



We believe we are led by the Holy Spirit, called to carry on the sacred work of building a vital, vibrant, and engaging beacon of hope.

After eight months of prayer, asking, seeking, sharing, and listening, it is now clear, our baptismal response to defy the decline of Christianity.

Our Strategic Planning Team, under the leadership of Heather Barlow, David Whitted, and Michael Gulland, combed through the extensive parish-wide survey results (Holy Cow: Congregational Assessment Tool), collected annual meeting's dream cards (your and God's dreams for St. Thomas), and our CORE values affirmed by near unanimous consent.

In August, the vestry adopted the 2023 Strategic Plan: a response to God calling us into faithful action.

**Specifically:**

Greater Inclusivity  
Greater Community Impact  
Greater Spiritual Growth

We invite you to explore our summary of the strategic plan.

Within each is a call to action, and a few examples, acknowledging that each is intertwined.



St. Thomas Episcopal Church

## Greater Inclusivity

### Outreach:

- Deepen relationships. Foster the gift of empathy.
- Connect each member of the church with opportunities to serve Christ.

### Invite, Welcome & Connect:

- Create a “safe faith home” for all.
- Seek out relationships to identified populations (military, LGBTQA+, elderly, young families, underserved populations, persons, and partners)
- Provide pro-active hospitality, informed by deepening relationships.
- Communicate the diversity and expansiveness of our community with images.

### Formation:

- Implement parish-wide Invite, Welcome and Connect curricula.
- Create Formation Curriculum Pathways, for each generation to be disciples of Christ.
- Enable our Campus to support the mission and vision seven days a week.
- Dedicate space for Middle School age youth.

## Greater Community Impact

### Outreach:

- Launch a new, strategic community partnership with Agape Feast (Chesapeake).
- Establish LGBTQA+ friends and family ministry, be an ally and advocate on and off campus.
- Intentionally reach out and engage military community
- Better understand our role and respond to the broader community in times of crisis.

### Invite, Welcome & Connect:

- Expand “Building Bridges” programming and offerings.
- Train and equip 50% of the parish in Invite, Welcome and Connect training modules
- Build bridges with specific populations: military persons and families, parents with young children, youth, adult singles, and elderly populations.
- Intentionally connect all communication channels.

### Formation:

- Weave Scripture, Tradition and Reason through all formation offerings, worship, and outreach.
- Revitalize children and youth music ministry.

## Greater Spiritual Growth

### Outreach:

- Achieve full annual tithe to the diocese by 2026
- Achieve 10% annual outreach funding to partners by 2026.
- Celebrate to each other’s stories & tell our stories.
- Seek out partners and send mission teams locally, domestically, and globally.
- Expand pastoral care team and ministries, serving on and off campus.

### Invite, Welcome & Connect:

- Engage parish in shared fellowship.
- Offer regular anti-racism training: in-line with the diocesan mandates.
- Be the hands and feet of Christ in times of need.

### Formation:

- Fix our income problem. Teach the spiritual gifts to tithing.
- Enhance parish wide biblical literacy.
- Reclaim the power of retreats.
- Engage visitors and members with intentional Episcopal formation.



## CALL TO ACTION:

"We can see clearly now" that God is calling us, to a faithful life of action.

Let's take two steps together, as one body of Christ.

### First: Fix our income problem.

Please use the PLEDGE card attached and submit your anticipated financial offering to God and the church.

Prayerfully walk with Christ, trusting God to bless you seven-fold, as you deepen your relationship with God, by walking towards at spiritual tithe. The key is to take a step. Not everyone can even imagine giving 10% to God and the church. It remains our goal as followers of Jesus Christ to seek to do so. Your letter provided a confidential invitation to do just this – one step closer to Christ with your pledge.

### Second: Connect.

Please use the CONNECT link attached and submit online to indicate areas of ministry for you to be connected. There is one card for each adult in your household.

Our baptismal covenant commits us all to put our faith into action. St. Thomas currently offers a host of opportunities for you to participate and practice – to try on. If you are already engaging in a ministry, check that box and try on another box. If it has been a while since you gave your time and talents, check a box or two or three. We will be in touch in response to what you indicate and welcome you into a deeper relationship with Christ.



### Mission:

STEC is a diverse community that seeks unity with God and each other in Christ.

### Vision:

STEC is a congregation living our faith through corporate worship, lifelong education, and loving service.

