

DIOCESE OF SOUTHEAST FLORIDA

NEHEMIAH 2009





Diocese of Southeast Florida

Nehemiah Process Mission:

The Nehemiah Process provides the strategic framework necessary for the implementation of the Diocesan Vision and Mission.

The Nehemiah Process is a process to guide church leadership teams for prosperous measurable results accomplished through education and other resources to improve, grow, and make disciples for the dynamic ministry of the church.

The Nehemiah Steering Committee has developed a joint ministry with the Parish Finance & Assessment Committee (PF&A), the Deployment Office and the Executive Board. The Diocese of Southeast Florida has experienced her share of successes over the past five years as a result of this joint ministry. Although progress is being made, an overall concern remains that some of the diocesan parishes will not be able to sustain a level of health over the next five years.

In that light, Bishop Frade, the Executive Board, the Deployment Office and the Parish Finance & Assessment Committee (PF&A) have required all clergy to participate in the Nehemiah Process whose parish has received **an Assessment Reduction or Aid to Congregations** or whose **parish is classified as a mission congregation**. Clergy who lead self-supporting congregations are also strongly encouraged to participate on a voluntary basis. The hope is that through participation in this process the parish leadership will develop the necessary tools and skills to continue growing a healthy, vibrant, and exciting parish ministry that would be increasingly inviting to new members.

The plate and pledge for the diocesan parishes is up almost 26% since 1999 which is very encouraging. Even since 2003 to 2006 the plate and pledge has grown over 14% which is a considerable accomplishment given the response to General Convention 2003 and devastating hurricanes in 2004 and 2005. In light of these significant challenges, the parish clergy and lay leaders should be congratulated for their faithful and sacrificial call to Christ's ministry.

The average worship attendance (AWA) also shows signs of improvement although there is still much to be done. As some have said, “We don’t have a money problem; we have a people recruitment problem.” The ministry of **HII: Hospitality, Invitation, and Incorporation** is by far our most important area for improvement in order to sustain long-term parish and diocesan health.

Our overall ability to attract new members or even elevate this to a high priority continues to handicap our parish’s ministry. Although the eight year period between 1999 and 2007 shows a decline of almost 11% AWA, the 2003 to 2007 AWA rate dropped to a loss of 8%, while the 2006 to 2007 AWA rate showed an increase of 0.4%. The parishes are beginning to address the **HII** (**H**ospitality, **I**nvitation, and **I**ncorporation) process but progress in this area has been entirely too slow in order to keep pace with the increasing ministry expectations.

Key Factors Influencing our Congregation’s Finances & AWA:

- Factors beyond Control: Economic, Demographics, Trauma, International Events, Natural Disasters, etc.
- Clergy Leadership:
 - * Success almost always occurs when clergy person is a life-long learner. That is, he/she is willing to invest considerable time and energy into improving their ministry.
 - * Key is to think & act prayerfully, creatively, strategically, and spiritually.
 - * An approach of “Building on strengths and minimizing weaknesses” is very important.
 - * Have a Personal Ministry Plan and Parish Ministry Plan which coincides with each other.
 - * Recruit & Train a Team Leadership.
 - * A Ministry of Extreme Hospitality is essential: e.g., Holland America’s customer friendly atmosphere.
 - * Expected to make considerable Sacrifice.
- Diocesan Finances are doing well, although room for improvement: We Know Stewardship!
- Our AWA is down! We Do NOT know how to implement the HII Process.

Proposal

The Nehemiah Steering Committee proposes the following process, known as Nehemiah 2009, to be instituted by the Nehemiah Steering Committee and the PF&A with the support and encouragement of the Bishop and the Executive Board.

Nehemiah 2009 Class:

The Nehemiah 2009 class will be composed of clergy and staff members from 5 groups:

- Clergy and Parish leaders who want to improve their ministry.
- Parishes who receive an investment from the Bishop, Executive Board and the parishes of the diocese in the form of either Aid to Congregations or an Assessment Reduction in 2009 will be required to participate in the Nehemiah 2009 Process. The purpose for their attendance is to receive tools and coaching on how to improve their parish's ministry within their unique setting. Failure to agree to participate in the Nehemiah 2009 Process or comply with the attendance requirement will result in their assessment returning to the Convention approved level and/or cessation of their aid payments.
- Parishes who are classified as a mission congregation. The purpose for their attendance is to receive tools and coaching on how to move their church from mission to parish status.
- Parishes who have incomes below \$200,000 or who are struggling with their AWA are invited to attend the monthly meetings.
- All church planters.

