

Fr. Robin Dodge's Charge to the Parish
The Church of the Holy Faith Annual Meeting
26 January 2020

This is my fourth Annual Meeting here at The Church of the Holy Faith, and I have to say what an honor and privilege it is to serve as your rector. People still ask me, "Are you happy here?" and I always respond with a resounding, "Yes!" I love New Mexico, I love Santa Fe, I love Holy Faith, and I love you, the people of Holy Faith!

And what's not to love about you and Holy Faith? You are committed to fulfilling the mission of Holy Faith to welcome all people into an ever-deepening relationship with Jesus Christ our Lord. You do so by fully participating in the more than 50 ministries that Holy Faith offers, a sample of which you can read about in the Annual Report. Of special note are the Bible Study groups as well as other Christian formation offerings, such as the Spiritual Classics discussion, the monthly men's lunch, and the Lenten soup and study series. We offer three Bible studies each week: for men on Wednesday afternoons at 3:00, for women on Thursday mornings at 10:00, and a co-ed evening study on Mondays at 5:30. What other church offers so many study groups and attracts on average more than 60 people a week, other than on Sundays, who are committed to deepening their faith in Jesus Christ? I think it's because we have so much fun!

The Church of the Holy Faith exists to help you deepen your faith. I have just mentioned the opportunities here for engaging with Holy Scripture and theology. Holy Faith also offers ways of deepening your prayer life. Each weekday at 9:00 in the chancel and 4:30 in the chapel, a hardy group of individuals gathers to pray the Daily Office in community, either Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer. Not only do the

participants hear much of Holy Scripture, but there is also time for personal and corporate prayer so that prayers are being offered for, and on behalf of, the entire parish. There are also other prayer groups such as the Rosary Society and the Daughters of the King, as well as more informal prayer chains, that make this parish church a House of Prayer. If you want to deepen your own spiritual life, you may want to participate in one of these prayer offerings.

And, of course, Holy Faith take its celebration of the Holy Eucharist seriously, thanks to the commitment of the altar guild, the flower guild, the greeters, the ushers, the lectors, the acolytes, the musicians, and the clergy! We worship together in the beauty of holiness to praise and thank God, to transcend division, and to celebrate the mystery of faith. Part of the reason for relocating the baptismal font to the entrance of the church was to invite the worshiper in, embrace them in this holy space, and then draw their eyes and eventually fully in body and spirit to the altar where they can meet their Lord in the Real Presence of Christ's Body and Blood. By the font's placement at the entrance of the church, theologically we also are reminded that it is through baptism that we enter the Body of Christ. Holy Faith offers three Eucharists each Sunday, in addition to the Tuesday evening Taize Eucharists and the Wednesday and Thursday noon Eucharists for you to regularly receive the Sacrament and deepen your spiritual life.

According to the Catechism, that Outline of the Faith in the back of the Prayer Book, the ministry of lay persons is "to represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship, and

governance of the Church.” So, I am grateful to you who are here today, for taking your place in the life, worship, and governance of this parish. I am especially grateful to you for the passage of the amendment to the by-laws that establishes an endowment fund, the limited income from which can be used for operating expenditures. I believe it positions Holy Faith well for the future. I appreciate that it took some time to get us to this point, and I thank those who cared enough for this parish to raise concerns and question why the need for and how to implement a second endowment fund. I also thank my fellow members of the Endowment Fund Task Force – Heidi Hahn, Asenath Kepler, Charles Rountree, and Guy Gronquist – for coming up with a process of listening more deeply and consulting more broadly that got us to this point. I believe the process helped the Vestry better understand its role and earn the trust you expect from it, and ultimately made the parish stronger. It underscores the importance of open communication from all corners, and that’s why the members of the Vestry are happy to hear from you, and why I try to keep the door to my office open as much as possible, unless I’m in a meeting or on the phone. So, if you’re walking down the hallway of Conkey House and see my door open, that’s an invitation to stop in, or, better yet, call first and make an appointment. I keep my own calendar, and I will be happy to set a time to listen to what’s on your mind. Before I leave the Catechism, I also want to underscore the duty of all of us as Christians. “The duty of all Christians is to follow Christ; to come together week by week for corporate worship; and to work, pray, and give for the spread of the kingdom of God.”

