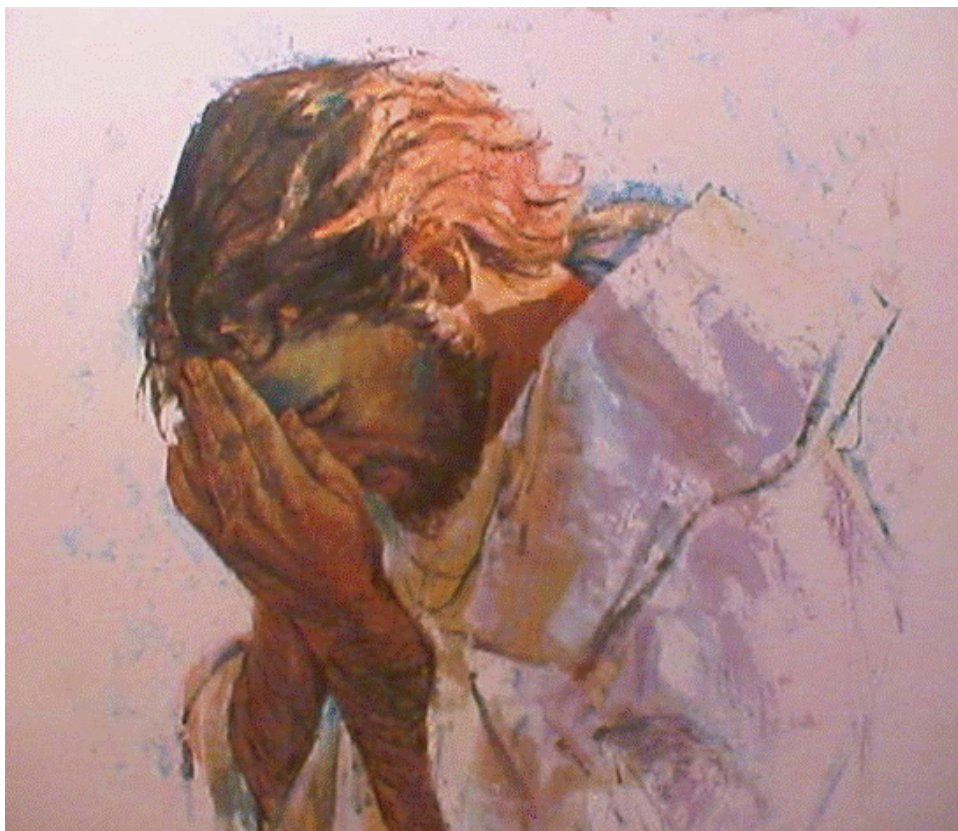


DIOCESE OF SOUTHEAST FLORIDA

# NEHEMIAH 2008



January 30, 2008



The Nehemiah Steering Committee wishes to propose to the Bishop and Parish Finance & Assessment Commission (PF&A) a joint ministry between the Nehemiah Steering Committee and the PF&A. The Diocese of Southeast Florida has experienced her share of successes over the past 5 years as a result of the joint ministries of the Nehemiah Steering Committee and the PF&A. Although we are making general progress on the overall state of health of the parishes, the Nehemiah Steering Committee and PF&A are increasingly concerned that some parishes will not be able to sustain this level of health over the next 5 years.

The plate and pledge for the diocesan parishes is up almost 26% since 1999 which is very encouraging. Even since 2003 to 2006 the plate and pledge has grown over 14% which is a considerable accomplishment given the response to General Convention 2003 and devastating hurricanes in 2004 and 2005. In light of these significant challenges, the parish clergy and lay leaders should be congratulated for their faithful and sacrificial call to Christ's ministry.

The average worship attendance (AWA) also shows signs of improvement although there is considerable room for improvement. As some have said, "We don't have a money problem; we have a people problem." The ministry of **HII: Hospitality, Invitation, and Incorporation** is by far our most important area for improvement in order to sustain long-term parish and diocesan health.

Our overall ability to attract new members or even elevate this to a high priority continues to handicap our parish's ministry. Although the seven year period between 1999 and 2006 shows a decline of almost 12% AWA, the 2003 to 2006 AWA rate dropped to a loss of 5%, while the 2005 to 2006 AWA rate dropped to 1.8%. The parishes are beginning to address the **HII** (**H**ospitality, **I**nitation, and **I**ncorporation) process but progress in this area has been entirely too slow in order to keep pace with the increasing ministry expectations.

## Key Factors

1. Factors beyond Control: Economic, Demographics, Trauma, International Events, Natural Disaster.
2. Clergy Leadership:
  - Success almost always occurs when clergy person is a life-long learner. That is, he/she is willing to invest considerable time and energy into improving their ministry.
  - Key is to think & act prayerfully, creatively, strategically, and spiritually.
  - An approach of “Building on strengths and minimizing weaknesses” is very important.
  - Have a Personal and Parish Ministry Plan which coincides with each other.
  - Recruit & Train a Team Leadership.
  - A Ministry of Extreme Hospitality is essential: e.g., Holland America’s customer friendly atmosphere.
  - Expected to make considerable Sacrifice.
3. Diocesan Finances are doing well, although room for improvement: We Know Stewardship!
3. Our AWA is down! We Do NOT know Extreme Hospitality!!!

