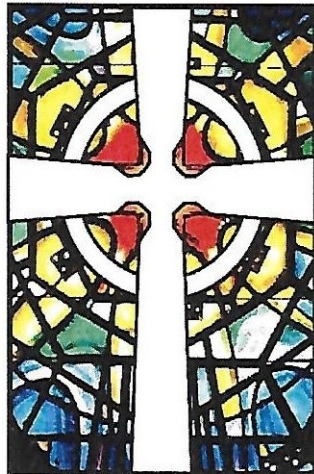


Saint Thomas Episcopal Church Chesapeake, Virginia

Strategic Plan, August 2023



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.***

St. Thomas Episcopal Church
Report and Recommendations of the Strategic Planning Team

STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Planning Team (SPT) at St. Thomas Episcopal Church (STEC) has undertaken a comprehensive approach to identify key areas of focus within the Church community. This integrated Report combines the findings and recommendations from three separate teams: the Outreach Subcommittee, the Recruitment/Retention Subcommittee, and the Formation Subcommittee. Each subcommittee worked diligently to identify specific challenges and opportunities within their respective areas and has proposed actionable, obtainable recommendations to strengthen and expand STEC's impact in these various areas. Given the current climate of energetic and exciting growth that the Church is experiencing, and cognizant that a Report that plans too far into the future may become moot, the SPT recommends that the Vestry implement the recommendations that follow over the next eighteen months.

An introduction to the work of each subcommittee follows:

- **Outreach:** STEC's commitment to a robust outreach program is evident through the Holy Cow survey results, valuable input from parishioners' dream cards, and alignment with the Church's core values. The survey revealed that two of the top five priorities centered on outreach initiatives, with an emphasis on expanding services to those in need and providing healing to the broken. Additionally, the dream cards submitted by parishioners consistently emphasized efforts involving food banks, shelters, and marginalized communities.

To develop its recommendations, the Outreach Subcommittee engaged with past and present members in outreach leadership positions to understand the history and current state of the Church's efforts. The subcommittee also researched faith-based and community outreach entities in the Great Bridge community to identify potential collaboration opportunities and unmet outreach needs. The recommendations focus on enhancing existing outreach efforts while also considering partnerships with like-minded organizations, including Agape Feast and pro-LGBTQ+ groups.

- **Recruitment/Retention:** The Recruitment/Retention Subcommittee recognized the importance of retaining current Church members and attracting new individuals to foster a thriving and growing church community. Through surveys and dream cards, it gained insights into the aspirations and needs of the congregation, particularly in improving the welcoming atmosphere and expanding the Church's local presence.

Efforts undertaken by the subcommittee involved analyzing the current state of STEC's Recruitment/Retention initiatives and engaging with members involved in these activities to understand their historical context and existing status. The subsequent findings and

recommendations aim to address the challenges faced by underrepresented and marginalized groups while creating a more inclusive and engaging environment.

- Formation: The Formation Subcommittee placed a strong emphasis on lifelong growth in the knowledge, service, and love of God, following the Episcopal Church's definition of formation. This aspect was identified as one of the SPT's three major foci with survey results and dream cards confirming the significance of STEC's formation programming.

The Formation Subcommittee conducted in-depth meetings with various Church groups involved in formation activities to understand their needs and contributions. This information formed the basis for recommendations which primarily focus on enhancing faith-based education opportunities to fulfill the mission and vision of STEC.

In summary, this Report presents a holistic overview of STEC's efforts in outreach, recruitment/retention, and formation. By integrating the insights and recommendations from these three subcommittees, the Church can forge a path toward greater inclusivity, community impact, and spiritual growth.

OUTREACH SUBCOMMITTEE

The Outreach Subcommittee (OSC) observed that STEC's desire to promote a robust and successful outreach program is illustrated by the Holy Cow survey results, input from parishioners' dream cards, and reflected in the Church's core values. This section outlines the strategies and recommendations to achieve these goals effectively.

Outreach Background

Members who have previously and currently serve in STEC outreach leadership positions saw potential for improvement in outreach efforts but also cautioned that any actions not interfere with the existing success. They suggested that future STEC annual budgets contain line-item funding for outreach as they historically had but do not at present. Further, these members indicated that current activities, while successful, could likely be improved by (1) better education about and promotion of available outreach opportunities and (2) ensuring a fresh corps of volunteers and leadership to would help ensure the outreach programs' livelihood.

The OSC learned that the core outreach efforts in which STEC currently participates include: Angel Tree, Buffalaw Food Pantry, Canterbury House at ODU, CAST, Chesapeake Care Clinic, Chesapeake We Care Resource Center, CHIP, LGBT Life Center Cook-In, Meals on Wheels, Red Cross Blood Drive, and Treakle Elementary School support. Please see Attachment A for a complete description of each of these causes.

