



Visioning Process Proposal

Offered for Approval by Congregational Meeting on
Sunday, November 19



St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Lionville, PA

104 S. Village Avenue
Exton, PA
610-363-6264
StPaulsLionville.org

Introduction

At the beginning of 2023 Church Council nominated a team of faithful, committed and forward-thinking leaders to develop a Vision for the future of St. Paul's. That team was invited and in March this team began to meet. They are:

Flos Erickson	Pastor Stuart Luce	Becky Shallow	Harold Strawbridge (facilitator)
John Finkbiner	Kirsten McCurdy	Glenn Werner	
Kelly Grant	Brad Rice		

After hundreds of collective hours, they developed and accomplished a project to draw wisdom from God, the congregation, the community and outside resources. This included gathering information by means of congregational surveys, prayer, member interviews, demographic data, Bible study, congregational feedback, visits to other churches and readings.

The Visioning Team discerned the six strategies in the graphic on the right of how we accomplish our mission. Through the process we realized that two key areas of how we function, fellowship and evangelism, were not represented in our mission statement. In the center is the suggested Mission Statement edit which now incorporates these elements.

On pages 4 and 5 you will find a graphic describing the next steps to this visioning process, and how the ideas will be developed, prioritized and implemented by various leaders and leadership teams.

Starting on page 6 you will find a page for each of the six strategies of the Vision Plan. There's a further definition of the strategy and a Biblical foundation. Next, you'll see suggested ideas compiled from the listening sessions held by the Vision Team with members of the congregation. Note that the suggestions are not prioritized. Also note that some suggestions are repeated or overlap other strategies. This is intentional as none of our ministries operate in a vacuum, but rather cooperate and seek the same goals.

It's natural to see challenges in implementing some ideas. Ideas will be reviewed for their potential contribution to the mission of St. Paul's. Some ideas may not be feasible given resources upon further evaluation. The committees and the members of St. Paul's will craft "suggested ideas" into projects as appropriate. As a member of St. Paul's, you have a role to play in this work.

Finally, I (Pastor Stuart) want to express my deep thanks for the amazing dedication and faithfulness from the Vision Team to this process. Each of the team members has busy lives and I'm sure at times wondered what they had gotten themselves in for. I can only pay them the deepest compliment I know: lives will be changed by their work. Children, teens, and adults will come to faith or a deeper faith that will support and transform the rest of their lives. St. Paul's will be healthier, more vibrant and more faithful by the work of this team. They have my greatest esteem and thanks.

Which leads us to you!

How will God speak to you in what you read in the following pages?

How will you be part of God's plan as it unfolds over the next few years?

