

WHERE WE ARE – Week of October 11, 2009

I am confirming the congregational meeting for November 8th. The reason it was changed from the original October date was that the Partnership for Missional Church Steering Team attended the September Cluster Event and learned of a process for discernment that they thought could be used effectively at our parish meeting.

When a family is faced with making a big decision, like choosing to sell a home and moving into a retirement community, or having a first child, or another child, or buying a new home; the monetary investment alone is not the only consideration. The whole picture requires careful consideration of several factors (i.e. Is the retirement community situated close to a shopping center or on a bus line; will our apartment accommodate another child, does the new home require a child to change schools) All of these factors need to be considered. You talk, you think, you consider options, you pray and maybe have some sleepless nights as you look at all the questions.

That same process needs to be applied to our larger St. James family as we discern “God’s preferred future for St. James in the community.” The meeting on November 8th will provide an overview of:

1. What has been learned about the congregation through the PMC process: the timeline, our Listening Conversations with many of you, the demographics of our community and how the larger community views St. James.
2. The situation of our building
3. Our financial picture
4. And the Southern Berkshire Summit Conversations, which provide context from the larger local Episcopal community.

We will break into small groups, each including a member of the Vestry or the PMC team, to have some Intentional Conversation. You may have received a “Save the Date” card by now or soon will receive one. Your presence at this meeting is critical. It will be a full day event. We will worship first, inviting God to be with us. Our nourishing lunch is coming partially from our children and the fruits of our Community Garden. We are planning an environment where, hopefully, you will feel safe, open and willing to share your thoughts with us. Remember, you are critical to the process as we discern God’s preferred future for St. James.