

**St. Luke's Episcopal Church
Strategic Plan 2021-2023**

INTRODUCTION

The new Vestry began initial discussions on where the church was and where it needed to go. Since the conversation could not be concluded at our Vestry meeting, a committee was appointed to write a strategic plan for St. Luke's. The Strategic Plan Committee consisted of Vestry and congregation members: Jim Huber, Susan Lee Hall, Bill Cowell, Maria Jordan, and Ernestein Flemister.

We began information gathering by asking the congregation to respond to a questionnaire. With the information in hand, the committee had regular meetings where we discussed all aspects of life at St. Luke's. The result of your responses and our discussions is this plan for the future of St. Luke's.

Thanks to everyone for your contributions to the final product.

Rev. Ernestein ☩

BACKGROUND

St. Luke's is an Episcopal Church in Grants Pass, a city of approximately 38,000 people located in southwestern Oregon. The church was founded in 1894 and has continued in operation since then. As of the preparation of this plan, our church membership is 118 people.

The purpose of this plan is simple: to clarify our mission, to define and guide our direction forward, and to use our resources as effectively as possible to continue the work that we believe God has set out for us to accomplish.

MISSION STATEMENT

To do God's work, we extend ourselves joyfully in Christ's name to one another, our community, and the world.

IDENTITY STATEMENT

St. Luke's Episcopal Church is a community of diverse and unique individuals and families, joined together in the Body of Christ. We are a family united by worship, discovering God's purpose in our lives and using our gifts in service to him, to one another, and to the world. We are committed to be welcoming and open to all, without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, age, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, disability or genetic information.

We are the people of God and a community seeking to live out the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We seek to love God and our neighbors as we love ourselves. We want to build collaborative and creative partnerships with our community to truly make it the beloved community of God. We encounter God in word and sacrament, in music and prayer, and in one another.

We offer opportunities for education, spiritual growth, service, fellowship, and the giving and receiving of pastoral care.

We seek, through worship and service, to show forth in the world the healing power of Jesus's love.

FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF

We share one core, fundamental belief upon which this Strategic Plan is built. That belief is simply what Christ has taught us: *"Love one another as I have loved you."*

The goals, strategies and objectives of this plan all flow from this belief and without it, or having lost sight of it, they become meaningless. Indeed, love is the foundation for all that we do.

GOAL 1, Worship: Build on our liturgy and continue to improve and diversify the music and liturgy of our worship services to meet the needs of the existing congregation as we welcome new people.

Explanatory Statement: To further our baptismal promise to “proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ” and “seek and serve Christ in all persons,” St. Luke’s needs people who reflect, embrace and live the diversity of life in the 21st century. One way we can further our baptismal promises is through our liturgy and another is through our music.

We have begun the musical expansion through the addition of hymns used in many other Episcopal Churches, such as *Lift Every Voice and Sing* (LEVAS). We have added instrumentalists such as harpists and wind and string instruments to our worship, along with more frequent guitar accompaniment.

As a first step toward increasing our musical “visibility” in the community, we hosted a Liberian musician who performed at a fundraising concert on March 7th of 2020 and participated in our worship service on Sunday, March 8th.

We have been awarded a grant for an Associate Choir Director, who will be in charge of a summer youth choir camp that we envision growing into a youth choir for St. Luke’s. The grant also provided funds for multiple copies of LEVAS and *Wonder, Love and Praise*.

There are other ways to “do” church that may reach more hearts and souls. One example is a contemplative service and another is what is sometimes called “messy church,” held in the Parish Hall and inviting parents and children. We are looking at other forms of worship including a Jazz Mass, an evening Eucharist and other new ideas.

Strategy 1: Improve and enhance communication with the congregation.

2021 Objectives:

- After adoption, hold workshops after each service to distribute, introduce and explain the Strategic Plan.
- When appropriate, use Zoom, YouTube channel and other available platforms to provide for virtual worship.
- Provide internet access for the entire church building.

2022 Objectives:

- In addition to the annual meeting, host a second meeting with the congregation that focuses on discussion of pertinent issues facing St. Luke's.

2023 Objectives:

- Conduct another survey of the congregation to determine what they think are the most pressing issues facing St. Luke's.

Strategy 2: Explore new ways to worship.

2021 Objectives:

- At both services, include additional eucharistic prayers the first Sunday of each month.
- Add the contemplative service TAIZÉ.

2022 Objectives:

- Add a new service such as "messy church."

2023 Objectives:

- Evaluate and determine if we will continue with new programs introduced in 2021 and 2022.

Strategy 3: Create and introduce new musical programs.

2021 Objectives:

- Use choral singing software to enhance music worship.

2022 Objectives:

- Hire a Youth Choir Director.
- Sponsor a 7 to 10-day summer music school.
- Establish a youth choir.

2023 Objectives:

- Offer a special service “Jazz Mass” twice a year.
- Collaborate with other church choirs and give community performances.
- Evaluate and determine if we will continue the new programs of the previous 2 years.

GOAL 2, Evangelism: As members of the community of Grants Pass, we extend our hearts and hands in welcome, hospitality and outreach in partnership with the community, especially to assist the most vulnerable populations.

