

ECUSA Office of Transition Ministries

Community Portfolio Narrative Questions

- 1. Describe a moment in your worshipping community's recent ministry which you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.**

The Atonement Young Adult Employment Ministry (AYAEM) and the Atonement Food Pantry have both proven and continue to be recognized as successful and fulfilling endeavors undertaken by the worshipping community. For additional details on the two ministries please, refer to question number 7.

- 2. Describe your liturgical style & practice. If your community provides more than one type of worship service, please describe all.**

The history of Atonement through the years has been based on a traditional liturgical service following the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) Rite 2. The music for each service is usually a combination of selections from the 1928 Hymnal and Lift Every Voice and Sing (LEVAS). Anthems, seasonal music, and music for special celebrations is left to the discretion of the Rector and Choir director.

Planning for the future and to encourage participation and growth of Atonement is dependent on a younger, more contemporary approach to the worshipping service. There has been discussion around a contemporary service one Sunday a month. This might include a band/drums played by the youth. This proposed service design would incorporate the youth, attract a more youthful membership, and contribute to the growth and sustainability of the parish.

- 3. How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?**

Church of the Atonement members participate in weekly worship services by serving as readers of the lessons and prayers of the people and church announcements. Members are also active in Bible studies, Lenten study series, Stations of the Cross, Lenten Seven Last Words service, Christmas Eve service, Christmas Day service, New Year's Eve service, New Year's Day service, Annual Women's Day Program, Annual Men's Day Program, Annual Youth Day Celebration, Coffee hour, Annual Advent Breakfast, Annual National Service Day Project, and Vacation Bible School.

We also have a relationship with the Virginia Theological Seminary in which we agree to guide, support, evaluate and provide feedback to second and third year seminarians during their pastoral development. In the past four years, Atonement has had three seminarians. This

experience has been one of spiritual growth for the seminarians, the Lay Seminarian Committee, and the parish membership.

4. As a worshipping community, how do you care for your spiritual, emotional and physical well-being?

Atonement parishioners have multiple opportunities to renew themselves. They can participate in weekly worship services, monthly anointing, Bible studies, weekly coffee hour, daily devotionals, Noon Day Prayer, weekly prayer line, and monthly Praise, Empowerment and Prayer (PEP).

In addition to those events which are cyclical on the church calendar, ministries offer special events that address the spiritual, emotional and physical well-being of the congregation and the community. Inspirational and motivational speakers provide reflection and renewal. These may include: authors, community advocates, priests and other ministers as well as members of the church. Pastoral counseling is always available for those who need a listening and prayerful ear. Since the parish has a seasoned membership, health and health awareness is always an issue. In the past two years the vestry in partnership with the community and local government agencies has sponsored a health fair/community day. This event serves to introduce the church to the community and heighten the educational awareness of preventive health measures.

5. Describe your worshipping community's involvement in either the wider Church or geographical community.

Community Outreach is one of Atonement's Core Values. We are willing ambassadors of Christ, pursuing opportunities to meet physical, psychological, social, educational, economic, and spiritual needs in our community. These include but are not limited to the following:

- Providing school supplies and winter garments for neighborhood schools;
- Providing practice space for the East of the River Steel Band which is composed of children 9 to 18. They receive music instruction and the program includes youth development activities;
- Partnering with elementary school and district agencies for a Community Health Awareness Day;
- Yearly distribution of Thanksgiving baskets and dinners;
- Yearly Birthday Party for Jesus;

- Providing financial support to various fundraising campaigns sponsored by the Episcopal Diocese of Washington;
- Providing space for Alcoholics Anonymous meetings.

6. How do you engage in pastoral care for those beyond your worshipping community?

Pastoral Care is another one of Atonement's Core Values. We are a compassionate community that expresses the love and healing power of Christ, supporting one another with hope and encouragement.

Lay Eucharistic Ministers and church members visit the sick and shut-in congregants as well as, friends and family members of the congregation. These visits are carried out by teams within the church. They visit on Tuesdays and Wednesdays of each week.

Worship services/communion is also provided to residents of Collington Continuing Life Care Retirement Community. This facility, under the auspices of the Episcopal Church, is located near parish and has several members and family of members in residence.

