

Minutes of the Annual Meeting Emmanuel Church, December 10, 2006

Father Robert Salamone opened the meeting the church at 9:00 AM with Sunday's Eucharist. His sermon was his annual report which included the events of the year and his recommendations for the future.

THE REPORT IS ATTACHED AT THE END OF THE MINUTES..

After the sermon, the congregation moved to the Common Room where a continental breakfast was served.

The meeting continued at 10:00 AM in the Common Room.

Father Robert nominated Clairelis Baxter to serve as clerk of the vestry.
Approved.

He nominated outgoing vestry members Allison Clements, David Woodruff, Butch Bush, and Lee Albright to be tellers for counting ballots for the election of the incoming vestry class. Approved.

The congregated voted to approve the minutes of the 2005 annual meeting.

Vestry nominees Sara Baker, John Becker, Philip Cofer, Bill Connerat, Ann Darby, Erwin Greene, Naomi Norman, Terrie Seward, Erik Wells, and Mark Wheeler were introduced. Fr. Robert stated the eligibility requirements for voting and said parishioners could vote for 1-5 nominees, but could not vote for more than 5.

Fr. Robert

- recognized Palmer Hicks for planning most of the diocesan youth events.
- displayed a plaque sent by the bishop honoring Father Ralph Marsh for his 40 years of service to the ministry. (Fr. Marsh was ill and could not attend.)

Junior Warden Brian Tison gave his report in the form of a Power-Point presentation which included Emmanuel's vision, mission and vestry organization. He encouraged everyone in the parish to become involved in the church's goals and outreach.

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Fr. Robert said that the vestry has worked hard in asking the right questions. He reappointed Robin Bewley to another one year term as senior warden.

Robin Bewley gave addition to her annual report which was distributed in "A New Beginning."

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She thanked Mo. Mandy for "moving us together. The congregation gave Mo. Mandy a standing ovation.

She also announced that the vestry voted to put the Cobb House on the market with the proceeds to be used to retire the parish debt, to increase outreach and to update church facilities. The church will not abandon the Pope Association when the Cobb House is sold.

Fr. Robert opened the floor to questions.

- Joe Napoli: "What has been going on has been beneficial, included Robert's coming."
- Clara Herrin: "There used to be First Communion." Father Robert, "We're trying to put in a concept for all services from baptism to death."
- Claire Goss asked about the possibility of the parish's becoming part of a cursillo program. Fr. Robert said that we need to get involved in more programs.
- Rustin McAlister: "How can we as a parish get involved in property issues?" Fr. Robert: "The vestry is going to deal with it. After the vestry makes decisions, the parish will be involved. The Cobb decision has been made. Are the cottages worth dealing with? There will be no input on the immediate questions, but the next step will involve the parishioners."
- Carol Winthrop: "When will the parish directory come out?" Mark Dodson: "In January."
- Gene Weeks: "Outreach seems to be a community within the community. Do not overlay things that are already going on; rather work within the community." Fr. Robert: "We should use all our facilities every day."
- Mary Moore: "When considering catechesis, we need to consider middle school and high school, too.." Fr. Robert concurred.
- Carter Stanfield urged parishioners to go along with what Father Robert has

to say. Everyone should be involved in a large, active group.

Announcements:

- Evensong on December 10.
- IHN has two guests.
- Vince Howard needs help with IHN moving.

Amrey Harden presented the treasurer's report and Financial Committee's financial overview.

- The anticipated deficit as of October 2006 was \$42,000. Instead, the parish is running a surplus of \$30,000.00 because of the increased giving and the lowering of expenses.
- Endowment fund activity has generated a little over \$200,000.
- The vestry has approved a tentative budget based on a 13% increase in pledges. Tentative 2007 income will be \$810,145. compared to 2006 income of \$715,422.78.00 (excluding endowment).
- All the budget requests were funded.

Amrey said the parish needs to do more. "We are only meeting the minimum."

