

Tuesday, August 4, 2015, 2:30 P.M.

Workshop I

Title: **Growing the Church through Church Language**

Presenter: **Rev. Rodney D. Smith**

Scripture Base: Matthew 28: 19-20

The presenter began with this basic question, "Whose job is it to grow the church?" The responses include the pastor, the members, and the pastor and members together. The presenter stated that church language is the starting point for church growth. Church language includes the words, comments, response, and even body language that people use when they communicate with others about their church. Talking points during this discussion included the following:

- We are shaped by our environment.
- Our fundamental assumptions about our church create church language.
- Our church language shapes the culture of our local church.
- Consider what the community is saying about our church.
- Church language can be the life and/or the death of every ministry in the church.
- Clergy and lay speak church language and when they speak the same language the church grows.

There are five critical questions that shape church language.

1. How do we see ourselves as a local church?
2. How does the community see us as a church? If our church moved out of the community today, would the community care?
3. What do we believe to be true about our church that others believe not to be true?
4. Whose job is it to grow the church?
5. Is your church a healthy congregation?

Conclusion: The responsibility to grow the church belongs to both the clergy and the laity. These two groups make and control church language.

Recorder: Hattie Nathan (9th Episcopal District)