

## **St. Michael's Church Strategic Plan**

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.*  
Matthew 5:6.

### **Mission Statement**

St Michael's Church is a congregation in the Anglican Diocese of South Carolina. Our mission is to "transform hearts through Jesus Christ." We are committed to the fulfillment of this mission by carrying the Gospel to our Homes, the Holy City, the Hurting Coast and the Hungering World.

### **Vision**

From its iconic presence on the peninsula of Charleston, we envision St. Michael's as a leading Gospel-centered church—reaching up in worship and making disciples who reach out in care for each other and for the Holy City, the Hurting Coast, and the Hungering World.

St. Michael's will be bursting at the seams with all generations filling pews and swelling youth classes and programs. Parishioners will include long-established families along with a steady energizing stream of newcomers. Compelling "front door" programs will draw people in, and activities that build deep Christ-centered relationships will keep them active and committed.

All of our services and programs will radiate warmth to participants of all generations, and we will engage people "where they are," as believers, non-believers, and questioners. Activities will be fun, some intending to periodically draw congregants together primarily to celebrate their unity, joy, and love for each other. We will make our campus more accessible. And we will explore expanding the campus through acquisition of additional space for multigenerational programming.

We will develop and follow a first-rate communications plan to keep parishioners aware of what is being accomplished in all program and mission fields. We will effectively use social media and other strategies to identify people newly arrived in Charleston and to introduce them to St. Michael's.

We will engage members in discipleship to deepen their walk with Christ, strengthen their relationships with each other, and prepare them to spread the Gospel to the ends of the Earth. We will call a steady stream of members into new leadership through task forces executing the strategic goals of the church. And our Vestry will be engaged, thoughtful, and knowledgeable stewards of our strategic vision and financial resources.

To secure the future of our church, we will build a substantial endowment, using planned giving and other appropriate strategies for growth.

### Goals<sup>1</sup>

- Family focus on worship, programs, and events
- Evaluate and provide facilities for future growth
- Secure the financial future of the church
- Grow the parish

### Strategies, Tactics, and Metrics

#### I. Family Focus on Worship, Programs, and Events

This means that St. Michael's will have programming that is readily accessible to all generations. It also means that we will make a concerted effort to bring the generations together to minister to each other, mentor each other, and build the church as a **family** of believers.

##### A. Strategies and Tactics

1. **Intergenerational Accessibility.** Programming that is accessible to all generations so that young and old know they have a place at St. Michael's and is informed by current best practices.
  - a. Every task force intentionally working to make their sphere intergenerational.
  - b. Make our strengths, like Mission and Healing Prayer, intergenerational to unleash the full potential of these already successful ministries and to pass them along to the next generation.
2. **Equipping Parents to Disciple the Next Generation.** Equipping our parents to disciple their children and develop a biblical worldview (as opposed to a secular / cultural

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<sup>1</sup> The goals are of equal importance and therefore are not ranked. The strategies and tactics are listed in rank order to provide a basis for prioritizing next steps.

worldview) because the family is the primary engine of effective discipleship.

- a. Creating intentional community of parents through small-group ministries in which parents hold each other accountable for discipleship in the home.
- b. Training parents to engage in family Bible study, apologetics, and worship in the home, as the primary behavioral markers of children likely to retain a strong Christian faith into adulthood.
- c. Reawakening parents to Sunday School and youth programs to serve as important adjuncts to family discipleship and places where youth can find Christian community.
- d. Survey parents in the church to determine areas where they feel ill-equipped to disciple children and program around those needs.
- e. Determine best practices for bringing families from the margins of church attendance into active discipleship.

3. **Emphasis on Family Friendliness.** Substantial emphasis on making St. Michael's a church that is as family friendly as any in Charleston.

- a. Making churchwide events truly family-friendly to draw in and retain a large population of families.
- b. Providing a clear, legible path to bring new / expecting parents into the family ministry and take them all the way through their children leaving for college.
- c. Focusing on youth / family leadership and participation in worship to train children in worship and reflect the intergenerational nature of the church.
- d. Exploring youth group partnership with missional organizations reaching unchurched / culturally Christian youth.

- e. Intentionally soliciting feedback after key events and debriefing on lessons learned.
- f. Learn what works at like parishes to improve engagement.

4. **Develop lay leadership in all generations.**

- a. Building up candidates for ordination to the priesthood and permanent diaconate so that we are continually sending members out to do important kingdom work and building up the global church.
- b. Providing training opportunities for lay members who want to advance in their faith without seeking ordination.

B. Metrics

1. Tracking attendance at all programs. Goal-setting once baseline is established.
2. Tracking attendance of families with children at key events. Goal-setting once baseline is established.
3. Tracking whether printed and/or digital deliverable that provides this family ministry pathway to families is distributed and remains up to date.
4. Annual family survey to track number and proportion of families engaging in family worship, Bible study, prayer, mission, and intentional community. Number and proportion should increase year over year.
5. Track number of parents reached through “equipping” ministries—parent-focused teachings, Moms groups, Dads groups, other targeted ministries. Key here is to confine this metric to ministries explicitly focused on equipping parents as parents and not allow ancillary ministries to be counted. For example, parents reading *Visionary Parenting* together counts; parents attending a Bible-focused Sunday School class does not.