There were several questions and comments regarding the financial report:

- Peg Wood thanked the committee for putting reports in "The Tower."
- Rustin McAlister: "Does the 2007 budget include personnel increases?" Yes.
- Bob Bowen: "Can the \$22,000.00 surplus be a discretionary fund?"

Every outgoing vestry member was recognized individually by Robin Bewley and Father Robert who presented each with a plaque. He gave Brian Tison a video of "Blazing Saddles."

The newly elected vestry members are John Becker, Philip Cofer, Bill Connerat, Erwin Greene and Naomi Norman.

The congregation renewed their baptism promises and made the sign of peace.

They then returned to the church where the Eucharist was concluded.

The meeting adjourned at 12:15.

Submitted by Clairelis Baxter, clerk

Three attachments: Rector's report, Senior Warden's report, Junior Warden's presentation.

THE STATE OF THE PARISH 2006

Father Robert's homily before the Parish Meeting,

10 December 2006

In our second reading this morning, Paul is praying for our growth in love and goodness, which is a virtue based on having an understanding and the experience to be able to discern what is the right and best thing to do. A life lived out of a clear conscience and blameless conduct. What a wonderful image for the day of our Annual Meeting, but also an image that strikes a number of different nerves all at the same time.

It can be discouraging, but it could also be something that encourages and urges us to stretch beyond the limits we impose on ourselves. It means we never reach a point where we say: I am done. This is all I am ever going to be. For each of us as persons and as a parish community (especially today) we can never say God is done with us. Can we ever really say: all of our ministry, our efforts at evangelization, our outreach, whatever, – isn't it all just absolutely perfect? I think and I hope that we, each of us, would take gladly and even gratefully the notion that we do not always have to be only what we have been.

Choose to change.

This is the heart of it all.

Our Advent call to wait for the coming of Christ and all that this will bring into our lives is not a passive waiting. Go, Emmanuelites, go prepare a way for the Lord, now! Get the world ready to receive all that is good! A most important point for us to remember is that Jesus never imposes or forces himself or his love or his goodness on anyone or anything. He will remake in his image only as much of the world as is given to him to remake. He will re-create only those who ask to be re-created. It would seem to me, that the heart of our advent call to prepare the way of the Lord is seen in the difference between simply waiting for Christ to come with trumpets blaring and take back the world from us, or you and me actively gathering the world together, gathering it together as Paul says, in abundant knowledge and full insight to freely offer it back to Christ.

Isn't that a wonderful insight – Give the world back to Christ, give this parish over to Christ, give it all to God! What a unique idea, huh? There are so many challenges in our

own lives and in our life as a parish that we would be able to meet with much peace in our hearts if we could bring ourselves to see them as opportunities for the giving of gifts rather than as struggles for ownership.

Think of all the demands that are made on each one of us--our time, our pride, our talents, our self-image, our material goods. Think of how much time we spend agonizing whether or not any of the demands is a reasonable one. Or what about this committee or that commission, or this special project - this is my little piece of Emmanuel – and, this is the way we have always done things here in Athens and there really can't be another way, can there be? All of that takes so much energy. How much more peacefully and productively we could meet all the demands made on us by everybody and anybody, if we could bring ourselves to realize how foolish such concerns really are, how out of place they are in an exchange of gifts. This is how we prepare for Christ's coming. This is how we mark the different worlds in which we live. We touch it with goodness, with gentleness, with generosity, with love, and with a sense of abandonment. Because it really is true. In a profoundly Christian sense, the only things we ever really own are the things we give away.

My brothers and sisters in Jesus, we relinquish everything, because it is all of God in the first place. And we have to approach our common life together with God as our focal point. The summit of our life together – the only reason that Emmanuel Episcopal church exists – is to gather around the Lord's table in shared fellowship, being nurtured and nourished by word and sacrament. All of the rest is basically incidental, unless of course it is a grace that flows from here. As I live in that reality, I can't help but wonder why we are satisfied with the minimum. We do exactly what just about every other Episcopal church does. We come on Wednesday for a healing service. Now that's very good, but what a wonderful fantasy it would be if we were a church committed to be church each day, intentionally gathered to pray for the needs of this community. I challenge you to think about parish retreats, the cursillo movement, having intercessory prayer teams available during our services, doing small group work in an environment of trust whose focus is spiritual growth. I challenge you to think of what deeper spiritual needs you have and to see how only an increased effort, moving from one place to another, will help you fulfill them. I have always lived my life in the firm conviction that if we are doing that part right, God will provide the rest. And it is happening again.