Outreach Recommendations

In light of its data collection regarding past and current outreach efforts, the OSC respectfully provides the following recommendations to the Vestry: (1) continue and improve the success of current STEC outreach efforts as outlined below; and (2) expand outreach by exploring

partnerships with Agape Feast and the LGBTQ+ community with emphasis as STEC as a safe faith home.

1. Existing Outreach Efforts

The OSC recommends that the Vestry continue its support for all current outreach activities and take action to enhance them. First, these activities should receive funding allocation in future budgets. This will provide needed monies to carry out outreach work and obviate the need for Church members to incur personal costs that are more appropriately left to STEC as a whole. Second, the Church should undertake efforts to better educate STEC members of available opportunities and to recruit new volunteers thereby mitigating burnout. This could be accomplished through one or more of the following mediums:

- Informational pamphlets/STEC website: Creating a pamphlet that provides an overview and describes each outreach opportunity, lists the pertinent points-of-contact, and explains how members could get involved. Similarly, the STEC website page on outreach could be substantially updated to provide more thorough information on all outreach opportunities as well as phone or email data for appropriate points of contact.
- Outreach fair: STEC holding an annual fair where each outreach group would host an informational table/booth. The Church could add an incentive such as the provision of food to promote attendance at the fair which would ultimately result in more outreach volunteers.
- Vestry announcements: At the Vestry announcements directly preceding Sunday services, the speaker could provide pertinent information regarding upcoming outreach opportunities and needs.

2. Expansion into New Outreach Opportunities

To capitalize on STEC's current climate of growth and energy, the OSC considered opportunities to expand its outreach efforts. The OSC recommends partnering with existing, established local community groups whose purpose and philosophy are consistent with STEC's core values and mission and vision statements. In addition, given the large military population in Chesapeake, it may behoove STEC to explore initiating outreach efforts focused on Church and community veterans.

a. Agape Feast

Agape Feast is an interdenominational outreach entity established in April of 2020 that combats problems associated with homelessness within the Chesapeake community. It offers a litany of meaningful outreach opportunities consistent with the Church's core values as well as

specific aspirations put on parishioners' dream cards. Among other opportunities, Agape Feast's efforts include:

- Preparing and serving hot lunch for homeless persons and related opportunities to make sandwiches, cookies, soups, or dinners.
- Contributing to the "Plant a Row" Program (whereby gardeners donate one row of their yield to food closet).
- Raise One: A substantial team effort to raise one person out of homelessness; this requires several skills and a substantial time commitment.

The opportunities with Agape Feast are plentiful. Please see Attachment B for a more complete description of all the efforts and time commitments available with this entity.

b. LGBTQ+ Community Opportunities and Pride in the 'Peake

The OSC has learned through its work that some LGBTQ+ people have professed a difficulty connecting with a local faith community that will accept them for themselves. Extending STEC outreach to LGBTQ+ people is both consistent with the Church's core values and also presents an excellent opportunity to fill a gap in outreach opportunities in the local community. The OSC learned from Pride in the 'Peake, a local non-profit that focuses on supporting children and families in the LGBTQ+ community, that the following LGBTQ+ outreach opportunities exist:

- Providing a place for PFLAG and similarly designed support groups to hold meetings as none currently exists in Chesapeake. (PFLAG is the nation's largest organization dedicated to supporting, educating, and advocating for LGBTQ+ people. Its meetings are support-based and similar in design and purpose to Alcoholics Anonymous and other fellowship groups that STEC hosts on the Church campus.)
- Developing an internal STEC fellowship group for LGBTQ+ persons. Some of our current members could be approached to begin and host this group.
- Continuing to attend public, pro-LGBTQ+ events as STEC representatives to show the Church's support for this community.

Outreach Conclusion

The OSC respectfully suggests that the Vestry consider the following items:

1. Maintain the success of the current outreach activities by seeking to provide support but not unneeded change. Allocate funds for outreach activities as a line-item in

future STEC annual budgets as was done historically. Increase involvement in outreach by better educating STEC members on available opportunities and recruiting new volunteers to prevent burnout.

2. Explore partnering for outreach efforts with established groups such as Agape Feast and Pride in the 'Peake that share philosophies consistent with STEC's core values and mission/vision statements. Groups such as these offer the potential for a myriad of outreach activities.

RECRUITMENT/RETENTION SUBCOMMITTEE

The Recruitment!Retention Subcommittee (RRSC) has identified the need to focus on retaining current church members and recruiting new members. This section outlines the strategies and recommendations to achieve these goals effectively.

Recruitment/Retention Background

The decision to prioritize Recruitment/Retention stems from the recognition that a thriving and growing church community requires both retaining existing members and attracting new individuals. The subcommittee conducted surveys, collected dream cards, and identified core values to understand the aspirations and needs of the congregation. The RRSC analyzed the current state of STEC's Recruitment!Retention initiatives and coordinated with members involved in these efforts to understand the historical context and the existing status quo.