Benefits:

- Expands God's Kingdom.
- Makes your life more fruitful and less stressful.
- Developing & Implementing a Healthy Parish Ministry Plan. Starts process of becoming a healthier parish prior to a decline or crisis.
- The Mortgage Freeze Program is available to those parishes with a diocesan mortgage.

Clergy will:

- Discover their Gifts –”*Strenghts Finder*”– and manage their weaknesses.
- Grow one ministry level.
- Develop a Parish Ministry Plan & Establish Criteria to Measure Progress.
 - * Weekly AWA and Plate/Pledge
 - * # of Visitors attending each Sunday
 - * # of Giving Units. (Plate/Pledge Analysis)
 - * # attending the HII process with goal growth of 6% per annum.
 - * # Leaders involved in ministry (Ministry Map)
 - * # of New Ministry Groups or Initiatives
- Develop a Parish Ministry Plan according to the *10 Systems of a Healthy Church*.
 - * Study the required materials
 - * Develop a Parish Ministry Plan with the Parish Leadership Team
 - * Focus on one or two of the Systems and develop a 6 month implementation of the projects
 - * Write an evaluation of the implemented projects
- Determine one’s personal and parish leadership’s “Wanna” & “W.I.T” Factors.
- Develop and maintain a 18-24 month Parish Calendar.
- Develop and maintain a Parish Webpage.
- Attend all classes.
 - Clergy Attendance requirements for the Nehemiah 2009 Process**
 - Sessions IV & VI (Overnight Retreats) are mandatory
 - Sessions I, II< III, V, VII: **ONE excused absence permitted!**
- Complete all assignments.

Nehemiah 2009 Process:

- The process will be designed to work with clergy and staff members in developing their Personal Ministry Plan and a process of creating, developing, and improving the Parish Ministry Plan: Vision, Mission, & Strategic Plan.
- The Nehemiah Process works best in assisting the clergy implement a healthy, more innovative Parish Ministry Plan. The Nehemiah Process is essentially a “catalyst” for creative innovation.
- Each person attending will be assigned certain foundational books to read.
- The clergy will create and train a Parish Leadership Team.
- The expectation is that the parishes will grow 6% each year within 3 years.
- The **10 Systems of the Church** (Nelson Searcy) will be the framework for developing the Personal and Parish Ministry Plan.
- 100% of the parishes will design and implement a HII plan
 - * March 31, 2009 – Parish HII Plan presented in detail
 - * April 1, 2009 – Implementation of Parish HII Plan begins
 - * August 31, 2009 – Evaluate and Re-Design of Parish HII Plan
- A personal assessment of the gifts and strengths of the clergy and staff members will be one of the first assessment tools – “*Strengths Finder*”.
- The Nehemiah Process system tools will be taught in segments according to the needs of the clergy and staff members.
- The Sony Video Conferencing System (SVC) will be utilized where possible so that almost any parish can participate.
- The clergy will create teams to visit other parishes.
- Every clergy person will be a member of a regional cluster.
- Data will be collected on-line to establish evaluation benchmarks.

Meeting Schedule for 2009

The Introduction, Sessions I, II, III, V, and VII will be offered at two different locations – one in the southern part of the diocese and one in the northern part of the diocese.

Meeting Times: 10:30am - 3:00pm

Introduction & Session I

February 18 (South) Holy Family Episcopal Church

February 19 (North) Holy Spirit Episcopal Church

Session II

March 25 (South) Holy Family Episcopal Church

March 26 (North) St. Joseph's Episcopal Church

Session III

April 29 (South) Holy Family Episcopal Church

April 30 (North) Holy Spirit Episcopal Church

Session IV

May 11-13: Overnight Retreat -TBA

Session V

August 26 (South) Holy Family Episcopal Church

August 27 (North) Holy Spirit Episcopal Church

Session VI

September 22 - 23: Overnight Retreat- TBA

Session VII

October 21 (South) Holy Family Episcopal Church

October 22 (North) Holy Spirit Episcopal Church

Session VIII

December 9: Christmas Party

NOTES:

Clergy Attendance requirements for the Nehemiah 2009 Process

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Sessions I, II, III, V, VII: one excused absence permitted