Flowing from a deeply rooted spiritual life we then have to question what does the Lord ask of me? Remember, what ever we do we do for God. As an aside and maybe ungodly judgment, perhaps when Emmanuel is or has been in a rut, it's been because God has not been a part of the process. Anyway, from our spiritual lives we should be moved to the works of mercy in the scriptures (physical as well as spiritual). We do some interesting things in our Outreach to the community. I think many times it has been easier for us to write a check to take care of a need. I would hope that we could all, including me, do something more hands on. We have so many people involved in education and so many poor in our schools. Can we be a center of learning for those who need more and extra help? From children to adults? Can we do some work for people, in a carpenters' club, for example?

As I speak of some kind of a center for learning, we have to apply this to our spiritual life as well. We need two full time persons to deal with faith formation and youth ministry. Faith formation has got to be a cradle to the grave program. We have to bring a professionally trained formator on board who will help to develop and implement the necessary programs to nurture our spiritual lives. An individual who will be able to tap the resources we have and help us offer the best in religious education and formation to all of our parishioners. I am extremely grateful to all of those who volunteer and bring their gifts freely to the table. Imagine what it would be like though to have married couples (happily I hope) sitting with our engaged couples and telling them the stories of their lives and the work they have had to do to make their marriages work. Or what about some of our younger families sharing what baptism and community mean with those other young families who may be pregnant for the first time. I am committed to our implementing the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program for our younger children as well. There is so much we can offer and do in this area.

As well as Youth Ministry. Having as many young parishioners as we do and only being able to employ a Youth Minister for 12 hours a week is almost criminal. We will get what we pay for (and that has nothing to do with Katie). 12 hours is 12 hours. How do we get to know and live with our young if we are not walking with you? We need to have a presence at the gymnasiums, football fields, and all the other places where our kids gather. We need to be with you as a family in your homes – to share your lives and begin to understand your needs. We also need families though who will commit their time and their children's time to youth ministry. It all has to work hand in hand. We must provide the excellence in programming – you must think their life in Christian community is as important as singing and dancing and manners and everything else. If we are not a part of the priority of your children's lives, I think there is something serious missing.

All of our programs and ministries need to be enhanced so they could be the best they can in bringing the Lord to those we serve. I know Emmanuel has done her best, but as I reread the parish profile I kept reading over and over again, we are ready to take the next step. Well the next step has come. It is time to pull together ever more strongly than before. It is time to move beyond the way we have always conducted business and deliberately create the community we need to be, not necessarily the one we want it to be. Let me share with you something funny that shows why we must change. Now I don't know if you are aware of this or not, but this is a parish with maybe 500 chiefs and two Indians. The other week or so, I was watching some lovely new landscaping going in on Pope street. It was a Herculean effort on the part of more than one or two. Well anyway in the act of putting in a new irrigation system, a shovel broke a wire to a spotlight. No problem. A parishioner asked an electrician to do what was probably rightfully a four or five hour job. Now there were no communications or procedures followed, and five full days later at 60 dollars an hour I keep asking Melissa "What's he doing"? Who is paying for this?" Learning the reality of the situation the dear parishioner of course was upset and confronted the electrician who said, "Well I'll charge you 50 dollars an hour." Ladies and gentlemen, if you ask anyone to do anything here without prior authorization, we are not paying the bill. There are clear procedures to follow. Another individual hired the same electrician to hook up the irrigation system when he was finished with the light! Guess what's not going to happen!

