NEWCOMER TASKFORCE

Planning to receive and enfold newcomers into the communities of Saint Peter’s Church
NEWCOMER TASKFORCE

What is a Newcomer?
NEWCOMER

A PERSON OR THING THAT HAS RECENTLY ARRIVED; NEW ARRIVAL

SYNONYMS: STRANGER, OUTSIDER, OUTLANDER
NEWCOMER

- Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. (Romans 15:7)

- For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me… (Matthew 25:35)
The Greek word *xenos* (from which we derive the word "xenophobia") refers to foreigners and strangers. The same word refers to those who receive and entertain another person hospitably and with whom one stays or lodges; a host. They have philoxenos, love of strangers or Hospitality.

**NEWCOMER**

- *xenos*: foreigners and strangers
- *philoxenos*: "lovers of strangers"
- Just Hospitality: honor the *xenos’* gifts and differences as they enrich the community
NEWCOMER

For you, in sharing your needs and gifts, Saint Peter's may be a community of extraordinary renewal and fellowship.

We invite you to participate fully in the spiritual life of this community, to deepen our understanding of God's Word, and to proclaim with us the Good News to others.

Join the conversation . . . speak with one of our pastors.
NEWCOMER

- **HOST**
  - Familiar with environment
  - Possesses varying degrees of responsibility and ownership
  - Seeks to offer a just hospitality (honoring the guest’s differences), to those outside the environment
  - Hopes guests will become hosts

- **GUEST**
  - Unfamiliar with environment
  - Has no responsibility or ownership at the outset of the experience
  - Looks to be honored and welcomed warmly; entrusts their care to people who are more closely connected within the environment
  - Uncertain to what the experience will lead
NEWCOMER TASKFORCE

Guiding Principles
Hosts do not don a button or gloves, but show/sign that they are hosts by aiding people. Hosts become known based on their care, not on an external marker.
Name badges are no substitute for personal greetings and introductions.

PRINCIPLE A

- Emphasize substance, which in the case of newcomers is people, over form.
PRINCIPLE B

- Honor all people as guests with hospitality that is sincere, generous and clear.

Genuine/sincere care has integrity that lingers in guests’ memories and forms a lasting impression.
Generous hospitality is distinct from opulence. The former is appropriate to a guest, the latter borders on wasteful.
Guests should not have to sift through the community’s life to find hospitality. It should be readily apparent.
PRINCIPLE C

- Newcomers are guests that require special care because they are in a new place for the first time, unlike others who are familiar.

An effective host anticipates needs and provides hospitality before people ask for it. Host provides hospitality in such a way that a guest does not even recognize it — stealth hospitality. It “feels right.”
NEWMOMER TASKFORCE

A Newcomer’s Initial Experience of Saint Peter’s Church
Studies show that a person’s initial impression is formed within seven minutes.
Initial impression becomes the lens by which all other experiences will be viewed.
To become part of the community, eventually becoming a host herself, means sensing that one is important to the community already in the first seven minutes even when in reality a newcomer is not fully part of the community.
Critical to have a reliable place for providing effective hospitality and a team to carry it out.

LASTING IMPRESSION IN SEVEN

- First seven minutes shape initial impression
- Initial impression becomes lasting impression
- THEREFORE the first seven minutes of a newcomer’s experience at Saint Peter’s Church are crucial to all else.
- Consistence is key: plan and team
## A NEWCOMER’S EXPERIENCE

### 10:53/4:53

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<td>Building reflects neighborhood. Conveys a sense of interaction with surrounding culture. Designed cross at minimum speaks nothing to the person, at best sparks interest. Electronic sign conveys information, but also conveys something about the means: contemporary with surrounding culture.</td>
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<td>Newcomer enters building via Lexington Avenue Entrance, immediately sees Sanctuary space and hears what is going on in it. Note: door between Balcony and Narthex may or may not be open.</td>
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<td>Lobby offers a sense of spaciousness and the artwork is enticing. Person may return to the gallery later. Staff person is knowledgeable, but must be asked for information and could be busy with another issue (present or not). Uncertainty about where to go: stairwell, elevator, double wooden doors, chapel. No signage indicating direction or what might be taking place where newcomers may be looking for Sanctuary just as readily as looking for bathroom, programming or place for children (especially if they come from a place where children are not welcome at Liturgy / programming).</td>
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First 7 Minutes: Applying Principles
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<td>Immediate grasp of space and what is taking place in it. Closed door may lead to sense of uncertainty about where to go. Open door would suggest immediately a place beyond the Balcony.</td>
<td>APPLY B AND C Ensure that doors between Balcony and Narthex are propped open or replaced with glass doors. Provide signage immediately inside door: “Welcome. Receptionist through the doorway.”</td>
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APPLY C
Provide trained volunteer greeters in Narthex.

