

Episcopal Church of the Advent: *A Community of Faith, Fellowship, and Fun*

Strategic Plan, 08/01/23 – 07/31/24

**Mission:** To love and serve God and our neighbors by offering to the people of Tallahassee meaningful worship services rooted in the tradition of Episcopal liturgy and music, a high-quality education to young children in our day school, opportunities for fellowship, and outreach ministries that serve the community and the world.

**Vision:** To be an inclusive worshipping community that serves our neighbors through education, outreach, and giving and welcomes all who want to love God.

**Core Values:** Faith, Fellowship, Community, Family, Acceptance, Education, Worship, Service, Tradition, Love, Compassion

Goals, Initiatives, and Measurable Objectives:

**1. Rich, Meaningful, and Engaging Worship Services**

a. Initiatives

- i. Offer at least four Sunday 10:30 services (perhaps the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month) that add variety to worship through different styles of liturgy or music, e.g. different Rite or Eucharistic Prayer, Morning Prayer, different instruments or musical styles, etc.

b. Measurable Objectives

- i. Satisfaction with new elements either through strong show of hands during service or a survey circulated in pews (90% either like the change or don't mind it)

**2. Financial Sustainability/Effective Stewardship**

a. Initiatives

- i. Review all recurring costs for potential savings including staff benefits, subscriptions, etc.
- ii. Continue hosting successful fundraising events (Bowls and Brews, Plant Sale)
- iii. Sell the Virginia burial plots given to the parish.
- iv. Enable pledging and giving on the website.
- v. Facilitate, encourage, and celebrate planned giving by parishioners.
- vi. Implement a month-long stewardship drive that focuses on sustained giving of time, talent, and treasure.

b. Measurable Objectives

- i. 15% year-over-year increase in plate and pledge contributions.
- ii. A balanced budget, or, failing that, progress toward a balanced budget within the next two program years.
- iii. One or more planned giving arrangements.

### 3. **Evangelism Inside and Out**

#### a. Initiatives

- i. Make the campus more welcoming to the neighborhood (e.g. signage, dog-watering station, lending library, refreshment station, neighborhood cookout).
- ii. Mail out greetings and an invitation to worship to the local neighborhoods and monitor the response.
- iii. Explore and pilot selective door-knocking in local neighborhoods to greet folks, invite them to visit, and give them a small gift.
- iv. Engage in new collaborative event with sister Episcopal churches in town.
- v. Continue to host successful community outreach events (Breakfast With Saint Nicholas, Rummage Sale).
- vi. Form a team to develop information and materials to provide to newcomers and visitors.
- vii. Produce and circulate handouts for parishioners to use when they invite family, friends, co-workers, and acquaintances to church.
- viii. Circulate a 30-second “elevator speech” for parishioners to use in their personal communications.
- ix. Order Advent Church bumper magnets and make them available for sale or as gifts.
- x. Designate an “Invite a Friend” Sunday and center the service and coffee hour on welcoming visitors.
- xi. Find a community service organization for the Rector and Senior Warden to join and engage with regularly as representatives of the parish to open new opportunities for outreach.

#### b. Measurable Objectives

- i. Two or more households from the local neighborhoods attending services.
- ii. One or more community engagement opportunities for parishioners to participate in.
- iii. One or more collaborative events with sister Episcopal churches.
- iv. 10% year-over-year average Sunday attendance
- v. 10 visitors on “Invite a Friend” Sunday

### 4. **Synergy Between Parish and Day School**

#### a. Initiatives

- i. Systematically involve the vestry and other parishioners in school events (morning muffins, donuts for dads, teacher’s planning day lunches, grandparents’ day, etc.) by making parishioners aware of these opportunities using personal testimony whenever possible.
- ii. Twice a week when school is in session, the Rector will be present at the school (playground, pick-up/drop-off, chapel, events) for a brief visit.
- iii. Ensure that day school parents are warmly invited to worship at Advent through various means.
- iv. Offer a “Date Night” for day school parents for them to drop their children off at the parish hall for babysitting using elements of Godly Play for activities.

- v. Review school and parish communications to ensure that parishioners, day school parents, and day school staff are aware of all parish and school news and events.
- vi. Host a joint social event for the Vestry and School Board.
- b. Measurable Objectives
  - i. Two or more new day-school families begin attending regular worship services.

**5. Strong Christian Formation Opportunities for All Generations**

- a. Initiatives
  - i. Monitor deployment of and satisfaction with Godly Play.
  - ii. Find opportunities for guest speakers or engaging video presentations (movies, lectures, documentaries) for Wednesday evenings.
  - iii. Conduct satisfaction surveys of participants in all formation activities.
- b. Measurable Objectives
  - i. Consistent staffing and regular attendance at Godly Play.
  - ii. 90%+ very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with formation activities.