

# INVITE A FRIEND TO CHURCH

## Notes from the Commission on Evangelism

October 1985

“The average Episcopalian invites a friend to church once every 27 years.” So goes a quote from a recent article on Evangelism in the Episcopal Church, a little tongue-in-cheek, perhaps. Actually, studies have shown that up to 80% of those coming into a church in a given year do so because of a friend or acquaintance already in that church, or by a referral from someone who has been a part of that church. Person-to-person is still the best way of bringing people into or back into the church. While we at St. George’s do considerably better than once in 27 years, it’s time to look at what we are doing.

You and I do not have to knock on doors or stop people on the street (or go on TV) to participate in that most basic of Christian activities – evangelism. “Evangel” simply means “Good News”. Simply being a Christian is being an evangelist (i.e. one who bears the Good News and shares it with others).

Now, there’s the rub. We tend to become immediately uncomfortable at the idea of doing anything that involves reaching out to another person concerning matters of faith. So, for now, let’s keep it simple: invite a friend to church. The greatest act of evangelism is still the worshipping community at the Eucharist. There the Christian story is told and reenacted.

A second place where the story is told, in a more direct way, is in the events of the Christian community, gathered for fellowship, mutual support, and just plain fun. For sure, this may be the last place to begin interacting with a Christian Community. In either case, you and I can create an option for a friend that did not exist for them before. We can become a path. This, too, is evangelism.

Begin to think of persons whom you know well enough to invite to church. We can err on the side of reaching out, for a change, but we can do so with sensitivity and caring. Our message will not be misunderstood. And we don’t take these steps alone. Invite a friend to church. Bring a friend to some event. In prayer, begin to think how to break the 1/27 –year pattern.