6. Maintaining growing list of people in ordination pipeline from expression of interest to discernment to candidacy. A healthy metric would be 12 candidates a year in the pipeline.
7. Track post-confirmation outcomes. Goal to produce new leaders in confirmation and avoid attrition. More specific goal-setting once baselines are established.
8. Track children / family participation in mission. Goal-setting once baseline is established.
9. Track recruitment of under 50 y.o. prayer ministers. Goal of recruiting minimum of two per training opportunity.
10. Touchpoints for children & family ministry staff to ensure engagement in continuing ed and reporting to task force on new developments
11. Work toward goal of 4 youths serving at each 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. service w/o any family serving more than once a month

## II. Evaluate and Provide Facilities for Future Growth

This goal recognizes that our current facilities often impede our ability to grow and accomplish other strategic goals. Thus, this goal focusses on evaluating and upgrading the facilities that serve our strategic vision anticipating new needs that come with and facilitate growth.

### A. Strategies

1. **Evaluate and upgrade existing facilities to improve efficacy of ministry.**
  - a. Engage in a regular process of evaluating facilities so that we avoid “dead space” not being properly used and are aware of needs for potential acquisitions / renovations. Initial evaluation of “dead spaces” to be completed by July 31, 2023.
  - b. Provide better access to church facilities, through more convenient parking or other means that mitigate the parking barrier. Evaluation to be completed by July 31, 2024.

- c. Evaluate accessibility of facilities on campus and work to enhance for all generations. Accessibility evaluation to be completed by January 1, 2024.
- d. Upgraded nursery facilities to draw in and retain families with young children. Evaluation to be completed by July 31, 2023.
- e. Resource Center/bookstore/gathering place to better reach out to the community and to fill a vacancy in downtown Charleston with the imminent closure of the Catholic bookstore, recognizing that such a venture may be valuable without being formally profitable. Evaluation to be completed by January 1, 2024.

**2. Provide facilities needed for future growth.**

- a. Evaluating potential to acquire surrounding properties. Initial evaluation to be completed by January 1, 2024.
- b. Evaluate need for dedicated youth space to position youth group for growth in numbers and quality of programming. Evaluation to be completed by July 31, 2023.
- c. Playground/outdoor gathering space to draw in and retain families with children and allow for better “front door” and other gatherings for youth and adults. Evaluation to be completed by January 1, 2024.
- d. Work to secure gathering space for 30-50 people since that is a common gathering size for which current space is not optimal. We envision a church that is a comfortable social gathering place. Evaluation to be completed by January 1, 2024.
- e. Determine highest and best use of the Rectory property so that we are making the best use of our campus. Evaluation to be completed by January 1, 2024.

**B. Metrics**

Because these strategies are largely about studying the need for facility enhancement and providing options for the same, achieving the deadlines for

their accomplishments are the metrics. (While these are inherently flexible, they are intended to provide a target to keep these projects moving.) Later metrics related to decisions about changes once evaluations are completed will ultimately be needed.

1. Tracking progress on meeting evaluation deadlines.
2. By January 1, 2026, at least 50% of worship attendees utilizing valet or other accessible parking solution.

### III. Secure Financial Future of Church

The goal is building the financial structures to provide capital funds for necessary projects and ongoing long-term interest-based revenue. It also includes annually increasing financial support for operations. This document does not take a position on the precise structure or management of the fund or funds but leaves those questions to the discretion of the Vestry.

#### A. Strategies

1. **Build an endowment to provide long-term revenue.**
  - a. Create a permanent endowment. Evaluate status and management of the existing trust and relationship to any new endowment. Evaluation to be completed by July 1, 2022.
  - b. Develop and execute ongoing campaign to encourage and facilitate planned giving as the foundation on which endowments are typically built. Campaign to begin by July 1, 2022.
  - c. Strategic conversations with wealth managers to help them encourage parishioners to provide for St. Michael's. This should begin no later than January 1, 2024.
  - d. Explore potential for capital campaign to fund specific facility acquisitions or upgrades. This should begin no later than July 1, 2025, unless there is an opportunity that warrants a more immediate timeline.
2. **Improve annual revenue.**

- a. Grow number of giving units and amount pledged year over year.
  - b. Educate congregation and potential donors on structure and management of church accounts to demonstrate transparency and provide comfort that donated funds are well managed and spent
3. **Ensure alignment between strategic plan and budgetary priorities.**
- a. Vestry checks annual budget against strategic priorities before passing it.
  - b. Annual check of staffing levels and priorities against strategic priorities.

B. Metrics

- 1. Track number of giving units. A 2.5% year-over-year increase is good; a 5% increase is better; a 10% increase is best.
- 2. Track pledged and actual revenue. A 2.5% year-over-year increase is good; a 5% increase is better; a 10% increase is best.
- 3. Uncover planned gifts already pledged via establishment of a Legacy or Planned Giving committee. Goal-setting once baseline is established.
- 4. Achieve resolution on structure of endowment and relationship with current trust.
- 5. Additional metrics to be added when a capital campaign is conducted.



