



## The Nehemiah Process

### Class of 2003

**Nehemiah 2003** began with ten (10) parishes.

The primary focus was on assisting participant parishes to develop vision statements, mission statements, and ministry plans, later to be known as "Parish Ministry Plans". Teaching aids included video presentations, books and other writings from experts in ministry and congregational development, use of a bibliography on related areas, modeling new styles of worship and the most effective use of technology, and actual presentations by members of the Nehemiah Steering Team. Participating parishes had assignments to complete between meetings.

The participating congregations were a very diverse group of congregation from the South Dade, North Dade and Broward Deaneries, including a Spanish and a Creole speaking congregation.

Team meetings were held at St. Margaret's Episcopal Church on Saturdays from 9am-3:30pm. Seven Sessions in 2003 and two sessions in 2004 were scheduled. The Parish teams consisted of the Rector plus 5 -10 Lay Leaders, although one parish brought up to 20 Lay Leaders. Each team signed a two year Covenant agreeing to participate in the Nehemiah Project.

The parish Rectors also meet as a group for two hours each month with Archdeacon Hobbs and other members of the Nehemiah Steering Committee.

The Mortgage Abatement Plan for parishes participating in Nehemiah was introduced. Holy Family Episcopal Church was the only parish to take advantage of this opportunity.

The Nehemiah Steering Committee met regularly during the year to assess the progress or lack thereof, discussed what areas needed modifying, and to determine what steps were needed next. Potential evaluation criteria were developed to determine relative success of the Nehemiah Project.

External Factors Impacting Parish Ministry:

- ❖ General Convention 2003: The Consecration of Bp. Gene Robinson.
- ❖ Hurricanes in 2004 : Charley, Ivan, Frances, & Jeanne.

The founding members of the Nehemiah Steering Committee were Archdeacon Bryan Hobbs, The Rev. Mary Gray-Reeves, Richard Miller, Linda Schlepp-Gray, Bill Swaney, and The Rev. Horace Ward.

It should be noted that at this time the Nehemiah Process was referred to as the Nehemiah Project.

**January 13, 2003**

- Explained Basic Nehemiah Principles.

**March 15, 2003**

- Symbol of Parish Life
- Introduction to Vision Workshop
- Introduction to Mission Workshop
- Area Demographic Studies - Percept
- 18 – 24 month Calendar

**April 5, 2003**

- *Power of Vision*
- Focus on Developing Vision and Mission Statement
- Introduction to Strategic Planning

**May 3, 2003**

- Focus on Incorporation – Suzy Miller (Beginning of **H**ospitality, **I**nvitation, **I**ncorporation Process)
- Beginning of Post Meeting Reviews (PMRs)

**June 7, 2003**

- Focus on Transformational Ministries (Cursillo, Discovery Weekend)

**September 13, 2003**

- Respectful Communications Guidelines
- Post General Convention Discussion
- Conflict Awareness

**October 25, 2003**

- Wrap-up Session
- Review: 12-24 month Calendar
- Holy Eucharist – Sermon was a summary of learnings from each parish

The Nehemiah Steering Committee became aware that it was difficult to regroup the teams because of the length of time between sessions (October 2003–March 2004).

**March 13, 2004**

- Ministry Fair Workshops
  - Stewardship
  - Renewal Events
  - Small Groups
  - Children’s Ministries
  - Youth Ministries
- Episcopal Foundation

**October 23, 2004**

- Parish Health