The survey results highlighted several areas of concern and opportunities for improvement related to Recruitment!Retention. Specific portions of the survey revealed challenges faced by underrepresented/marginalized groups, the need for a more welcoming atmosphere, and a desire to expand the church's presence in the local geographic area.

This analysis has laid the foundation for the following findings and recommendations:

Recruitment/Retention Recommendations

Based on its research and investigation, the RRSC respectfully suggests the Vestry take the following actions to promote and strengthen STEC's recruitment and retention:

- **Utilize the Invite, Welcome, Connect Approach:** Implement the "Invite, Welcome, Connect" strategy to improve the current Recruitment/Retention efforts. (This is an Episcopal Church-based plan that equips and empowers congregations and individuals to practice evangelism, hospitality, and connectedness.) Encourage existing members to invite others, create a warm and inclusive welcoming experience for newcomers, and foster connections within the community.
- **Welcoming Underrepresented/Marginalized Groups:** Take proactive steps to ensure that underrepresented and marginalized groups feel welcome and included within the Church

community. Create targeted initiatives and programs to address their unique needs and perspectives.

- Enhance Signage and Social Media Presence: Improve the visibility of the Church by enhancing signage both outside and inside the building, including welcoming signage and directional signage to guide visitors. Create a video tour of the church to be posted on the STEC website and update the current website to make it more intuitive and informative.
- Training for Greeters and Ushers: Provide comprehensive training for greeters and ushers to ensure they have the necessary skills to create a warm and inviting atmosphere. This training should focus on hospitality, empathy, and effective communication.
- Add Fun Events and Post-Service Activities: Increase engagement and connection by adding fun events to the church calendar. These activities can provide opportunities for parishioners and visitors to socialize, connect, and deepen their relationships within the community.
- Allocate a Budget Line-Item for Recruitment/Retention: Consider including a dedicated line-item in the budget specifically allocated for Recruitment/Retention activities. This will provide the necessary resources and financial support to implement and sustain effective strategies.
- Military Neteran Efforts: Given the large military presence in Chesapeake and more broadly in the Hampton Roads area, STEC should be more intentional about welcoming and inviting active duty military families and veterans of the armed services to STEC.

The RRSC recognizes that successful recruiting/retention efforts will necessarily overlap with formation and outreach endeavors. Along those lines, the RRSC suggests the Vestry consider the following actions to bolster existing outreach activities that are closely aligned both with RRSC but also outreach and formation:

- Maintain Outreach Efforts: Continue all existing outreach initiatives to engage the broader community and invite it to participate in the Church's activities.
- Increase Awareness and Involvement: Increase awareness among current members about the various opportunities available for further involvement in church activities. Develop a pamphlet that describes each opportunity, lists relevant skill sets, identifies points of contact, and explains how to get involved. Organize a ministry fair where each effort/opportunity has a table/booth *with* detailed information.

- Improve Communication in Narthex: Create a display in the narthex area that provides overviews of different ministry opportunities. This will serve as a visual reminder and encourage members to explore various involvement options.

Recruitment/Retention Conclusion

To ensure effective Recruitment/Retention strategies, it is essential to establish a budget line-item for these activities. While it is crucial to enhance and improve the current efforts, it is equally important not to disrupt successful aspects. Educating and recruiting STEC members into ministry efforts should be a priority, including training for ministry leaders and members. Setting goals for training percentages, such as Safe Church training, anti-racism training, and IWC training, can help create a more inclusive and knowledgeable community.

Other recommended actions include increasing signage around and inside the church, creating a primary "entryway" to welcome visitors, and enhancing off-campus visibility through branding and messaging. Partnerships within the local community should be fostered, and ongoing training should be provided for ministry leaders and members through the Invite, Welcome, Connect approach. Additionally, expanding extra-curricular/post-service activities and events, such as mom's groups, men's groups, parish retreats, and community concerts, can further engage and connect parishioners.

By implementing these strategies and recommendations, STEC can foster a vibrant, inclusive, and growing community, both retaining existing members and attracting new individuals to join the church.

FORMATION SUBCOMMITTEE

The Formation Subcommittee (FSC) recognizes that successful formation is necessary not only for the success of outreach and recruiting/retention (*i.e.*, the other two subcommittee foci), but also for that of STEC as a whole. This section outlines the strategies and recommendations to achieve the FSC's goals effectively.

Formation Background

The Episcopal Church defines formation as "lifelong growth in the knowledge, service, and love of God as followers of Christ... informed by Scripture, Tradition, and Reason." The Holy Cow survey results demonstrated that formation was important to STEC members via the educational index results, but the application was not particularly strong as indicated by the spiritual vitality index (which had the lowest percentage of any of our indexes at 26%). Further, parishioners' dream cards reflected that youth formation is strongly desired, and successful formation programming for all ages is essential for STEC to satisfy its mission and vision statements and to embody its core values.