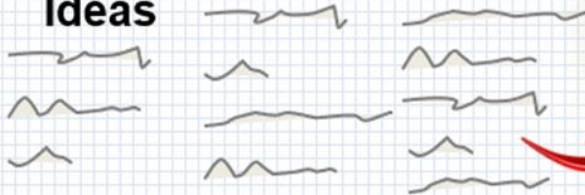


Implementing St. Paul's Vision Plan

● Approved Vision Plan



● Suggested Ideas

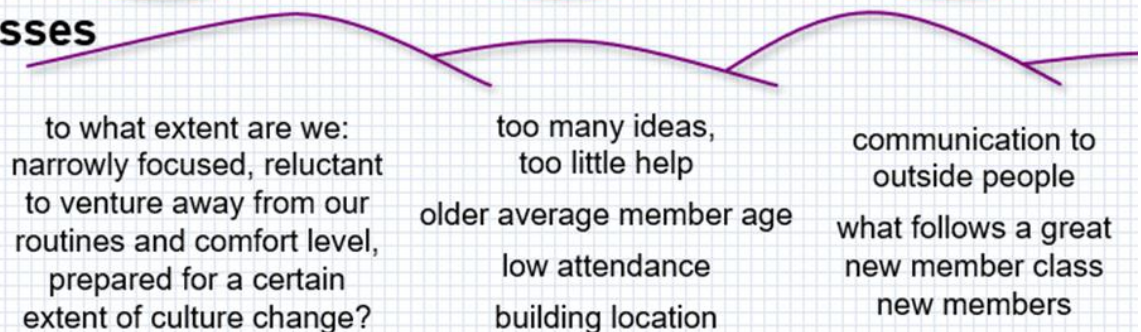


Church Council
Long Range Planning Team

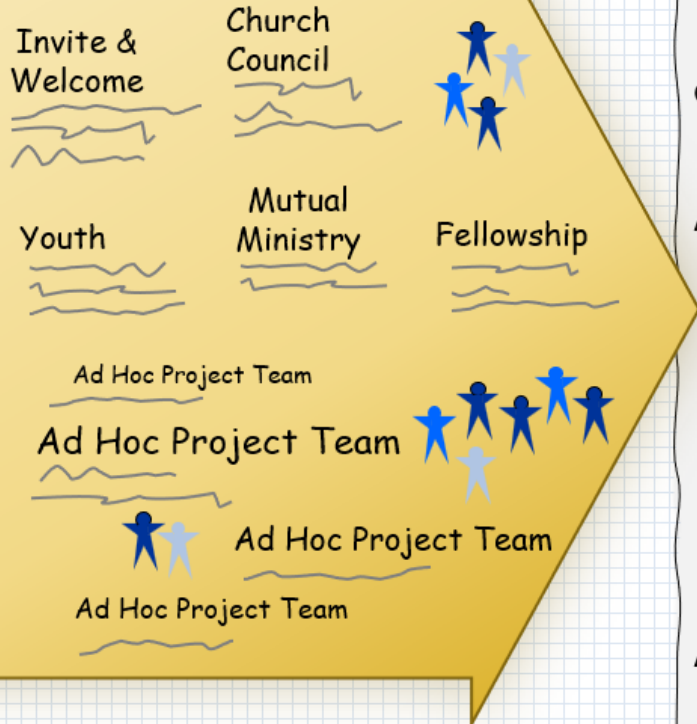
● Strengths



● Weaknesses



Teams



The Vision Planning Team produced the Vision Plan and a collection of Suggested Ideas by gathering wisdom from God, the congregation, the community and outside resources.

Church Council will charter projects as indicated by the suggestions' feasibility, priority and available resources.

A variety of teams will complete projects. The Vision Planning Team recommends that Church Council, assisted by a Long Range Planning Team, support the work. Both are responsible to St. Paul's members. Some projects can be done by the people in existing teams or by staff. We may need to charter new teams to be accountable for implementing other ideas. Some projects may need ad hoc project teams to form, complete the project and disband.

As we implement projects, we'll be aware of our strengths that will be success factors in completing work and we'll recognize weaknesses that could be barriers to success.

Measures of Success will gauge the effectiveness of ideas implemented by the people of St. Paul's.

central location in a vibrant community
 good mission statement
 varied social ministry, worship, service opportunities

● Measures of Success

Metrics defined to measure spiritual and numerical growth in: & Continuous planning process established

various demographics	programs
attendance	finances
engagement	leadership

2-in-1 congregation (8 & 10:30; traditional & contemporary) we're a congregation of strangers; we know faces not names / people	children's programs programs for young couples child care / Christian ed separate from services	not diverse facilities: Fellowship Hall & kitchen, Parsonage declining faith in society
--	---	---

Discipleship/Growth in Faith: Develop a pathway for children, youth, and adults to grow in faith.

Then Jesus said to them all, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. - Luke 9:23

Our congregation is grateful for the opportunities presented to grow in faith at St. Paul's. Throughout the visioning process, a consistent theme is to build upon these opportunities even more in order to attract and keep people at St. Paul's. Also important is developing more learning and connection opportunities for children, youth and adults to continue to learn and grow in their faith journeys.

Suggested Ideas:

Develop connections to the community that show the value of God, St. Paul's and church in one's life. This might include:

- Extending workshops, Bible study invitations to audiences outside of St. Paul's via social media
- Providing resources or support to address mental health problems in our community

Continue to grow a strong youth ministry which involves more adult leaders; including:

- Consistent and coordinated instruction between Sunday School, First Communion and Confirmation
- Children's milestones that keep kids engaged through the journey so they want to get to the next milestone including a capstone or signature ministry or project that is well-known
- Encouragement for Confirmation class to visit different religions' church services (in progress)
- Recognize topics important to young people

Support connection and growth of members:

- Providing shepherds to new members
- Surveying to determine people's depth of discipleship and areas that are needed
- Developing a discipleship covenant which is deeper than just membership, but helping people understand what it is to be a disciple
- Providing a "roadmap" to growing in faith
- Provide free personal Bibles
- Offer worship series such as a "Purpose Driven Life" to further emphasize our strategy

Equip and support groups to respond to congregation interests and needs by providing classes, and where helpful, collaborating with other churches.