To support you in your ministry and in your duty, Holy Faith has a committed and dedicated staff and volunteers! Donna Lukacs as parish secretary does a fabulous job

of keeping the parish calendar and assigning rooms, while all along fielding inquiries, answering correspondence, and keeping the offices running smoothly. Mark Childers as parish administrator and director of music & liturgy does an incredible job of coordinating ministries, especially those related to our worship, so that in all our prayers and praise we glorify God and are transported through the music and liturgy in this place to the nearer presence of God. Marcos Castillo as facilities manager and Rocio Salazar as housekeeper do a tremendous job of keeping our campus in tip-top repair and operation and cleanliness and tidiness like never before. We also have a dynamic team that ministers to the youngest Christians in our midst, with a group of faithful chaplains volunteering to ensure that there is an age-appropriate children's chapel each week during the 8:30 service; Kathlene Ritch assisted by Gail Fine in leading the youth choir; our faithful nursery attendants, Maria Sandoval and Veronica Vigil; and Janet McCroskey, who not only works with our youth acolytes, but with all those who wish to serve at God's altar here at Holy Faith.

I am joined by faithful clergy colleagues. Fr. Jim Gordon is a compassionate priest, engaging in the full range of liturgical duties of preaching and celebrating, as well as overseeing pastoral care for the parish and the Sunday Forums. Mother Pam Graham, who came to Holy Faith a year ago this week, is an engaging priest who ministers primarily to the children, youth and young families in the parish, as well as in the area of women's spirituality. Fr. Richard Murphy is invaluable in assisting with the weekday masses, and we are delighted that he is able to join the Sunday rota more frequently.

I want to thank our Vestry who have been faithful stewards of Holy Faith this past year. While we are sad to see Mitzi Barker, Penni Chambers, and Mike Ward rotate off the Vestry, and Donna Bailey step down as Recording Secretary, we are delighted by the election of Charles Chambers, Walter Sterling, and Van Swift, who will join continuing members Paul D'Arcy, Dan Green, Guy Gronquist, Heidi Hahn, Leslea McCabe, Charles Rountree, and myself. I especially want to acknowledge Penni Chambers as she pulls back from Holy Faith to focus on her candidacy for ordination to the priesthood. In her short time as Treasurer, Penni almost singlehandedly moved Holy Faith's financial records from Church Windows to Quick Books to provide easier reporting and clearer presentation of the parish's financial health, and resulting in a decreased bill from the auditor because of her time in doing so. Thank you, Penni, and may God bless you as you pursue ordination!

Now that I have been your priest and rector for more than three years, I have come to know you and Holy Faith very well – your lives, the way you do things, your passions, your hopes. I would like to use the next three years as a time for strategic visioning, to continue to place Holy Faith on firm footing for years to come. So let me outline some initiatives that I would like us as a parish to pursue.

You have heard from the Treasurer's Report that the anticipated shortfall in this year's budget is more than \$80,000. I do not like presiding over a deficit budget, and I don't want to see another deficit budget. Blessedly, because of cash reserves totaling over \$450,000 thanks to surpluses from the past few years, including 2018's surplus of \$178,000, we can weather this in the short-term. But it cannot continue for the long-term. As was mentioned in the discussions concerning the operations endowment fund,

an endowment fund is not in place of annual giving, and so we will redouble our efforts to engage in robust annual stewardship campaigns, including information about sources of funding and ways to give. Stewardship, primarily, is not a financial issue, but a spiritual issue. So, if you have not already made a pledge for 2020, or would like to increase the pledge you have already made for this year, I would be happy to hear from you. Stewardship also isn't just about money, but also about time and talent. And so we will be promoting more volunteer opportunities both within and outside the parish. Thanks to the Annual Reports, we will be compiling an updated list of ministries and contact persons so people will know who to talk to if interested in helping out in various ministries. This list will be posted on the website and appear when there is space in the Sunday bulletin. We are also considering resurrecting the annual Ministry Fair so you can get an idea of the needs of the various ministries and where you might want to help.

As we focus on stewardship, so we will look at parish expenses. As with most not-for-profit entities, the majority of Holy Faith expenses are fixed in staff salaries and benefits. We will ensure that we are getting the most benefit from our administrative expenditures. One area that we will closely investigate are health care costs that comprise almost 10% of the overall budget. I will charge the new Vestry to determine if there are any cost savings in the health plans the parish offers its employees, while maintaining equitable treatment and our obligations under diocesan and church-wide canons.