Explanatory Statement: As followers of the teachings of Jesus Christ, we understand our duties and responsibilities to others beyond the walls of St. Luke’s Episcopal Church. Unfortunately, too many people in our community are suffering and are in need. One example of this, involving homeless people, was highlighted in this news article:

At a point in time in January 2019, the United Community Action Network counted 602 homeless people living in Grants Pass, and another 1,045 “precariously housed” people sleeping in someone else’s home, Clarke noted, adding that the count “may be a conservative estimate.” (*Grants Pass Daily Courier*, August 9, 2019)

St. Luke’s wants to be available to stand in the gap to help those in need when they are unable to do so themselves. We want to help without judgment or

condemnation and serve our neighbor with love, dignity, and respect. As a part of our efforts, we are currently reaching out to students at Fort Vannoy Elementary School and we help feed the poor with sandwiches, boiled eggs, and non-perishable food items on the last Sunday of each month. We held a fundraiser in conjunction with other churches in March 2020, for The Foundry Village to help to build tiny, transitional houses for the homeless. We have created a Social Justice Committee comprised of congregation members committed to helping those in need. We are determined to find the best way to strategically allocate our time and resources in assisting those others. When we act in love and commitment, we show solidarity in witness to Jesus's call to love one another as he loves us.

Strategy 1: Use our resources and participate with other organizations to develop services needed by our community.

2021 Objectives:

- When possible, share proceeds from fundraising events with community-wide projects such as Foundry Village.
- Participate with others in providing food to people in the park at least once per month.
- Maintain a portable bathroom on the grounds of St. Luke’s for use of those in need.
- Encourage and support a team of individuals from St. Luke’s who are committed to volunteering at the Warming Shelter.
- Continue with the FISH program.

2022 Objectives:

- Sponsor a table at the annual “Point In Time” census of homeless people.
- Continue new programs initiated in 2021.
- Make our presence felt in as many community events as possible, such as protesting against the incarceration of immigrant children at the border.

2023 Objectives:

- Evaluate and determine if we will continue the new programs of the previous 2 years.

Strategy 2: Invite members of the community to new events at St. Luke's.

2021 Objectives:

- Host a fall First Friday Art Night.
- Explore other possibilities through on-going conversations with the community through alliances with other ecumenical groups and the Rogue Community College Student Services Coordinator.

2022 Objectives:

- Host a free Youth Choir concert.
- Host a "Taste of St. Luke's" culinary event.
- Host a karaoke night.

2023 Objectives:

- Evaluate and determine if we will continue the new programs initiated in the previous 2 years.

GOAL 3, Perseverance, Endurance, Sustainability: We care for and support our current members as we invite new people to be a part of our worshiping family, with a goal of maintaining a long-term financial stability to continue God's work.

Explanatory Statement: St. Luke's Episcopal Church has been around since 1894 and we hope to be here for another 126 years. In order to do that we need to discern what God requires of us; what God's purpose is for us in Grants Pass. Yes, we will love and support our members, but we will also need to live in solidarity and build allies with the community. We need to be welcoming, hospitable and open to our neighbors allowing us to grow the church.

Churches don't live on air, we need time, gifts and treasure to do God's will. We need the monetary support of our members; we need to find creative ways to fund projects within the church and the community. We will use our trust fund

wisely to support God's work and we will also search for grants and other resources to accomplish God's will.

God's people make sacrifices for the sake of doing his work. We will encourage each other to give as much as we are able, we look for more sources and we will lift our offerings to God and God will bless it to his purpose. We roll up our sleeves and go to work in God's Vineyard.

Strategy 1: Take care of the members of our congregation.

2021 Objectives:

- Continue to care for our sick, hurt and suffering members, ensuring they receive love and care from the clergy and laity.
- Provide recognition of the work that members do for our church, such as acknowledging individuals and groups in the monthly newsletter and holding a coffee hour in their honor.
- Continue to provide opportunities for members to have fun, such as offering a Zoom coffee hour or happy hour.

2022 Objectives

- Continue programs initiated in 2021.

2023 Objectives

- Evaluate and determine if we will continue the new programs initiated in the previous 2 years.

Strategy 2: Use our facilities for traditional and non-traditional ways of doing stewardship.

2021 Objectives:

- Continue to offer the use of our space free-of-charge for events such as postcard writing to “get out the vote.”
- Through use of the website and other forms of social media, make the sermons of the reverend available to the public.
- Enlist the services of a registered architect to evaluate possible uses of the basement for different purposes.

2022 Objectives:

- Work with the City of Grants Pass to find a long-term, permanent solution to sewage back-up problems related to the sewer main in the alley.

2023 Objectives:

- Analyze results of the architectural study and decide on which project, if any, to proceed with.
- Continue programs initiated in the past two years.

Strategy 3: Pursue funding sources in addition to the traditional pledge and plate offerings.

2021 Objectives:

- In consultation with the Vestry, consistently apply for relevant grant funds whenever opportunities arise.
- Gain a thorough understanding of the limitations and opportunities of the Memorial Trust funds.
- Use electronic platforms to reach out and connect with the congregation and community.
- Secure a St. Luke’s Church credit card.

2022 Objectives:

- Build new platforms for giving, such as use of credit cards, PayPal, Venmo, etc.
- Spend Trust Fund dollars in a limited, strategic manner, such as hiring a Sunday School director on an experimental basis or capital improvements to the basement.

2023 Objectives:

- Based on records of attendance and giving, evaluate the effectiveness of the new programs initiated in the previous 2 years.