This vestry – and the vestries to come-- have been empowered to take back their ability and right to discern with the rector the path that we are going to go and grow in. In this group of the Lord's servants— and I mean that so sincerely—there is not one of the 15 with an agenda or with a need for power and control. I have enough of that for all of them. This group of the Lord's servants are not afraid to live out the gospel in our midst--a gospel that speaks of justice and stepping out in courage and faith to effect change. If we live the gospel, there will be change whether we want it or not. And not all change is bad my friends. We must change perceptions. Everyone is invited to be involved. Everyone has a chance. Everyone is important. We must relinquish the airs that there are “groups” that exist in the parish that have more influence than any other group. Trust me, they don't exist. We are going to ask every group and every ministry to come up with their own mission statement that will help to validate that ministry and a clear procedure that will raise up new leadership so that leaders are never in charge for too long. That way of operating will also invite new people to accept leadership because they will not see their role as a life sentence. And if a vestry member is limited to a three year term (which is correct), every other group that exists in the parish will have the same type of regeneration of service. It is the only way for us to grow and be transparent.

You need to know that in a very short eight months I have grown to love this parish very much. I not only see you and love you as you are but I see very clearly what we might become. This is a parish of dedicated people, loving people with open hearts who want to trust, who want to take the next step. We can only take the next step if we are willing to stick together and realize what the greater good is. Jesus.

Are we about Jesus? Are we about creating his kingdom here on earth? That is the only thing that matters. And the wonderful thing is we could do that and we could be that! You know there are still a couple of lingering things from our past around that must be dealt with. Property issues probably being the biggest. You need to know that as an outsider, I don't think any of the handling of our property issues of late has been a holy process. There was dishonesty present, and brother was pitted against brother and sister against sister with not nice words and feelings between the two. That is not about Jesus in our midst. I was speaking with someone who was speaking with someone – not from the parish, who said, “we saved the cottages.” My brothers and sisters in Jesus, I want us to be in the business of saving souls – for God as well as for Emmanuel, you see. Sometimes, when it comes to the spiritual life and to the hard task of seeking what is holy and good, we are told to let go. And I believe there is a whole theology of relinquishment that might in fact save us -- from us.

I've gone on longer than I might, but I have said the things that I am convicted to say. The state of Emmanuel parish with all of our “character” and “characters” is pretty fine indeed. I look forward to seeing what gifts we can give back to God this year.

EMMANUEL EPISCOPAL CHURCH

VISION, MISSION
&
VESTRY ORGANIZATION

ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW

- VISION & MISSION
- BAPTISIMAL PROMISES
- GOALS
- COMMISSIONS
- COMMITTEES

VISION

Emmanuel Episcopal Church provides people with opportunities for growth in faith through our love, respect and acceptance.

MISSION

Emmanuel Episcopal Church strives to honor God and nurture the spirit by ministering to God's people.

BAPTISMAL PROMISES

- Seek and serve Christ in all persons
- Continue in the Prayers and Breaking of Bread
- Continue in the Apostles' Teaching and Fellowship

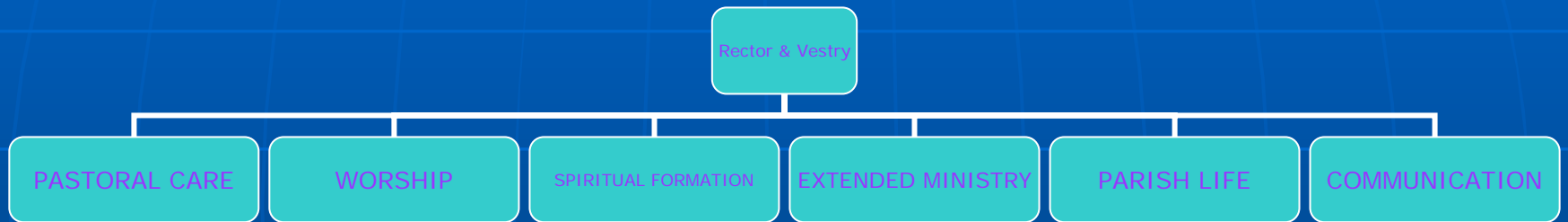
BAPTISMAL PROMISES (con't)

