



Dear St. Luke's Family,

During the pandemic, we talked a lot about our *next normal*. This gave all of us an opportunity to re-imagine ministry in new ways as the world around us dramatically changed. We tried our very best to keep you connected during a very difficult time. Every week our worship teams were in the building recording, singing, and speaking to empty rooms with you in mind. We moved our classes and small groups online. We had to re-imagine our outreach strategy, so we invited our congregation to adopt classrooms, write letters, and even deliver meals to those who were isolated. We gave financial assistance to scores of people in our church and community who were heavily impacted by Covid. We sent daily mobile messages to you as an effort to encourage you during long and difficult days. But like many churches, we have figured out that church may never be the same...And that's ok.

Now we look ahead and begin to imagine the future, and specifically God's dream for St. Luke's. A leadership team of primarily Governing Board members and Lead Team members of our staff have formed a Visioning Team. We are using the services of Auxano, a leading Christian consulting organization, to help us in our planning (*you can learn more about them at Auxano.com*). The founding partner, Jim Randall, is our consultant, and with his guidance we will be creating a picture of the future and the steps and strategies to get there. We will address potential new realities emerging from this pandemic, changes in the denomination, and their possible impact to St. Luke's, and how to help our church soar in a time when church interest is plummeting. In fact, next Sunday you will be able to help us by filling out a very brief survey at the end of the service. This will be very useful in giving us a sense of your anticipated church involvement moving ahead.

While our mission will never change, we will continue to evolve, experiment, and respond to rapid change around us. For instance, you may have noticed that we have made more use of video messages in our 9:30AM contemporary service. This allows everyone to hear the same voice. Instead of using valuable time for two pastors working on one message, now we can utilize the same voices to create more online content beyond Sunday sermons, enabling us to reach a larger audience. We will also continue to re-evaluate worship times and think about ways to improve our Sunday morning experience. We want to grow our 9:30AM traditional service in the sanctuary, then start new services with a strategy to help each feel vibrant and attractive so all services have the potential to grow.

Nothing is set in stone. Rather than just going back to the way things were, we want to go toward what can be and harness our energies and resources for the greatest effectiveness. Most importantly, know that we are actively discerning where God is leading and will be responding to the direction we receive. We will keep you informed the best we can and seek your prayerful support and aid as we do. If you have any questions or ideas to pass along, please contact Rev. Eric Burton-Krieger at Eric.Burton-Krieger@stlukesumc.com.

Thanks for the accommodations you have made this past year. It has not been easy for any of us, but as we've been saying for a while now, and will need to keep saying, "we will get through this *together!*" Let's stay together, stay strong, and keep the faith.

God bless you,
Rob Fuquay