

Vestry Letter
December 2009

Why is Trinity Taking Attendance?

Back in October, we started asking our 10:30 parishioners to sign an attendance register that is passed up and down each aisle during the announcement period. Not surprisingly, we've had a few questions as to why we're doing this (and one or two have taken offense at being asked to sign.) So why *are* we doing it? For three reasons:

1. **Building Community:** I think everyone has had the experience of seeing somebody in church whom you recognize but can't name. And being embarrassed to ask because you've been on smiling and nodding terms for too long. Writing your name and passing it to your neighbor is a simple, unobtrusive way for us to know each other better. Our community becomes stronger when we know each others' names.
2. **Welcoming Guests:** At Trinity, welcoming guests is everyone's ministry. We've made a concerted effort over the last two years to improve our welcoming, but many guests have been reluctant to leave contact information so that we can stay in touch. Since starting the attendance sheets, we've found that guests seem much more willing to record their visit when *everyone* is doing it. The number of guests who register has exploded since we started this. When there's a guest in your pew, please greet them, invite them to stay for coffee, and introduce them to at least one other parishioner.
3. **Staying in Touch:** As members of a Christian community, we count on pastoral care in times of need or crisis. And yet, not everyone thinks to call the church at such times. Especially in a growing congregation with a limited staff, we need every advantage to stay in touch. The attendance sheets are one more tool to help our staff identify those who have fallen away and may be in need of pastoral care.

Registering attendance is a best practice at many large, successful churches. It offers a number of benefits for relatively little effort. We view this practice as crucial to Trinity's efforts to become a larger, stronger Christian community and hope you'll support it enthusiastically.

Charles Key
Senior Warden