$800,000. We reasoned that even though it could generate \$40,000 per year as part of the endowment, COGS would give up control of the property and eliminate the space for overflow parking. Also, based on the survey this option would not likely be supported by most of the parishioners.

### Then we took on the harder ones ...

Our initial thoughts included a restaurant, boutique hotel, performing arts center, bed and breakfast, senior housing, low-income housing, affordable housing, multi-level parking garage, retail operations, nursing home, private school, and condo units. The better ones seem to be:

### Develop Flats or Townhomes:

- **And sell.** The Task Force reviewed a multilevel building with 12 units with 960 SF each and 6 unit townhomes with 1,600 SF each. The latter seemed to have a reasonable rate of return, but the high construction cost, risk level, and our ability to find a willing contractor for a small project at this time all contributed to its rejection.
- **Or Rent.** This option considered the units above, but renting at market rates for this area. This option retained parish control, but the same negatives applied and it put us in the management business.

**Or a Bed & Breakfast:** We consulted with parishioners, former B&B owners, and reviewed several options. A 20 unit design made economic sense and was acceptable to the city, but management and labor requirements and increasing competition combined with vagaries in the market caused this option to be rejected.

**Or Affordable Housing** for qualified medium income families became yet another option we studied. This would be highly supported by the city of Dunedin. But again capital and risk came to the fore.

### A Final Review

On July 16, 2019 we reviewed our work. Some of our take-a-ways ...

- The options that seemed to provide the best return all would require high capital outlay, high risk and frankly, volunteer expertise our parish does not have.
- The city of Dunedin currently is in a high growth mode. Projects currently in the pipeline will not only consume available construction talent, but also continue to make our lot very valuable for parking.
- Over the next few years we may also have decisions regarding the rector's residence that could affect what we do with Peace Park.

The one conclusion we agreed on was for now it was best to shelve immediate plans. Dunedin is growing and with that the need for parking continues. We also agreed we learned quite a bit and we are in a much better position to develop the lot when the time and circumstances makes sense.



## 1 "Change" at a Time

by Diane Niford  
Vestry Liaison: Spiritual Formation

Bill's article entitled "Don't Try So Hard" inspired me to respond.

As Christians we are called to be apostles and evangelists. It can be as simple as it was in the New Testament, when God's Word was shown in the character and compassion of each new Christian as the Holy Spirit used their witness to draw others to our Lord.

To illustrate, let's call a new attendee "Change." Is it not amazing how much courage it may take "Change" to attend a new church? Everything is different, even foreign: the sanctuary, the bulletin, the music, the order of service, passing God's Peace. "Change" is trying to put all this together while assessing us. And we know not whether they are a seasoned Christian or a seeker, whether they are hurting, grieving or rejoicing.

How shall we respond to "Change?" As a church we are looking at doing more nurturing of our spiritual lives. We are also looking at growth via Inviting, Welcoming, Connecting. Today more than ever the Church, as Bishop Curry reminds us, needs to share the journey into a deeper relationship with God.



Invite • Welcome • Connect\*

We can sympathize and/or empathize with "Change" and offer a smile, a kind word of welcome, God's peace, an escort to coffee and an invitation to join a table, friendly interest in how and why "Change" has chosen to worship with us, an exchange of phone numbers or email addresses. And we can continue to do so each Sunday "Change" attends ... dealing with change by accepting "Change."

Perhaps we won't have to "try so hard" if we do this one "Change" at a time. Seeing the risen Christ in us may make it more likely for others to believe in the risen Christ. And as Becky often reminds us: LOVE WINS.