Formation Recommendations

STEC's current formation offerings include opportunities for both youth and adults through programs such as Wired Word, Adult Book Study, Music, Episcopal 101, Confirm not Conform, Sunday School, Communion Recognition Classes, Lenten University, Summer Children's Chapel and EYC. Many of these initiatives were added in the last year and quickly became an integral formation offering, demonstrating STEC's desire for a robust selection of formation opportunities. A current list and description of all formation opportunities should be maintained on our website. Our current listing is incomplete.

To support and enhance existing offerings, the following is respectfully recommended to the Vestry:

- **Frequent Safe Church Training:** Conduct in-person annual or bi-annual Safe Church training and encourage all eligible adults to participate. Because many Episcopal/STEC programs and ministries require Safe Church-certified chaperones and adults, it is critical that the Church have a corps of certified volunteers to support these needs.
- **Fund formation priorities:** Each SPT subcommittee found that financial concerns and/or shortcomings created uncertainty for planning and hampered members' efforts. Once the Vestry identifies a priority it should ensure that a corresponding line-item appears in the budget.
- **Re-evaluate and prioritize the use of STEC's limited space (especially on Sundays):** It would be beneficial to study how to best use the available church space and prioritize accordingly. Pertinent observations and notes include:
 - o Holding Wired Word or Adult Sunday School in the parish hall makes awkward passage to, from, and through Taylor Hall, and the size of the group does not correspond to the room's size. Converting the old offices into usable rooms is one possible way to create more and a greater variety of space.
 - o Create a space for parents of Sunday School children to enjoy coffee, unstructured conversation, or quiet. Parents that currently drop their children off and depart STEC campus may remain on site with this option.
 - o Evaluate rooms for Sunday School to ensure welcoming and age-appropriate environments for all. Youth classrooms, and particularly the high school room, need to be refreshed.
 - o Continue Sunday adult offerings of Wired Word and Book Study but evaluate what spaces might be more appropriate for them.

- Sunday School and Youth: Under the excellent leadership of the current Sunday School coordinator, attendance has grown and offerings have expanded. The FSC's data collection, including discussion with current Sunday School teachers and High School youth, support the following actions to strengthen existing efforts:
 - o Inventory existing curriculums and supplies for Sunday School to determine - needed items versus those that should be disposed. The EYC may be willing to help with this process, as it can count toward volunteer hours, provide needed people power, and allow their valuable input.
 - o Coordinate curriculum/offerings with STEC liturgical practices to ensure they complement and support each other.
 - o Add an educational component to the High School Sunday School class, as high school students expressed a desire to have a more formal education component in addition to the fellowship opportunity currently offered on Sunday mornings.
 - o Continue Confirm not Conform classes as youth feedback was extremely positive about this offering.
 - o Refresh the pageant costumes. The Christmas pageant is attended not only by members of STEC but also broader members of the community who may be visiting STEC for the first time. Making a strong impression on these visitors could be beneficial for STEC.

- Opportunities for expansion: The FSC subcommittee identified several areas as ripe for expansion.
 - o Revive the JOY middle school youth group. (This requires having two dedicated Safe Church-trained adults.) While STEC's middle school age children often participate with the EYC group, having an age-specific group will give them their own program and also allow EYC to focus on the high school. This will ensure truly age-appropriate programs for our youth.
 - o Expand EYC/JOY offerings - STEC's EYC is consistently the best represented youth group at Diocesan youth gatherings and the children are hungry for more opportunities.
 - o Support the two newly-selected EYC leaders to the fullest extent possible. Both recently joined STEC and they will likely have fresh ideas and energy.

- o Directly involve the youth in Sunday morning worship via an annual youth-led service. The music director would welcome youth assistance to lead congregational gathering songs with voices and instruments throughout the year.
 - o Plan a low-cost mission trip in CONUS.
 - o Coordinate service opportunities with the STEC outreach personnel, as youth expressed a strong desire for more such endeavors.
- Adult Formation: Having various offerings for adults of all ages (singles, parents of youth, or retirees) will best allow STEC to fulfill the mission of "living our faith through lifelong education." The following is recommended to support adult formation opportunities:
 - Welcome parents of Sunday School children to stay on campus even if they do not attend a class; sometimes the most welcoming space is one where nothing is required. Experiment with promoting the chapel as available for silent prayer or meditation and creating a different space to have coffee and unstructured conversation. This may be attractive not only to parents but also to other adults who seek a quiet space. An added bonus could be that if these adults were Safe Church-trained, and in the habit of being on campus during the Sunday School hour, they might function as much needed substitute teachers on occasion.
 - Offer a Bible Study or class held other than on Sunday morning. The most obvious short-term possibility is to coordinate with the Children's Choir rehearsal.
 - Support daytime foyer and experiment with a midday Mass or Bible Study.
 - Continue serial offerings such as Lenten University and Episcopal 101 that utilize a limited number of sessions outside regular formation hour.
 - Note there are no current offerings specifically for young adults. This age group had the lowest participation in our Holy Cow Survey and is least represented in our findings.
 - Music: Music has historically been an integral part of formation at STEC through educating adults on liturgy and Christian music traditions, to including our children in worship services, teaching a "Hymn of the month," and creating strong community connections. To build on STEC's current music program the following is recommended:

- Revive the Children's Choir. This was one of STEC's most successful programs pre-pandemic, and many of our active youth attribute their love of Church to their participation in Children's Choir when they were younger. By learning music appropriate for the liturgical year, children expand their knowledge of not only music but also liturgy, community and faith. STEC's music director has suggested scheduling a weekly 50- 60 minute rehearsal targeting 3rd to 8th grade students with a goal to vest and sing in a service four times per year.
- Formalize the string program. STEC has a wealth of string players ranging in ability from beginning to semi-professional, and the music director asked two current STEC families to formalize a string program that can nurture children, enhance worship, and attract other musicians from the community. A bi-monthly rehearsal schedule will likely commence in September of 2023, and this program may eventually look for ways to serve outside the parish by visiting nursing homes or other churches.

Formation Conclusion

STEC should strive to ensure all ages and stages of its membership have appropriate formation opportunities, and some of these programs will need a budget line-item to be successful. To maximize efficiency and strengthen the offering, formation programming should coordinate with outreach and other committees where the mission overlaps. In order for youth-based programming to succeed there must be more Safe Church-trained adults to both expand programming and to ensure current leaders do not burnout. Further, successful implementation of the recommendations in this Report lays the groundwork for longer term visions expressed by the focus groups: hiring a youth pastor, an international mission trip, and youth participation in Province and National Church gatherings such as the acolyte festival.

STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM CONCLUSION

STEC has undergone much positive growth and change in the year leading up to this Report. While a boon for the Church and community, it has presented challenges with regard to creating a timely and relevant plan that does not too quickly become moot. Notwithstanding this phenomenon, the SPT believes that this Report outlines an effective eighteen-month strategy that will facilitate STEC's development, foster the Church's mission and vision, and execute STEC's core values.

The Vestry is respectfully directed to each subcommittee section above for specific recommendations from each of those groups, and the SPT observes that some themes and principles overlap and transcend any one subcommittee. Three critical elements, or

considerations, can be extracted from the SPT's work at a high level: (1) expanding participation amongst all members, (2) stating and explaining Church leadership decision-making to members, and (3) having safe, functioning Church space in which activities can be held. These are discussed below.

First, during data gathering and investigation, each subcommittee found there exists a shortage of needed volunteers. Adding programming without adequate personnel results in member frustration and burnout amongst our most active volunteers, and ultimately leads to program decline or failure. A tangible and justifiable resentment amongst parishioners who are repeatedly asked to volunteer their time currently exists and is perceived as growing. It is therefore imperative that STEC seek to expand its lay participation in all its programming, while not alienating those who have brought about the success that these efforts have achieved to date. The focus must be on expanding the circle of membership, *i.e.*, broadening the pool of volunteers, rather than merely expelling the current corps and moving the circle to another group of parishioners. Achieving this will require a delicate and deliberative process by the Vestry.

An important caveat: as this circle continues to expand, making STEC a more diverse and inclusive congregation, it is critical the Church remain apolitical and divorced from partisan politics. While some of the efforts and causes discussed in this Report may be commonly associated with certain political groups, STEC must avoid even the appearance of endorsing specific candidates, groups, or parties - or otherwise risk understandable and inevitable distancing by current and/or respective members. Accordingly, the Church should exercise thought and caution regarding the signage, display of flags, *etc.*, on and around Church space; while well-intentioned messaging may attract some people, it can simultaneously ostracize and drive others away, thereby foiling and defeating the very efforts to welcome. Put simply, STEC should not run afoul of its own core values by attempting to attract some people in an improper manner that drives others away.¹

Second, Holy Cow survey results labelled -STEC as a "MAGI" church (page 15) which indicates that it is progressive and adaptable. While STEC therefore "embraces meaningful change," members may also tend to analyze and seek the reasoning underlying important decision-making (as they should). Accordingly, the Vestry should not only ensure that changes themselves are announced to parishioners, but also that such changes are clearly explained to Church membership prior to implementation. (In this context, the SPT refers not only to changes

