

## ***Vestry Visions***

*“What we’re experiencing is an assault on the very foundations of our society and democracy – the twin pillars of truth and trust.” —Dov Sideman (from Thomas Friedman’s June 21, 2017 Op-Ed in the *New York Times*)*

While it may be revisionist history on my part or naivety in thinking, I find myself consistently asking the question, “What is happening around me?”

Trust in our institutions and more worrisome, trust in each other, seems to be at an all-time low. Turn on the radio, television, your computer, your phone or just find yourself in a coffee shop and conversations today quickly veer to “us vs. them” with nobody ever conceding a single point. When did compromise become a bad thing?

Truth has suddenly become fluid. Suddenly Obi-Wan Kenobi is right when he says to Luke, “Everything is true, from a certain point of view.” If you don’t like what you are hearing today change the channel, surf to a different website, or find a different Twitter feed.

In this world of fluid truths and eroding trust, it is all too easy to circle the wagons and start seeing enemies everywhere. But these are the times where we must open ourselves up and remember our shared Principles and Purposes. What I tell my children is “Default to nice.” The vast majority of people have good intentions and want to do the right thing. Approach the world and individuals with the respect you want to receive and conversations and interactions are no longer “*us vs. them*” but become a discussion of “*we*.”

As your Vestry, we are committed to “*we*.” We will continue to work within the bounds of truth and maintain the trust that has been built by previous Vestries. To this end, we are proactively working with the various committees and staff to gain

a solid appreciation of truth upon which we base our decisions. And in doing so we hope to continue the tradition of open and transparent leadership and representation that will enable us to maintain your trust.

So what is happening around me? We are witnessing the canary in the coal mine and we can either ignore the symptom or we can act. Remember, change is driven by those that show up. It is our responsibility to not sit idly by. If we are uncomfortable about what we see happening around us we must engage. Engage respectfully with those that you don't agree with and find a way to have a "we" discussion.

### **Shared Principles and Purposes**

The inherent worth and dignity of every person;

Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;

Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations ;

A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;

The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and society at large;