



ST. JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH
LAKE FOREST, ILLINOIS

Strategic Plan 2025

Dear Siblings in Christ,

At our Annual Financial Meeting on January 28, 2024, the congregation approved a partnership with LEAD (Living Everyday As Disciples) to guide a **strategic planning process**. Twenty months later, I'm grateful—and excited—to share the fruit of that journey.

This plan was shaped by deep listening: to Scripture, to one another, and to our neighbors. It asked of us faith, patience, and trust. The result is a clear, 2–3 year roadmap organized around **three priorities** that reflect the heart of St. James:

1. Deepen our relationship with **Jesus**
2. Deepen our relationships within the **Congregation**
3. Deepen our relationships within the **Neighborhood**

Church Council has approved this plan. It is intentionally crafted as a **living document**, grounded in our passions and designed to make room for ministry leaders and teams to propose, pilot, and refine the specific actions that bring these objectives to life.

Now comes the joyful work of participation. I invite you to **prayerfully review** the plan and listen for where the Holy Spirit is nudging you to grow and serve. Then, please join one of our three Ministry Teams aligned to these priorities and offer your time and talents.

I'm deeply grateful for the dedication of our **LEAD Team** and for the wise guidance of **Deacon Peggy Hahn**, who helped us translate insight into an actionable path forward. Thank you, too, for your trust and support throughout this season of discernment.

Together, and by God's grace, this plan will strengthen our connections—to Christ, to one another, and to our community—as we **step faithfully into the future**.

With gratitude and hope in Christ,

Pastor Amy

Our Purpose:

Growing Together, in Faith and Life.

At St. James, our baptism sets us on a lifelong journey characterized by our relationships with God, our faith community, our neighbors, and the wider world. Our baptismal covenant means living a life, **growing in faith**.

Our Priorities:

Deepen our Relationships with...

As we shape this culture, we have identified three priorities, each supported by clear **objectives to guide us into the future**. These are grounded in faith and trust that God is leading the way. They uphold our values, strengthen our Lutheran theological foundations, affirm our Baptismal promises, and foster a welcoming environment for people of all ages.

JESUS

This is a call for every member to engage in **prayer, study, and worship** with renewed intent in order to listen for God's grounding voice for our lives of faith.

CONGREGATION

This is an invitation to strengthen our **care for one another**, to encourage meaningful connections, and to welcome all people into God's belonging.

NEIGHBORHOOD

This is an intentional commitment to strengthen our relationships with the people and organizations in **our surrounding communities**.

From Laurie Whisler, Council President

Here we are 20 months after the start of the LEAD process. Our LEAD Team has done an outstanding and thorough job of listening not only to our congregation but also to our community and beyond.

The recommendations have been thoughtfully reviewed by the Council, and we have a lot of work to do. We are already getting geared up. There have been foundational changes in staffing to support our current ministries, as well as organizational changes within our Committees to improve communication and the sharing of work. Thinking caps are on, and logistics are being discussed.

When reviewing these recommendations, remember that the goal of any individual in a group is to "come to the table expecting to have their mind changed." It is our turn to listen and come together.

Keep in mind that this is not perfect, but nothing in life is perfect, except God's plan for us. It's time to roll up our sleeves and help St. James move forward.

Yours in Christ, *Laurie Whisler*

Our Strategic Objectives:

Priority #1: Deepen our Relationship WITH **JESUS**

Objective 1:

Expand worship life to include alternative worship opportunities.

Objective 2:

Experiment with various ways to enhance and share the faith.

Objective 3:

Nurture theologically growing leaders & encourage relationships across differences.

Priority #2: Deepen our Relationships WITHIN THE **CONGREGATION**

Objective 4:

Help our people connect relationally.

Objective 5:

Address staffing needs to develop a Youth and Family Ministry.

Objective 6:

Intentionally design spaces to foster connections.

Goal #3: Deepen our Relationships WITHIN THE **NEIGHBORHOOD**

Objective 7:

Implement a more focused approach to address food and housing insecurity.

Objective 8:

Strengthen ministry partnerships with Sagrado Corazón and other churches.

Objective 9:

Sponsor community events and educational forums.

How is the Holy Spirit nudging you to grow & serve?

GROWING TOGETHER

We are committed to bring these objectives to life. Our ministry teams are meeting to develop SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely) goals, in partnership with our church Council and supported by our LEAD mentors.

We invite you to discover where God may be leading you to become invested. Is it to foster personal growth in one or more of these areas? To help minister to others? How will you participate in "Growing Together, in Faith and Life"? **Please contact the team leaders to learn about ways to get involved:**



JESUS

Marilyn Koepke & Shelly Holmstrom

discipleship@stjameslutheran.org

Ministries & Committees on this team include: Altar Guild, Christian Education, Memorial Garden, Prayer, Worship & Music



CONGREGATION

Melinda Voelcker & Dave Moore

connect@stjameslutheran.org

Ministries & Committees on this team include: Evangelism, Fellowship, Health & Safety, Hospitality, MaTch, Men of St. James, Small Groups, Stewardship, Women of St. James



NEIGHBORHOOD

Alane Wanda & Tom Meyer

outreach@stjameslutheran.org

Ministries & Committees on this team include: Social Ministry Outreach (i.e. ProjectFRESH, COOL Ministries, Sagrado Corazon, etc.) and Sewing Group.

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