¹ STEC is the only centrally located Episcopal Church in the City of Chesapeake. This is notable because Chesapeake is the third largest city in the Commonwealth. There is an Anglican and an Anglo-Catholic Church with in city limits, but STEC is the most centrally located, and it is the only *via media* congregation. As such, STEC has attracted people from all walks of life and from varied social and political identities who may already identify as Episcopalian or be looking for that "middle way" between Protestant and Catholic services or "high" and "low" church. One of STEC's strengths has been its ability to create a community with people who might otherwise never cross paths and to draw membership from each of Chesapeake's boroughs and beyond. Creating a space where all are welcome requires a thoughtful balance.

brought about as part of this Report, but more broadly to include decisions by the clergy and lay leadership that affect things such as layout and use of physical space, incorporation of music during services, *etc.*) Merely announcing something but failing to expound upon the reasoning leaves membership confused, frustrated, and alienated.

Third, all of the recommendations in this Report are premised on the pre-requisite that the STEC physical facilities are safe, functioning, and can support the various activities contemplated herein. Financial health and the Church's ability to maintain the building and grounds, while not featured prominently in the Holy Cow survey and/or dream cards, are necessary for the success of outreach, recruiting/retention, and formation. Accordingly, while advising specifically on this matter is beyond the scope of the SPT and best left to the Vestry (and other STEC committees), the SPT notes that proper attention to this topic is paramount for the execution of this Report's recommendations.

In closing, the SPT has been honored to carry out the work that forms the basis of this Report. To continue the healthy growth and introspective momentum that STEC has achieved, the SPT recommends an annual mutual ministry be implemented going forward and that a new Holy Cow survey be conducted in another eighteen months (*i.e.*, in or about February 2025). Results from these efforts will provide data points to review progress, reflect congregational goals, clarify objectives, and identify what changes will lead to more effective ministry. As STEC continues to grow and expand both in membership and ministries, these tools will ensure that the Church's efforts reflect the will of the current congregation, that parish resources are being utilized appropriately, and ensure that STEC remains on its current energetic and robust path of revitalization and expansion.

Respectfully submitted,

St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Strategic Planning Team

Heather Barlow, Co-Chairperson
Michael Gulland, Co-Chairperson
David Whitted, Co-Chairperson

Grayson Biscotti
Debbie Gunderson
Myra Jacques
Paulette Lassiter
Beth Lunde
Maryellen Remich
Thomas Sunderland
Michele Weigle
Bob Whitehouse

Attachment A

Current STEC Outreach Efforts

Angel Tree - Each Christmas parishioners buy gifts for families/individuals in need. Many of these names come from organizations such as Treakle Elementary, CAST, Chesapeake Care Clinic and Newboms in Need.

Buffalow Food Pantry- Parishioners donate food, coats, and household items for the Buffalow Family Ministry weekly.

Canterbury House at ODU- St. Thomas has donated funds to the campus ministry in the past.

Chesapeake Area Shelter Team (CAST)- STEC assists housing homeless individuals for one week. Parishioners donate food, personal clothing, and other items needed for the guests. Parishioners/Nolunteers ride the bus to pick-up guests and bring them to the host church, prepare meals, help with serving food, chaperone overnight guests at the church, and help clean-up the church in the morning. Volunteers/Parishioners ride the bus to return guests to the drop off site.

Chesapeake Care Clinic- The Chesapeake Care Clinic provides quality medical and dental care to the low-income and underinsured residents of Hampton Roads. Parishioners volunteer at the care clinic. In addition, the Clinic has been a recipient of donations through the STEC Angel Tree. Pre-COVID parishioners have attended a fundraiser for the Chesapeake Care Clinic.

Chesapeake We Care Resource Center- A Homeless Resource Center open 9 am- 5 pm Monday-Friday. It provides showers, laundry facilities, a meal, computer access, housing application assistance, employment search assistance, and other services for the homeless. Parishioners have donated sandwiches through the sandwich ministry and bus passes through extra outreach funds.

Children Health Investment Program (CIDP)- CHIP provides services in South Hampton Roads for children through age six and expectant mothers in the focus areas of health improvement, school readiness, and self-sufficiency. It offers parent education as well as a nurse to help with maternal health before and after the delivery of a child. It follows mothers with high blood pressure - offering a nurse on-call and blood pressure monitors. It plans on renovating its location to include a community center once funds are raised. An annual baby shower is held to help the organization with its Sleep Tight program as well as providing items for babies, such as diapers and clothing.

LGBT Life Center cook-in - Parishioners donate food and volunteers prepare 100 meals each month for anyone in need.

Meals on Wheels- Parishioners/Nolunteers spend two-four midday hours a month. They meet at Chesapeake Regional on the fourth and fifth Thursday of each month, pick up prepackaged meals, and distribute them on a regular route to elderly/disabled recipients in Chesapeake.