APPLY B AND C
Provide clear signage for various locations at top of stairwell.

APPLY B AND C
Revise THIS WEEK AT SAINT PETER’S to include this information. Provided by greeters to everyone upon arrival. |

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<td>APPLY C Provide greater at the base of stairwell. (Signage at top of stairwell would have been enough, to have greater here may result in a person thinking, “wow, these people are really hospitable!” Modified experience rises from neutral to very positive.) A coffee station and/or some gathering space en route is helpful, so too would making the space feel less like a storage area and more like a clean entryway to the Sanctuary.</td>
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2) Frustration.  

Feeling of not having received much attention or welcome. | APPLY A, B AND C  
Scatter ushers in various sections of the Sanctuary, allowing people to find their seat. Usher sees a person coming in their direction and greets them en route, helping them to find a seat within a general area the newcomer has already identified. |
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<td>APPLY B AND C: Provide an ELW on each pew seat with bulletin on top. Front page of bulletin should include one or two announcements (rubrics) about this particular liturgy (i.e. rites of healing will...; all are welcome to receive...).</td>
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Assets and Opportunities for Growth
1. This is a vibrant place. People doing mission together (liturgy, community building, community service, etc.).
2. Community is made up of a broad range of people, all of whom are valued and celebrated.
3. While sophisticated, climate remains conversational and communal; not stuffy or cold.
4. Fine and performing arts flourish in worship and for the enrichment of life in the City, particularly mid-town.
5. Programming is thoughtful and developed for the needs of the community; nourishment via liturgy, education and formation, cultural, etc.
6. The building’s clean palate holds a lot.
1. While not a place with a difficult sell, for some people the dynamics of the community and its richness makes it challenging for some people to get connected. Evaluating the ease of entry and openness to newcomers in every aspect of the life of the community is essential to providing welcome of the stranger. The key here is for the host to provide appropriate steps toward engagement and involvement. Related to this is the need to be clearer and even more public about the mission of the church, its assets. What we do is not exactly apparent. In some cases streamline and in other cases develop materials that communicate the church’s mission with view toward aiding newcomers discern their place within the community.

2. While Saint Peter’s is communion of a diverse people and communities and celebrates that diversity, we can provide more equitable involvement for this great diversity of people in ministries, governance, resources etc. Sharing resources amongst the many communities of Saint Peter’s Church.

3. While sophisticated, communal and conversational, an initiative that provides for nuanced engagement (stealth marketing) would make the community even more attractive to newcomers. This includes an improved, more dynamic and visually consistent web site; targeted email programs / communication [developing special lists (art, children, etc)]; bogging and social networking; and the ability of user to manage their online engagement in the community (advanced online database, including stewardship, etc.)

4. While Saint Peter’s commitment to the arts is strong within worship and for the good of the greater community, we could up our profile by seeking out new partnerships, sharing our resources with others (choir, jazz, creative proclamations, etc.) and inviting more artists to enrich Saint Peter’s in community building ways.

5. While the programming is strong and developed, newcomers mean in some cases similar and other other cases new and different interests. Expanding programming will help to better capture newcomers. Malleable programming would reflect the ever-expanding spectrum of the enriching conversation and communal-ness.

6. While the building is a great resource and its clean palate holds very much, the building itself could be exploited more dynamically: in what places is the church’s presence / mission of the church unclear; in what ways do we need to get “up-to-date”
NEWCOMER TASKFORCE

Planning to receive and enfold newcomers into the communities of Saint Peter’s Church