The community is invited to our monthly Noon Day Prayer and monthly Praise, Empowerment and Prayer service. A Wednesday weekly prayer line offers access to prayer through a conference call.

7. Tell about a ministry that your worshipping community has initiated in the past 5 years. Who can be contacted about this project?

In an effort to address critical areas of need in Ward 7, two of Atonement's ministries, are helping to provide gainful employment opportunities as well as food services and resources to those in the community.

Atonement Food Pantry –This ministry feeds those in the community that are in need of emergency food services and resources. We provide an abundance of produce, meats, dairy, and non-perishable foods to an average of 85 registered patrons monthly. Donated clothing and books are also available. We turn away no one in need. Contact Coordinator, Patricia Marshall: marshallpw@gmail.com for additional information.

Atonement Young Adult Employment Ministry (AYAEM) – This outreach ministry provides opportunities to adults and their families to acquire skills necessary for employment success in growth industries in the Washington Metropolitan area. Through workshops including; mentoring, job readiness, and food handling certification, 24 participants have completed the program and graduated since its creation two years

ago. Contact Chairman and President, Obie Pinckney, Jr.
pinckneyo@gmail.com for additional information.

8. How are you preparing yourself for the Church of the future?

The Church of the Atonement is preparing for the future as indicated in our mission statement and core values:

Mission Statement: “We, in this parish, pray God to enable us to spread the ministry of Jesus Christ through active participation of its members in the life and work of the Church.”

- We will continue to spread the ministry of Jesus Christ through active participation in the life and work of the Church.
- We will continue to offer continuous spiritual growth and opportunities for lifelong learning and development through comprehensive Christian Education programs for all ages and levels.
- We will continue to actively reach out to the community and nearby neighborhoods to help meet physical, psychological, social, educational, economic and spiritual needs.
- We will continue to come together to foster friendships among our parishioners, neighbors, newcomers and visitors.
- We will continue to focus on using enhanced technology, social media and our website to reach our congregation and the wider community.

9. What is your practice of stewardship and how does it shape the life of your worshipping community?

Core Value: At Atonement, we aspire to be good stewards of all the gifts of time, talent, and treasure entrusted to us for building up God’s Kingdom. We seek to embrace the tithe as the biblical standard of giving, but we also embrace the need for supplemental fundraising activities and events to meet the diverse needs of a growing parish.

Worshiping members of the Church of Atonement aspire to be good stewards and to cultivate an atmosphere of loving service to one another and to our neighbors by sharing our gifts of time and talent. We understand the importance of creating a sense of personal investment and ownership in the physical growth of our parish.

10. What is your worshipping community’s experience of conflict? And how have you addressed it?

Church of Atonement has been relatively conflict free in its many years of existence. Our Core Values are derived from the Holy Scriptures and

from our unique experiences under God's guidance during the life of the Church of the Atonement. These values are so primary and so import to our faith community, that throughout any upheavals within the Church, changes in our society, and changes in the world at large, they serve as the basic guidance we follow to fulfill our mission as a local parish within the Episcopal Diocese of Washington.

11. What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well? When has it gone poorly? And what did you learn?

Currently the Church of Atonement is conducting a new rector search to replace a minister that served 12 years. Through strong leadership and guidance, the pastor moved the Church towards increased community outreach and spiritual growth. With such a tremendous and impactful undertaking, the Vestry reached out to the congregation for members to support the search efforts. The Rector Search Committee realized the criticality of the change and put a number of measures in place to encourage all members to participate, provide input and feedback to the selection criteria and the overall growth and sustainability of the Church. Focus groups, online surveys, letters to sick and shut-in, and one-on-one discussions have been used to allow all congregants to provide information. However, there were still those members that did not participate or provide input. Even using multiple data collection methods, the overall responses received were not what were anticipated. The committee learned that the responses gathered were from those interested in the continued work still to be done. Another lesson learned was that nothing is going to yield 100%.

The process will be completed and the rector chosen.

Key qualities in a rector:

- An engaging preacher/teacher/mentor who can relate the scripture lessons to our daily lives and current events
- A warm, welcoming person with an open door policy, a sense of humor, and a commitment to Pastoral Care
- A family and community oriented person with a commitment to God and the vision and mission of our church
- A good administrator with financial management skills