Red Cross Blood Drive Held at St. Thomas- A Blood Drive is held once a month except for June. ParishionersNolunteers donate blood and help with registration and hospitality.

Treakle Elementary - A Partner School. Parishioners provide school supplies/items needed at the school. In addition, the parish supports families as needed (in the past a family had a house fire, donations were collected for the family). The EYC raised enough funds to sponsor three families this past Christmas. In addition, Vacation Bible School collects items for the school. STEC invites Treakle students to VBS for free.

STEC also provides a gathering place for Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon and Scouts.

Attachment B

AGAPE FEAST VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

(all volunteer opportunities must be scheduled in advance by calling Sandy@ 757-547-2151-
Please leave a message ifl can't answer at the time you call. You can also email
agapefeastmeals@gmail.com)

All volunteers must be 18 or older.

Cafe Volunteer: Monday, Wednesday and Friday we serve lunch to people who are currently experiencing homelessness in the City of Chesapeake.

Time: 11:15am-1:15pm

Feeding Location: The We Care Resource Center

1468 S. Military Highway

Chesapeake, Va 23320

(Located at the back of the Chesapeake Redevelopment and Housing Authority Bldg)

Story Writer: A person who would interview our volunteers, possible highlight one a month and/or an individual we serve to see what they like about what we are trying to do in the community.

News Letter/ Bulletin Team: May be the same person as the story writer. Someone who can put together a newsletter each month with much of the same information, but new statistics and one new story attached. Also, someone who could make church bulletin announcements to go in various churches bulletins to let their parishioners know of current needs we have.

Application & Forms Volunteer: This position does require the volunteer going through a background check with the City of Chesapeake. Duties would include sitting down with individuals we serve that are currently experiencing homelessness in Chesapeake and helping them fill out forms and applications. This volunteer opportunity is located at the We Care Resource Center at 1468 S. Military Highway, Chesapeake, Va 23320. You would be assisting the caseworkers at the center.

Soup/ Hot Dish Maker Volunteer: Do you like to cook for a crowd? We help provide most of what you need to make a delicious and nutritious foil pan (enough to currently serve 30 people).

You schedule a time to pick up the ingredients, the tin foil pan. You take the items home. Make the hot dish or soup the day before and then deliver it to the door of the We Care Resource Center on the day you are scheduled to deliver and then you drive away. It's that simple!

Community Events Coordinator: Help the Director of Agape Feast coordinate some upcoming community events. MUST BE ORGANIZED and VERY MUCH A PEOPLE PERSON. Looking at 2 events per year.

Sandwich Makers: SO SIMPLEIf you can make 10 meat and cheese sandwiches (preferably turkey or chicken cold-cuts), than we have the opportunity for you! You make the sandwiches in the comfort of your own home. We ask that you do not put anything on the sandwiches other than the meat and cheese. We provide mayo and mustard packs to the folks we serve so they can choose for themselves. You do have to have a drop off date and time scheduled in advance. We DO NOT take sandwiches that just get dropped off without. Making sure we avoid waste.

Cookie Bakers: We like to include in the sandwich bags we give out homemade cookies. If you are interested in making some please let us know and I will give your information to our lead and she can schedule your donation. We do not take cookies that have not been scheduled. We want to avoid waste.

Donation log keeper: Needing a person who would be able to be the point of contact for our volunteers to report donations to. This person would keep a written log and just drop off the log sheet each month to the Director of Agape Feast. This could be done from their home.

Volunteer Appreciation Team: Looking for folks who like to help plan and run picnics and BBQ's. Would like to be able to get volunteers together once or twice a year, as a group, to celebrate their time and talent!

Statistics Volunteer: Looking for a person who is familiar with excel and could keep a running tally of the things we do. This person would be inContact with our leads of the various programs we run to keep track of their monthly statistics. This can be done from your house. Must have excel and phone.

Training Tracker: This person would be the point of contact to ensure that our volunteers have completed any training that may come up through the year. They do not have to provide the training, but just keep in contact with the list of folks taking different training and ensuring that the volunteers turn in completion certificates to them.

Special Donation Coordinator: This volunteer would help with donation asks from specific churches for items like sneakers, jeans, shorts, t-shirts, etc. These items are considered special donations, because we would have one church at a time donate the item that we currently are in need of to ensure we don't wind up with way more of that specific item than we can handle.

Community In Kind Donation Cart Coordinator: We are blessed to have in kind donors in our city and the surrounding cities that generously give on a consistent basis. This person would stay in touch with these partners and share our thanks and also keep these donors up to date on how their donations are benefitting the people we serve. They also would help schedule our donation carts out to the businesses, civic groups, clubs and so on.

Volunteer Drivers: These volunteers will help of pick up and drop off of the following type of items: food bank run, produce donation run, help picking up furniture and dropping it off at our storage location (furniture used when people we serve move into an apartment), dropping off donation carts in the community, picking up donated items from local donors. (**You are using your own vehicle insurance and health insurance if you have an accident while volunteer driving. You are also donating the gas your vehicle uses and mileage.)

