



The 2019 Letter from the Vestry:

This year at the Annual Vestry Retreat on Thursday, February 28th and Friday, March 1st, we focused on the words and meaning of our mission statement:

“To be an open, inviting, and serving community
In which Jesus Christ is the center of our life
And the gospel is modeled and proclaimed
In Word and Sacrament.”

Throughout the retreat, our ministries and departments shared with us the details of how they serve the parishioners of Saint Luke’s and our broader community. We talked about the successes and failures of 2018, how the different ministries support each other and partner on programming, and the goals for 2019. And while we listened, we asked the following questions:

1. Do our current worship services, programs, and outreach fulfill our mission?
2. Is there room for improvement?

The answer to both questions is YES! Your Vestry is amazed and impressed with the many ways Saint Luke’s continues to meet the needs of our congregation, our community, and the world, and yet we recognize that to become complacent is to become irrelevant in a world that is quickly changing around us. For 2019, your Vestry has identified several specific goals that will help us continue to stay relevant.

1. Tell our Story

Saint Luke’s is a unique place that was founded by people who wanted a neighborhood church that served both its members and its community. That simple philosophy still echos through our halls and each of us have the opportunity to be more proactive by making sure all who attend Saint Luke’s are invited into our culture of service. Ask someone new to join your weekly Bible study, to serve as an Usher or LEM, to join you on an outreach volunteer project, or to serve on an internal committee. The more you put into Saint Luke’s, the more you will get out, we promise!

2. Targeted Stewardship Strategy

We are lucky to be part of a generous parish. The Vestry wants to take this year to, first, intentionally THANK those of you who give and who have answered the call to increase your annual pledge to Saint Luke’s. And second, we aim to connect with those of you who consider yourselves members of Saint Luke’s, but have not yet taken the step to become our financial partner. We need you! Our budget is currently funded by only 33% of our members. Imagine what we can accomplish if the percentage of participation increases to 70%.

3. Audio/Visual Plan

Our Capital Campaign included the purchase and installation of all the equipment necessary to record, produce, and publish worship services, classes, and other program offerings held at Saint Luke's. Currently, we do not have the manpower to operate this equipment regularly and we are confident that the answer lies within the talents of our own congregation. We are exploring establishing an AV Guild. If you or your teen is interested in this opportunity, please let us know!

4. The Operating and Accounting Software system upgrade

Our Administrative team has a big year planned as they implement a software upgrade that has been 2 years in the making. This new software is a huge improvement and will come with many features that will help you more fully engage with all facets of Saint Luke's. You can assist our staff by answering questions as they work to verify all our member data and by being patient during the expected growing pains. The final product is going to be great!

5. Explore Satellite Services of the Word in Birmingham

When Rich first had the idea for The Word, it centered around the idea of the Arc and the Temple. The Arc travels to spread the word, while the Temple remains the foundation and center of our Worship. The incubation time for the Word is complete and it is now the time to explore how to share what we have created. The Word is a well balanced worship service featuring universal music and a more relaxed atmosphere that introduces our non-anglican friends to the timeless beauty of sacramental worship and the eternal truth of God's Grace. This year we aim to identify several opportunities to host The Word in other places in BHM.

6. Explore Alternate Funding Sources for Programs

Saint Luke's has a long history as an incubator for new non-profits and as a key collaborator with community partners. While these programs would not exist if not for the time, talent, and treasure provided by our members, it is prudent to fully consider creating partnerships to better fund some of our programs through grants. The recent success of several music & arts collaborations and the establishment of Founder's Place gives us a platform to begin.

Our Retreat also included a review of the many lay led groups and committees that participate in the work of running Saint Luke's. These lay volunteers are often the unsung heroes of our congregation. This year all of our Vestry Sub-Committees have enthusiastically responded to the call for more transparency to publicly reaffirm that the leadership of Saint Luke's does not operate behind a closed curtain. All the members of Saint Luke's are welcome to attend any Vestry meeting or Finance Committee meeting and any adult confirmand in good standing can serve on a sub-committee. Included with this letter is a detailed listing of all Vestry sub-committees including their purpose and current chairs and members. Also included is a detailed listing of all the lay groups involved in worship and pastoral services. Because we may have unintentionally left someone out, please take time to review both lists. You will be amazed at how your friends and neighbors serve and you might find an opportunity for yourself.

In conclusion, the Vestry wants to share with you the 2019 approved budget. Most notable is the fact that the first step in our the budget process is to allocate almost 20% of our pledges to the diocese and our outreach fund. This means we are not always able to fund everything we would like to do within our own parish. Our Clergy, Staff, and Vestry believe this is what responsible Christian Stewardship calls us to do and makes us all participants in God's call to help others.

THANK YOU for being part of the Saint Luke's family. It's the members of Saint Luke's who make us what we are and the entire Vestry is proud and humbled to serve you.

In Christ,

Your 2019 Vestry

Sr. Warden - Sumner Rives '19

Jr. Warden - Bo Hartsfield '19

Jr. Warden - Paul Elliott '20

Class of 2019

Susie Caffey

Anderson Neighbors

Mark Waggoner

Class of 2020

Livy Abele

Bob Boylan

Tim A.R. Callahan

Susan Logan

Class of 2021

Rebecca Eubanks

Trippe Gray

Norman Jetmundsen

Norman Tynes

Scarlett Simmons

Appointed Members

Treasurer - William Nicrosi

Clerk - Harrison Smith

Jr Vestryperson - Molly Sheffield Davis