## Proposal

The Nehemiah Steering Committee proposes the following process, known as Nehemiah 2008, to be instituted by the Nehemiah Steering Committee and the PF&A with the support and encouragement of the Bishop and the Executive Board.

## Nehemiah 2008

The Nehemiah 2008 class will be composed of clergy and staff members from 4 groups:

- Parishes who receive an investment from the Bishop, Executive Board and the parishes of the diocese in the form of either Aid to Congregations or an Assessment Reduction in 2008 will be required to participate in the Nehemiah 2008 Process. The purpose for their attendance is to receive tools and coaching on how to improve their parish’s ministry within their unique setting. Failure to agree to participate in the Nehemiah 2008 Process or comply with the attendance requirement will result in their assessment returning to the Convention approved level and/or cessation of their aid payments.
- Parishes who have incomes below \$200,000 or who are struggling with their AWA will be invited to attend the monthly meetings.
- All church planters.
- Any parish who seeks assistance will be invited to attend.
- **Note:** The Nehemiah 2006 parishes will continue their process through 2008 as was the original plan. (Any Nehemiah 2006 parish who receives Aid to Congregations or an Assessment Reduction will be required to continue the Nehemiah 2006 process.)

## **Benefits:**

- Expands God's Kingdom.
- Makes your life more fruitful and less stressful.
- Developing & Implementing a Healthy Parish Ministry Plan will: **SYSTEM!**  
**Save**  
**You**  
**Stress**  
**Time**  
**Energy**  
**Money**
- The Mortgage Freeze Program is available to those parishes with a diocesan mortgage.

## **Clergy will:**

- Discover their Gifts – “*NOW, Discover Your Strengths*” – and manage their weaknesses
- Grow one ministry level
- Develop a Clergy Ministry Plan & Establish Criteria to Measure Progress
  - # of guests attending each Sunday
  - # of giving units.
  - # attending the HII process with goal growth of 6% per annum.
  - # leaders
  - # of new ministry groups or initiatives
- Develop a Parish Ministry Plan according to the 10 Systems of a Healthy Church
  1. Study the required materials
  2. Develop a Parish Ministry Plan with the Parish Leadership Team
  3. Focus on one or two of the Systems and develop a 6 month implementation of the projects.
  4. Write an evaluation of the implemented projects.
- Determine one's personal and parish leadership's “Wanna” & “W.I.T” Factors
- Develop and maintain a 18-24 month parish calendar
- Develop and maintain a parish webpage
- Attend all classes.

### **Clergy Attendance requirements for the Nehemiah 2008 Process**

Sessions II & IV (Overnight Retreats) are mandatory

Sessions I, III, V, VI: one excused absence permitted

- Complete all assignments.

## Process:

- The process will be designed to work with clergy and staff members in developing their Personal Ministry Plan and a process of creating, developing, and improving the Parish Ministry Plan: Vision, Mission, & Strategic Plan.
- Each person attending will be assigned certain foundational books to read by June 1, 2008.
- The clergy will create and train a Parish Leadership Team.
- The expectation is that the parishes will grow 6% within 2 years.
- The **10 Systems of the Church** (Nelson Searcy) will be the framework for developing the Personal and Parish Ministry Plan.
- 100% of the parishes will design and implement a HII plan.
  1. May 20, 2008 – Parish HII Plan presented in detail
  2. August 1, 2008 – Implementation of Parish HII Plan begins
  3. January 1, 2009 – Evaluate and Re-Design of Parish HII Plan.
- A personal assessment of the gifts and strengths of the clergy and staff members will be one of the first assessment tools – “*Now, Discovering Your Strengths*”.
- The Nehemiah Process system tools will be taught in segments according to the needs of the clergy and staff members.
- The Sony Video Conferencing System (SVC) will be utilized where possible so that almost any parish can participate.
- The clergy will create teams to visit other parishes.
- Every clergy person will have a partner.
- Data will be collected on-line to establish evaluation benchmarks.

## Schedule:

Introduction	January 23 (South) February 14 (North)	Holy Family Episcopal Church Our Lady of Florida
Session I *	March 12 (South) March 13 (North)	Holy Family Episcopal Church Holy Spirit Episcopal Church
Session II	May 19 - 21	Overnight Retreat at Lake Placid, Florida
Session III *	August 27 (South) August 28 (North)	Holy Family Episcopal Church Holy Spirit Episcopal Church
Session IV	September 23 - 24	Overnight Retreat TBA
Session V *	October 22 (South) October 23 (North)	Holy Family Episcopal Church Holy Spirit Episcopal Church
Session VI *	December 10 (South) December 11 (North)	Holy Family Episcopal Church Holy Spirit Episcopal Church

\*Meeting Times 12:30pm - 4:00pm