#### IV. Grow the Parish

This means making a concerted effort to increase both the size of the congregation and the proportion of congregants actively engaged in discipleship and ministry. We strive to create a parish-wide culture of hungering and thirsting to know God more clearly, love Him more dearly, and follow Him more nearly. This kind of culture will increase our ability to spread the Gospel to our Homes, the Holy City, the Hurting Coast, and the Hungering World.

##### A. Strategies

1. **Programming and activities aimed at improving retention of existing members.**
  - a. Active small groups with sufficient variability to cover all generations and sufficient quality to bring people from the front door into active discipleship. Small groups are a key engine of discipleship and should work to call people deeper into ministry. In addition, small group relationships are key to congregant retention.
  - b. Develop coherent marketing and social media strategy to improve quality of communications. High-quality, informative, on-brand communications will draw more people to St. Michael's and will avoid confusion that inhibits retention.
  - c. Determine best database / CRM program to enhance functionality of constituent tracking.
  - d. Provide cornerstone community events, such as parish-wide social events, parish retreats, and similar events that help members stay connected with their parish family.
  - e. Optimize task force structure and activities to regularly bring new people into leadership and increase congregational engagement. This includes providing clear "terms of service" for members to avoid boredom / burnout.
  - f. Determine and evaluate reasons for parishioner departures and disengagement so that they can be

addressed as inhibitors of growth by interviewing them.  
Report to Vestry semiannually analysis of attrition.

**2. Provide high-quality learning opportunities that foster a culture of and expectation of lifelong growth in discipleship and adapt to different methods of learning**

- a. Maintain biblically sound weekly teaching / small group opportunities for those who can attend on a set weekly night.
- b. Implement smaller-group methods of learning such as one-on-one spiritual direction or micro-groups that are not tied to meeting at the Church or on a set schedule.
- c. Source and provide portable growth options for people at each level of growth (e.g., lost, found, freed, formed, fulfilling), starting with options provided by ministries with which we have a connection, and effectively communicate those to the parish.
- d. Develop intensive learning opportunities for topics such as prophecy, contemplation, hearing the voice of God, and leadership, targeting these opportunities at people in leadership / ministry roles.
- e. Create a new norm of staff supported but lay led learning to support and foster teaching gifts within our parish.
- f. Prioritize space for discipleship on the church website via a specific GROW tab that links to how people visiting the website and plug into our discipleship ministry, starting with Alpha.
- g. Ensure effective communication of discipleship opportunities.

**3. Programming and activities aimed at reaching the unchurched in our community.**

- a. Construct high-quality “front door” events to draw new people into the church and to draw people from the margins deeper in. “Front door” events are events

expressly designed to be attractive to the unchurched and to marginal / cultural Christians, and should serve as good opportunities for members to invite friends and neighbors who are unlikely to come to an ordinary church service. Historic examples include the Easter Egg Hunt, the Christmas Pageant, The Gate, Sociable Saints, Prime Time, and special music performances.

- b. Revitalize introductory / seeker programs like Alpha to provide a pipeline of new believers into the congregation
- c. Create high-quality youth ministry to attract families and set up youth to be active Christians during a post-college
- d. Explore potential for an evening service that will grow parish.
- e. Explore options for Monday through Friday school-type programming (e.g., mother's morning out, after-school program, hosting or running a school) to attract more families to the church.
- f. Develop high-quality college ministry to build a pipeline of young adults coming into the church.

**4. Programming and activities aimed at attracting newcomers to Charleston.**

- a. Implement methodology for identifying and inviting newcomers to Charleston as a key demographic open to finding a new church.

**B. Metrics**

- 1. Achieve 75% of regular attendees involved in a small group ministry by January 1, 2026.
- 2. Achieve regular Sunday in-person attendance of 100 people at 8:00, 250 people at 9:00, and 400 people at 11:00.
- 3. Increase ASA to Membership ratio; specific goals to be established upon review of baseline data.

4. Track number of membership growth and attrition on an annual basis.
5. Track participation in discipleship opportunities. Goals to be determined once baselines are established.
6. Track return on outreach to new residents
7. Internally designating “front door” events and tracking newcomer attendance. Goal-setting once baselines established.
8. Initial evaluation of Monday through Friday school-type options to be completed by January 1, 2024.
9. Track recruitment of new task force members
10. Tracking completion of “exit interviews” following parishioner departures
11. Initial marketing and communications strategy, including recommendations on database / CRM products, to be completed by January 1, 2024.
12. Evaluation of evening service options to be completed by July 31, 2023.

## **Glossary**

**Goals.** A goal is what you’d like to accomplish. It’s the big idea. It presents itself a broad statement of what you hope to achieve.

**Strategies.** A strategy is an overall approach or method for attaining goals. Strategies define a general approach or method, whereas tactics describe specific activities (see below.)

**Tactics.** Tactics are specific activities that will be implemented to execute your strategies for attaining the goals. Tactics are actionable.

**Metrics.** Metrics are measurements are used to specifically define steps needed to accomplish the goals. They are used to determine progress as benchmarks in the tactics employed to achieve strategic goals.