



Saint Luke's Parish

Discernment Committee Parish Report

September 22, 2019

What Is Discernment

- Period of self-reflection where we engage in parish-wide discussions on where Saint Luke's is and where it wants to go.
- What we have learned will be used by the Recruitment Committee in their interviews with Rector candidates.

How We Did It

- 5 Nights of Parish-Wide Focus Groups, over 20 Individual Groups
 - Tuesday, June 24th
 - Sunday June 30th
 - Tuesday, July 30th
 - Tuesday August 20th
 - Wednesday, September 4th
- 4 Smaller Group Discussions – Internal Discernment Team, Youth ages 12-18, Ushers and Spouses, P2P Staff
- Numerous Individual Conversations
- Total Input from 250+ People
- Weekly Communications Updates via Parish-Wide **SEARCHLIGHT** Newsletter

Groups Represented by Focus Group Participants

- 8 am Service Attendees
- 10 am Service Attendees
- Adult Spirituality/Pathways Attendees
- Caring Connections
- CAYA Attendees
- Children's Ministries
- Choir Members
- Clergy
- Community Supper Helpers
- DOCC & Small Group Participants
- LifeWorks Participants
- Lay Assistants
- Retreat Attendees
- Moms/MOAT Groups
- Newcomers
- Non-Regular Attendees
- P2P Staff
- Parish School Director, Staff
- Parish School Families
- Parents of Youth, Parents of Young Children
- Pledging Members
- Saint Luke's Staff
- Seniors
- Transition Members
- Ushers
- Vestry Members
- Youth, Ages 12-18

Focus Group Questions

1. Why do you come to Saint Luke's?
2. What are Saint Luke's strengths, what area(s) are we strongest and why?
3. Which area(s) are the biggest challenge for Saint Luke's and why?
4. Imagine that it's 2022 and our new rector has been with us for three years. Describe our parish's most exciting, energizing, significant accomplishments during those three years of serving God together? (Not including "more people" or "more money.")

Why Do You Come to Saint Luke's?

"Because I have learned to believe more strongly in God every time I come."

"As a newcomer to the town of Darien, and a lifelong Episcopalian, I wanted a way to make a connection. Once that began, it rapidly became my spiritual home. I feel a sense of place even when I can't be here."

"Incredible clergy. Beautiful music program. The people in the pews. The role Saint Luke's plays in the wider community. Spiritual and intellectual stimulation."

Why Come and Strengths

1. Community of Faith
 - Spiritual home
 - Deep friendships
 - Intergenerational
 - Accepting
 - Refuge, place of calm
2. Preaching Quality
 - Inspirational
 - Intellectual
 - Relatable
3. Clergy
 - Accessible
 - Welcoming
 - Smart
4. Service Opportunities
 - P2P, Outreach
 - Community Suppers
 - Mission Trips
5. Episcopalian Traditions
 - Liturgy
 - Music
 - Strong Lay Leadership
6. CAYA
 - Flexible Service Time
 - Contemporary Music
7. Education
 - Adult/Youth/Children Programs
 - Small Group Offerings
8. Atmosphere & Campus
 - Beautiful Buildings
 - Flowers

Saint Luke's Challenges

- Youth Ministry
 - A commitment to stronger youth programs
- Take Better Care of Our Own
 - Strengthen Pastoral Care, Healing ministries and Caring Connections
 - Improved intergenerational relationships, deeper connections between people
- Need for More Volunteers
 - Engage newcomers
 - Stewardship
- The Size of Saint Luke's
 - Sometimes hard to know what is going on and difficult to get involved

Saint Luke's Challenges Continued

- Improved Communications across the Parish
 - Keeping up with technology
 - Website
 - Printed directory!
- Outreach
 - What are the opportunities?
 - How do you get involved?
- Pressures from the External Secular Culture
 - Busy congregation
 - Sports/ski weekends/summer attendance

In 2022 We Hope to Have...

- Vibrant child and youth programming
- Continued sermon excellence
- Engaged parish with more involvement from a broader group, including newcomers

Our Next Rector Is....

- An excellent preacher who combines high intellectual content with a relatable approach to our lives.
- A rector who appreciates our broad spectrum of political and theological opinion.
- An energetic leader who will inspire an already enthusiastic and committed congregation to reach new heights.
- A warm and welcoming people person, community builder and fundraiser.
- A leader who appreciates the challenges of administering a parish the size of Saint Luke's.

Next Steps

- Discernment Team Members, plus Senior Warden Mark Campbell will meet with Bishop Douglas on Thursday, October 10th in Meriden, Connecticut.
- Shortly after the meeting we expect to receive the Bishop's approval of our work and the go-ahead to post the job on the Saint Luke's website and begin accepting applications.
- The Discernment Phase ends and the Recruitment Committee begins its work, headed by Lisa Baird and Craig Jones.