Fellowship/Community: Continue to be welcoming and expand fellowship activities

Day by day, as the early church spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.
- Acts 2:46-47

A fundamental principle of the church is to offer members and the community opportunities to gather for fun fellowship, and appeal to all ages and interests. We will continue events that have been successful and identify innovative opportunities for St. Paul's, to gather and meet new people of like interests. Fellowship benefits from existing leaders and will grow as we identify participants and equip new leaders.

Suggested Ideas:

Develop Support Groups that respond to congregation interests and needs for example:

- Revive Intouch ministry
- Transportation to doctor appointments, events, services, etc.

Develop additional fellowship activities which are advertised to the community such as

- Intramural sports, interchurch youth group activities
- Work days with people from both services
- Trivia Night / Game Night (and invite a friend)

Communication

- Updates on upcoming events (both within St. Paul's and community)
- Encourage the startup of new groups as interest is generated e.g., empty nesters or 55+
- Encourage and support leaders to get involved in planning
- Promotion after a successful event with pictures, highlights etc.
- Name Tags and more frequently updated

Develop additional fellowship opportunities responding to congregation interests and needs.

Worship: Continue to offer various worship opportunities to appeal to people.

For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them. -Matthew 18:20

For many people, their first experience with a new church is through worship. The Congregation identified several themes as strengths including our music program, inspirational messages and our online worship. The most mentioned themes involve ways to attract young families and ways to be more welcoming as people enter to visit.

Suggested Ideas:

Worship could be more attractive, especially for young families, by having Sunday school or a children's program or activities during worship.

Continue improving the nursery including livestream of the service. (Completed).

Reboot Rejoicing Spirits for their 20th anniversary.

Find ways for children to be more involved in worship such as collecting the offering or playing instruments, frequent youth lectors.

More outdoor services.

Reestablish greeters and develop ambassadors each Sunday for visitors who they can talk to after church to find out more about St. Paul's, answer questions, and help them get involved.

Invite guest clergy of different race, ethnicity, gender or denominations to preach or speak occasionally.

Continue upgrading worship technology and livestreaming.

Service/Ministry: Inspire, equip, and support people for service in our Church and local communities.

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. -1 Peter 4:10

Serving, as a key part of St. Paul's mission statement, involves active participation and working together. This can happen through an unlimited variety of opportunities, in simple and fun ways, to serve as many in as many ways as imaginable. Opportunities to serve allow us to use our individual gifts. Inviting others to join us in serving is a step toward fulfilling our mission as disciples.

Suggested Ideas:

Work on Activating

- **Attract a diverse range of people** by hosting varied service events, open to the public.
- **Collaborate with and help promote other local organizations** such as counseling groups and community services to create synergies.
- **Better inform everyone regarding our current ministry opportunities**, their leaders and event schedules. Encourage and challenge people to discover and pursue their role in ministries, especially those with new ideas for ministry.
- **Involve the Youth.** Support them in community service opportunities as required for high school and explore offering a scholarship to graduating seniors.
- **Develop Intergenerational (among ages 4 to 94) connections and ministries.**
- **Develop service opportunities for those who prefer to participate from home**, such as cooking, assembling items, telephone outreach, etc.
- **Encourage and develop mission trip participation by all ages.**

Work on Inviting and Including. Become a recognized resource in our community by:

- **Identifying and inviting new audiences.** This would include underrepresented groups in our church.
- **Equipping everyone in the congregation to be "inviters".** Consider how you make invitations. In-person requests typically get favorable responses.
- **Increasing the visibility of St. Paul's activities in our community.**

Work on Identifying and Empowering Disciples

- **Designate a volunteer coordinator**, possibly a staff position.
- **Provide ample opportunities**, with some geared for youth and some for families, to serve throughout our community.
- **Encourage and assist more people to participate or lead service opportunities** that will thrive with their unique gifts.
- **Encourage and motivate new people** to become involved
- **Support one another in extending beyond our comfort level** when we explore new programs.
- **Recognize and thank volunteers** for their efforts using traditional and novel ways.

Evangelism/Church Growth: Improve our visibility, “invisibility”, and welcome.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. -Matthew 28:19

St. Paul's Church is passionately and purposefully committed to reaching out and spreading the message of faith (evangelism) so people can explore and deepen their spiritual journey. St. Paul's actively engages in various outreach methods, both online and in-person, and needs to keep adding methods to reach out. St. Paul's encourages those currently part of our community to invite others and then foster a welcoming and inclusive environment (“invisibility”), ensuring that the message of God’s love and grace is shared with as many people as possible.