Raised Bed Garden Builders: This coming fall we will be building raised garden beds at Prince of Peace Catholic Church. Anyone who would like to help build these is most welcome!

Raise 1 Chesapeake Team Member: We started Raise 1 Chesapeake a year ago and have been able to help one person who was experiencing homelessness move from a life of rough sleeping and surviving unsheltered to an apartment that is fully furnished and stocked. More importantly this person has moved into a life filled with friends and community!

To volunteer for this you must absolutely be a person who will stay the course through thick and thin (not walk away when disagreements happen) with a person who may have had great trauma in their life, may have currently or had in the past alcohol or drug addiction, may have mental illness of varying degrees, may have a criminal record from lesser charges all the way up to felony charges. You must be a person of good moral character that can keep people's information and life history more than private and totally just amongst your team members. You are committing to weekly and sometimes daily contact with the person for at least a year (and hopefully more, since the person becomes really an extension of your family).

You help to drive the person to appointments, help with social services, obtaining food, clothing, hygiene items and much more. You are never alone with the individual and you work with other team members as you help the person move forward.

Movers and Shakers: This volunteer opportunity helps with obtaining furniture items that are needed to move into an apartment. They also clean apartments on the day of move in to ensure that kitchen cabinets, fridge and countertops are clean. That floors are clean. They help stock the food pantry and fridge with food items that are donated. They help clean all the dishes that are donated and put them away in the kitchen cabinets. Help set up bathrooms with donated supplies and shower curtains. Help vacuum the floors.

ATW4G Art Class (All Things Work 4 Good): You need NO ART experience or talent! If you can help pass out items and encourage people that they are doing a great job with their art project than this volunteer opportunity is for you.

The art classes are held at The We Care Resource Center at 1468 S. Military Highway, Chesapeake, Va 23320 (at the far back of the Chesapeake Redevelopment and Housing Authority Building) on the first and third Friday of each month. Volunteers show up at 11:15am and leave around 1:30PM.

Each week there is a different class taught. We are hoping to have an community art show at the end of this year that will highlight those we serve's work.

*****If you are an artist** and would like to teach a class please reach out and we can put you on the schedule to teach.

Parking Lot Food Distribution Team: We have teams of people who take two weeks at a time (just Tuesday and Thursday morning of the two weeks) and go to local parking lot areas where we distribute bags with sandwiches, fresh fruit, water bottles and bags with healthy shelf stable items, to each person we find either living in their vehicle or sleeping rough in Chesapeake. This requires a one time training class no more than two hours. All food and equipment are provided. After training you are assigned to a team and then teams meet at 6:15am on the day that they are scheduled to distribute. The teams do this year round. That means when it is still dark out, freezing cold with snow or raining. All team volunteers need to dress for the weather.

R2E Sneaker Cleaner Volunteer: We call this program R2E Sneakers because of the gospel story of the Road 2 Emmaus and the fact that none of us never know who we are walking with.

We gather donated gently used sneakers and clean them up (wash scrub and dry) for reuse by the individuals that we serve.

Sneaker are cleaned outside at Prince of Peace Catholic Church (POP).

Mercy Chef Culinary Class Helper: We are partnering with Mercy Chefs who agreed to teach a culinary class to give back of the house restaurant skills to those we serve. This is a six week class at The We Care Resource Center and some of the topics covered are: hygiene, food safety training, knife skills, etc. If you want to assist as someone to help handout items during the class please let us know.

Cake Decorating Class Helper: We have a local cake decorator that teaches those we serve cake decorating skills at the We Care Resource Center. Many of the large grocery stores in the area have cake decorating jobs open and we are trying to help our folks gain the skills they need to possibly be employed as a cake decorator. You do not need any cake decorating knowledge or skills to volunteer. We need volunteers to help pass out items and encourage the folks taking the class. The class is about one and a half hours long, one day a week for about 4 weeks at a time.

Agape Stockroom Helper at POP: We are always in need of volunteers to help on Wednesday and Thursday 9-11am and from 2-4pm Tuesday afternoons. You can pick just one day and time or you can do multiple days and times. This stockroom is located at Prince of Peace Catholic Church (621 Cedar Rd) in Chesapeake. Volunteers must contact the director each week to let her know that they will be attending and on what day(s).

Agape Stockroom Helper at We Care Resource Center: We are in need of a stockroom helper at the We Care Resource Center. The volunteer will be working with a lead at that stockroom on Wednesdays from 11am-1:30pm. Duties include: folding, marking sizes and handing out clothing and shoe to individuals we serve. Also, generally keeping the stockroom tidy. Volunteers must contact the lead each week to ensure we have coverage.