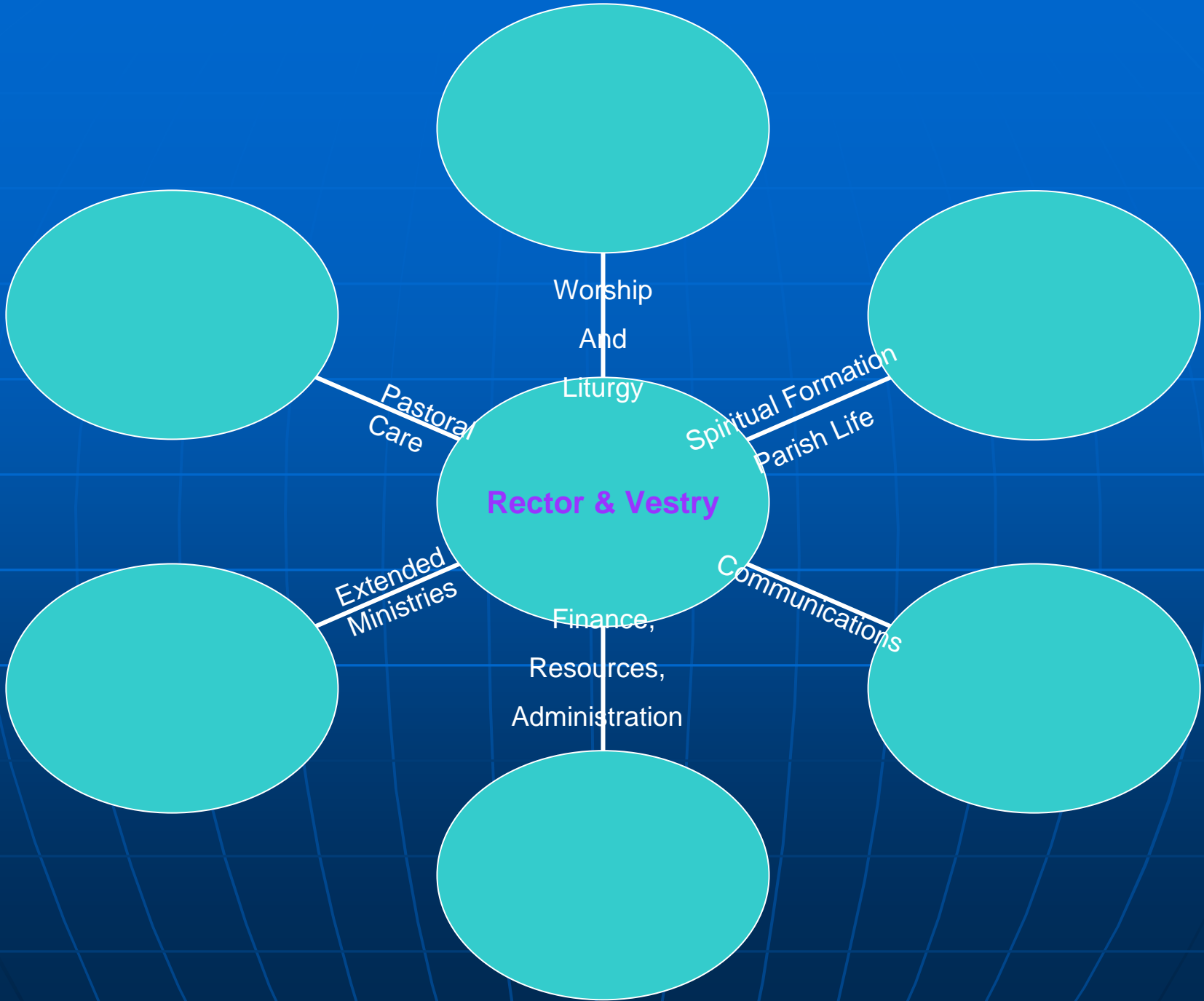
- Proclaim by Word and Example the Good News of God in Christ
- Respect the Dignity of every human person
- Strive for Justice and Peace Among All People