Suggested Ideas:

Branding, Marketing

- **Increase and improve communication to the community** outside of St. Paul’s including signage, invitations by members to participate, welcome banners, information banners, road signs, digital signage, postcards. Host a table at community events to invite people to St. Paul’s.
- **Enlist a social media team** to announce, promote, and celebrate St. Paul’s events.

Needs of Young Families

- **Offer a “Parents Night Out”** where parents could drop their kid(s) off at St. Paul’s which could also involve youth.
- **Evaluate the addition of a part-time Children’s Ministry staff person** to attract young families.
- **Specifically ask young families what they need** to learn how to connect with this age group.

Community Outreach

- **Offer regular neighborhood events** that would appeal to younger families such as a carnival, bounce house event, Family Fun Night, movie night or pumpkin patch.
- **Establish an “Open Door”** policy for the use of our facility to support local service organizations.

Welcoming Visitors and New Families

- **Build a stronger bridge from preschool to church participation.**
- **Provide training/coaching on how to invite others** in an authentic and non-threatening manner, such as an “elevator speech invitation” ready.
- **Provide better follow up with visitors to the church** including a mailed letter, feedback form, and a gift.
- **Create a new homeowner’s welcome package** with St. Paul’s information.

Infrastructure: Celebrate our stability; invest in our human, spiritual and physical resources.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. -Acts 2:42

St. Paul's is blessed through its facilities to address every milestone on our faith journey. Whether it is at the baptism font, the faith formation in Sunday school, the Spiritual Leadership on Sundays to even our final resting place at our beautiful memorial area. This is our infrastructure but, in some areas, we need to restore or contemporize in order to adapt and meet future worship and gathering practices. We need to establish future leaders to continue to meet our mission in the local and global community.

Suggested Ideas:

Draw more people into leadership, provide training and ensure leaders do not burnout.

Form a long-range planning team to facilitate the success of our vision as it continuously evolves as the needs of the congregation change.

Start a fundraising campaign for current needs: fellowship hall/kitchen renovation, the parsonage and reserves for unexpected expenses.

Review Church aesthetics, for example: Find a way to diminish the look of black pipe, address leaks, narthex hallway update.

Map the responsibilities of staff and leadership teams noting where individuals and teams are responsible for tasks, accountable for decisions, consulted or informed.

Use more technology for example TV screen in the narthex, use a variety of media a tablet available for quick registrations and QR codes, upgrading worship technology and live streaming.

Add community-use facilities like a covered outdoor pavilion.



St. Paul's Vision Plan Overview

Fellowship / Community

A fundamental principle of the church is to offer members and the community opportunities to gather for fun fellowship, and appeal to all ages and interests. We will continue events that have been successful and identify innovative opportunities for St. Paul's, to gather and meet new people of like interests. Fellowship benefits from existing leaders and will grow as we identify new participants and equip new leaders.

Evangelism / Church Growth

St. Paul's Church is passionately and purposefully committed to reaching out and spreading the message of faith (evangelism) so people can explore and deepen their spiritual journey.

St. Paul's actively engages in various outreach methods, both online and in-person, and needs to keep adding methods to reach out. St. Paul's encourages those currently part of this community to invite others and then foster a welcoming and inclusive environment, ensuring that the message of God's love and grace is shared with as many people as possible.

Worship

For many people, their first experience with a new church is through worship.

The Congregation identified several themes as strengths including our music program, inspirational messages and our online worship. The most mentioned themes involve ways to attract young families and ways to be more welcoming as people enter to visit.



Infrastructure

St. Paul's is blessed through its facilities to address every milestone on our faith journey. Whether it is at the baptism font, the faith formation in Sunday school, the Spiritual Leadership on Sundays to even our final resting place at our beautiful memorial area. This is our infrastructure but, in some areas, we need to restore or contemporize in order to adapt and meet future worship and gathering practices. We need to establish future leaders to continue to meet our mission in the local and global community.

How will God speak to you in what you read in the plan?

How will you be part of God's plan as it unfolds over the next few years?

Discipleship / Growth in Faith

Our congregation is grateful for the opportunities presented to grow in faith at St. Paul's. Throughout the visioning process, a consistent theme is to build these opportunities even more in order to attract and keep families at St. Paul's as well as develop more learning and connection

Service / Ministry

Serving, as a key part of St. Paul's mission statement, involves active participation and working together. This can happen through an unlimited variety of opportunities, in simple and fun ways, to serve as many in as many ways as imaginable. Opportunities to serve allow us to use our individual gifts. Inviting others to join us in serving is a step toward fulfilling our mission as disciples.