Paul D'Arcy, as Junior Warden, has done a fantastic job of anticipating the physical needs of the parish's buildings and grounds and seeing that repairs are scheduled and carried out in a timely fashion. But there are always those hidden

defects or problems that can result in emergencies, like discovering the sagging of the nave floor when we wanted to relocate the font to the entrance of the church. I will encourage the Vestry to seek a physical audit of the building and grounds, the property and its heating, cooling, and plumbing systems, so we can have a timetable for planned and strategic repairs to ensure that there is a beautiful, functional, and safe space here in which to worship for generations to come.

Noting demographic trends and changes to the patterns in which people tend to worship, I have established with Vestry approval a task force that will look holistically at the offerings Holy Faith provides for children's and youth Christian formation and will report back to the parish with recommendations for ministries that will encourage greater participation among young families and ensure that the faith once delivered to the saints will be handed down to future generations.

Holy Faith has always demonstrated care and concern for those who are not part of its worshipping congregation – through feeding programs at St. Elizabeth' Shelter and Feed the Hungry, our involvement with the Interfaith Community Shelter at Pete's Place, and support of countless other outside ministries. Holy Faith's Mission & Outreach Granting Committee, under the capable direction of Charles Rountree, does a wonderful job of reviewing applications for assistance and distributing funds from a portion of the generous Scheffler Bequest to worthy ministries locally, nationally, and even internationally. The Vestry has approved an overarching structure to coordinate all of the parish's mission and outreach efforts and to promote to parishioners opportunities for volunteering with them. Now is the time to implement this new Mission & Outreach structure, and I am happy to announce that Pam Jones has agreed to chair this larger

Mission & Outreach Committee. If you are interested in serving, please be in touch with Pam or me.

In the times in which we live, we as a worshipping congregation regrettably have to be concerned about safety and security. While we want to be welcoming to everyone who wishes to worship God here in the beauty of holiness, we also want to be prepared in the case of an emergency. Based on attendance at an active shooter training session by members of the staff and leadership, and a security audit by a member of the Santa Fe S.W.A.T. team, the Vestry has developed a Congregational Security Plan and has filed it with the Diocese as required by the diocesan Standing Committee. The plan covers all buildings of the Holy Faith campus, and suggests specific protocols for Sundays in the Church and Palen Hall and weekdays in Conkey House if the need for lockdown arises. We have already initiated the locking of Conkey House on Sundays once Children's Chapel begins. Parishioners are urged to be aware of the nearest exit to them, to call 911 if any suspicious behavior is observed, and to be prepared to evacuate the building if safe to do so, triggering the fire alarm on the way out. Experience shows that distracting a person intent on causing harm is most effective, so be prepared to throw hymnals, prayer books, and/or fire extinguishers at any potential assailant. Additional surveillance equipment and alarms are expected to be acquired. The full details of the Congregational Security Plan will be rolled out in the coming weeks to ushers, greeters and others in a position to quickly respond; Sunday School and Children's Chapel Volunteers, Nursery Attendants, and Parents; and the Parish at large.

Despite such precautions, part of our duties as Christians means that we are called to spread the Gospel – the Good News – of Jesus Christ. Not all of us may feel comfortable evangelizing on the streets of Santa Fe, but when we're here at Holy Faith we should do our utmost at extending hospitality and making people feel welcome. Our greeters, ushers, and docents do a fantastic job of welcoming newcomers. And, of course, our Hospitality Team does a fabulous job of extending hospitality in terms of food and drink at receptions, upon which they were called last year at an unprecedented level and carried it off with their usual aplomb! But you, the people in the pews at Holy Faith, are part of what people remember about this church. So, be sure to greet people around you each time you are in church, introduce yourselves, get to know them, invite them for coffee hour and, most importantly, invite them to return. With our Anglo-Catholic liturgy; our east-facing celebration of the Eucharist that makes it clear when we are talking to God and when we're talking to one another; and our focus on preaching Christ crucified, resurrected, and ascended; we at Holy Faith have something to offer this city, this diocese, and the wider Church.

In summary, then, my sisters and brothers in Christ at Holy Faith, I charge you with carrying out your ministry as lay persons and duties as Christians:

- ❖ Represent Christ and his Church
- ❖ Bear witness to him wherever you may be
- ❖ Carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world
- ❖ Take your place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church
- ❖ Come together week by week for corporate worship; and
- ❖ Work, pray, and give for the spread of the kingdom of God