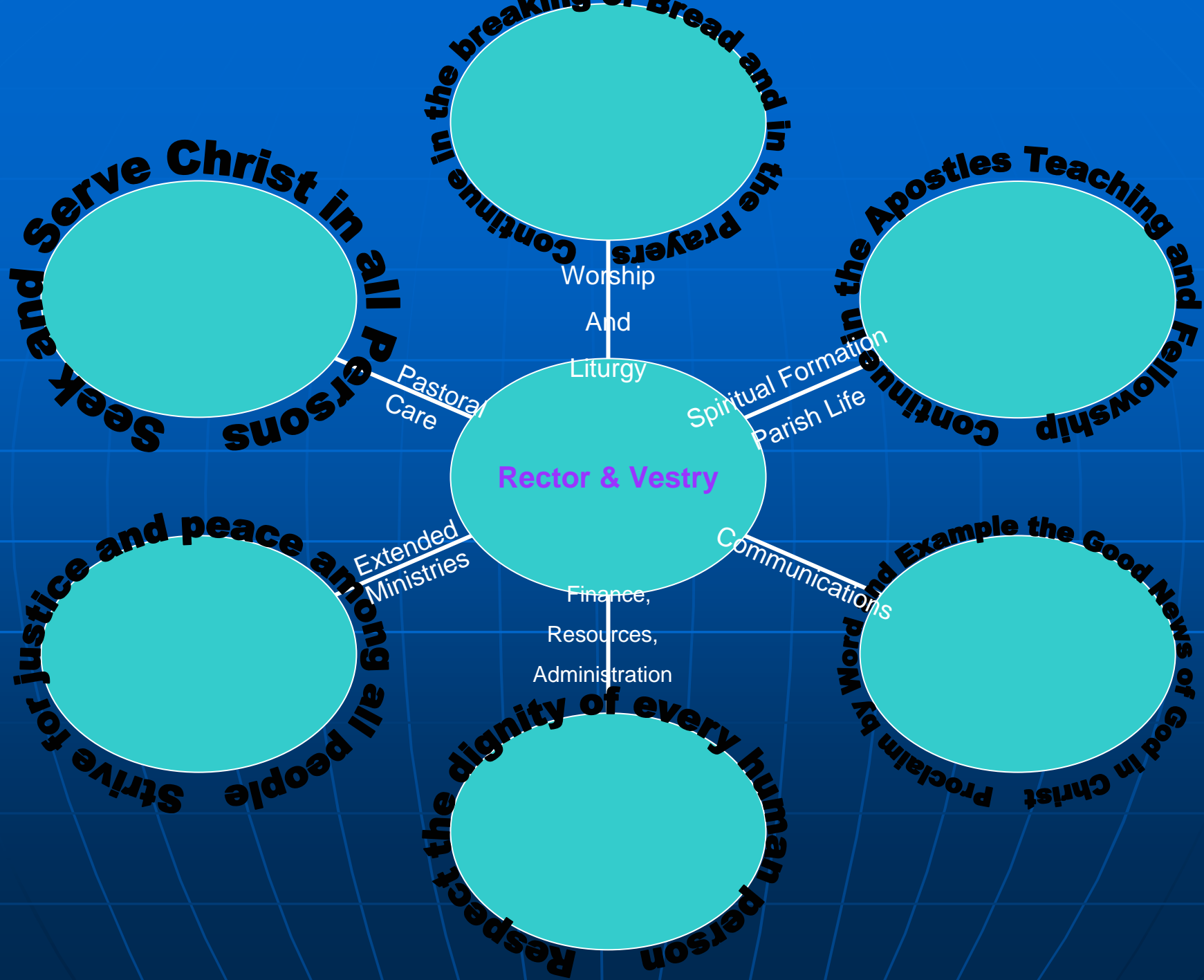
VESTRY GOALS

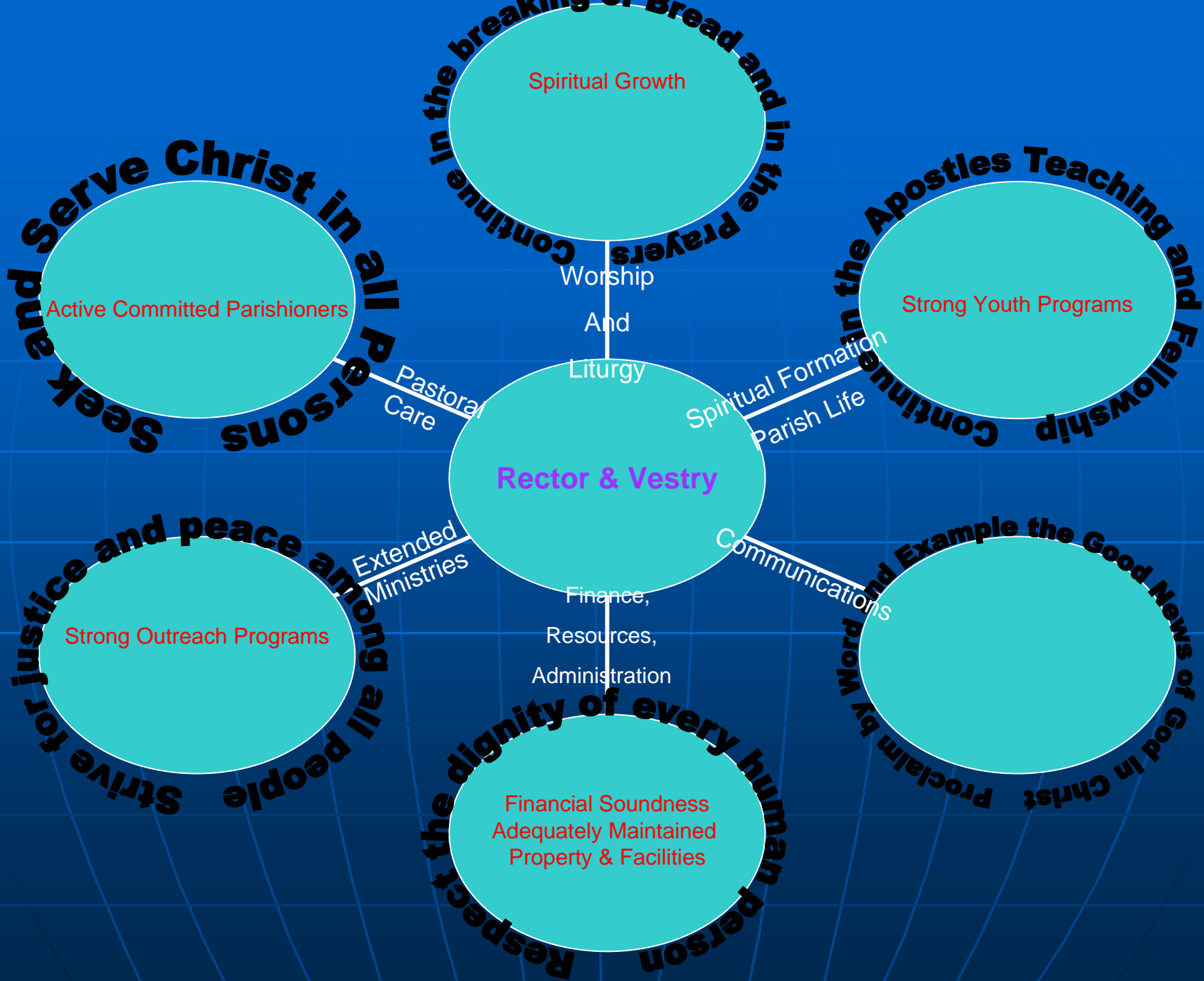
- Strong Outreach Programs
- Spiritual Growth
- Active committed parishioners
- Strong Youth Programs and Parish Life
- Financial Soundness
- Adequate Property and Facilities

ORGANIZATIONAL SUMMARY COMMISSIONS













EMMANUEL EPISCOPAL CHURCH

VISION, MISSION
&
VESTRY ORGANIZATION

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