

## WHAT IS EVANGELISM?

- Evangelism is essentially "the spreading of the Gospel by public preaching or personal witness."
- Evangelism is from the Greek word 'euangelion' meaning "good news"; an evangelist tells the story of Jesus.
- As stated in the General Convention of the Episcopal Church held in 1973, "Evangelism is the presentation of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit in such ways that persons may be led to believe in Him as Savior and follow Him as Lord within the fellowship of the church." Along those lines, at our baptism and confirmation we are asked, "Will you proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ?" Our response, "I will, with God's help," commits us to share in the church's work of bearing good tidings to those who have not yet heard.
- Evangelism is "to know Christ and make Him known." It begins with knowing the "good news" and teachings of Jesus and then proclaiming it to others through word and deed.

## HOW SHOULD GRACE ENGAGE IN EVANGELISM?

- Regularly proclaim the gospel message during sermons.
- Continue offering Alpha on an ongoing basis, both in person and online.
- Bridge the Alpha groups to Journey groups so that new believers can grow in their faith through life-on-life discipleship. This will mean training new Journey group leaders and starting new Journey groups when Alpha groups end.
- Offer an Anglicanism 101 class (could be from 1 to 6 weeks) to explain what we believe and why we do what we do in a worship service. As an alternative, have an instructional Eucharist service followed by a reception in the Parish House that would allow for questions and answers about our church. Either option will make our church more accessible for those checking it out.
- Have church members share their testimonies and faith journeys. Possible ways include:
  - Written testimonies in Grace To You (similar to those on the back page of Christianity Today magazine and not in our current interview format)
  - During a Sunday morning church service (as when one of our priests invites someone to tell their story)
  - In small groups over refreshments or a potluck meal in the Parish House
  - At a church showing of the C.S. Lewis movie *The Most Reluctant Convert*, in which an actor portraying Lewis tells his conversion story (possible outreach event with opportunities for sharing)
- Offer an evangelism course for members of the congregation. This could be done as a book study or video course over several weeks during the break between services or as part of the Lenten soup & study after the 10:00 service.
- Have a booth at local events like FAFO, Light Up Ocala, or the Christmas Parade where we could give away or sell drinks like water/soda/hot chocolate and/or maybe some baked goods. While doing so, we could talk to people about who they are, who we are as a parish, and what we believe. Rather than just being located

nearby where a lot of these events take place, become a more visible and active presence at them.

- Engage in acts of mercy such as feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, providing clothing for the needy, visiting the confined, providing shelter for the homeless, and visiting the sick. The good news can be shared when doing these acts.
- Use our resources and property (including Ambleside building) for outreach ministries (as determined by the outreach committee) in which the "good news" is shared.
- Recognize opportunities for evangelism in all our interactions. When we plan an event or participate in an activity, we should ask ourselves: How does this grow the kingdom? Does it reflect God's love? Does it show something about God that people might not have encountered?
- Follow the Celtic way of evangelism in which "belonging leads to believing." In George G. Hunter, III's book *The Celtic Way of Evangelism: How Christianity Can Reach the West*, Hunter provides a very thorough and compelling description of these monastic communities and how they practiced spiritual formation, work, evangelism, and mission. Hunter shows how practices such as understanding the target population, welcoming people into the fellowship so that faith is more "caught than taught," building the *ethos* or *credibility* of authentic witness, and operating from a missionary perspective are all reflected in the Celtic approach. He also shows how Celtic evangelists were interested in more than conversion, but also *civilization*, cultivating complete persons who form just societies. In this respect, Hunter's description of the *Celtic Way* has seized the interest of many writers in the *emergent church* (e.g., Dan Kimball credits Hunter's work in the *Emerging Church*, pp. 284-285).