



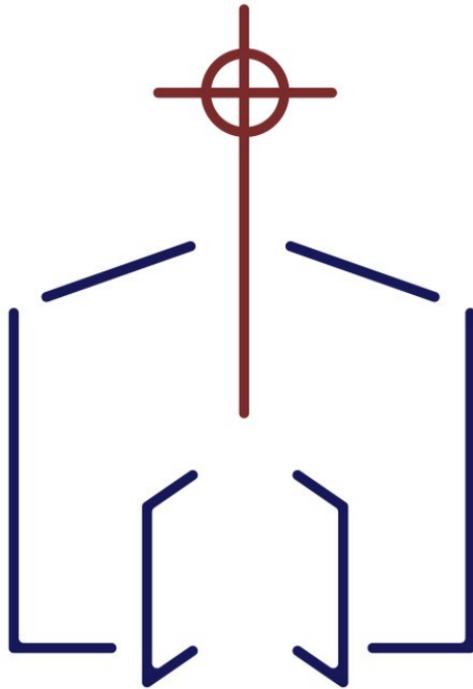
**CHURCH-WIDE
MINISTRY ASSESSMENT REPORT
FOR**

**St. Andrews
Presbyterian Church
Lebanon, PA**

MARCH 18-20, 2022

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St. Andrews Presbyterian Church

BACKGROUND

St. Andrews' Presbyterian Church is a historic congregation in Lebanon, PA. The church has a long and storied history since its beginnings in 1883, including a period when it was known in the community as the "Bethlehem Steel Church." Members describe their church as "family," "aging," and "searching for Identity."

The church began as a mission of Christ Presbyterian Church. The church entered its first permanent building in 1887. The congregation grew vibrantly in the first half of the 1900's. In 1959 the church moved into a new building and changed its name to St. Andrews Presbyterian Church.

The church has served the community in many ways and continues to serve the community. In the past, the church has provided space for a preschool education program. The church hosted a free noon meal once each month for over twenty years, and in 2015 began providing emergency overnight shelter for two weeks twice a year.

The membership of the church is around 240 and on an average week, 60 people attend the church's 10:00 AM blended service in-person while an additional 33 people attend the service online. Sunday School for all ages is offered at 9:00 AM and all in the congregation are invited to attend Coffee Hour Fellowship at 11:00 AM after the worship service.

The church expresses its mission in the following way: St. Andrews Presbyterian Church is a gathering of God's people following the call of Jesus Christ and moved by the Holy Spirit to praise God and grow in faith, welcoming and serving the greater community in God's love for the salvation of all people. The broad congregational goals identified and articulated by the

church leaders are meaningful worship, expanded children and youth programs, church-wide spiritual connections, and support and care for all the church family.

St. Andrews has a robust website, www.standrewslebanon.org, that is aesthetically pleasing, well-organized, and new-user-friendly. The church’s Facebook and Instagram pages display new posts on a frequent basis.

The church is led by the Session. The pastor serves as the moderator of the Session, which is comprised of 12 elders. The Session fills the responsibilities prescribed to it by the book of order of the PCUSA. The church is also served by a Board of Trustees that ensures the upkeep of the church’s buildings and grounds and a Board of Deacons who minister to the felt needs of the congregation.

The church is also served by clergy and staff. Pastor and Head of Staff Rev. Robin Morgan began her call at St. Andrews in January of 2015. The church staff also includes a youth director, office manager, music coordinator, contemporary music leader/digital communication specialist, media coordinator, organist, and a custodian.

The church has a 2022 budget of \$514,479 which is a \$27,000 increase over the previous annual budget.

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
Annual Budget	421K	462K	425K	420K	448K	454K	465K	449K	484K	487K
Average Attendance	155	158	143	148	143	142	138	140	NR	118*
Average Membership	370	359	324	325	287	268	256	264	260	240

Over the past decade, the church’s budget generally increased though there have been ebbs and flows and the increase has not been linear. Similarly, year-over-year worship attendance has not followed a linear pattern. The general trend in attendance overall has been declining numbers, but before the pandemic that decline was very gradual: an average of less than 2% annually. In contrast, membership numbers have experienced a fairly steady decline in the past decade, seeing a 35% total decrease in membership from 2012 through 2021.

The church’s facilities are sprawling, with an abundance of classroom and meeting spaces that have historically been shared between the church and outside organizations in need of a place to gather. The sanctuary, which features large glass windows that allow for a large amount of light to fill the room, has well-cared for padded pews and multiple entrances that lead you into various parts of the building.

Concerned about their declining attendance and in need of help discerning the call of the church in their next season of ministry, St. Andrews reached out to Ministry Architects to conduct an assessment and begin a two-year partnership together.

This process includes an initial assessment of the church’s ministries and making recommendations about how it might move forward strategically over the next 24 months. Ministry Architects met with 10 focus groups, totaling 70 people, and 14 others completed an assessment survey.



MINISTRY IN CONTEXT

One lens Ministry Architects likes to use for understanding ministry is the idea of the “three rents.” Churches that “pay these rents” with their ministry tend to have much greater freedom to be creative, take risks, and experiment with innovative ideas. Those churches that fail to pay these rents often find themselves mired in distrust, second-guessing, and discouragement.

It has been Ministry Architects’ experience that though these three rents, in and of themselves, do not ensure an effective or faithful ministry, they are often the most immediate evaluation tools used by youth, parents, staff, and the congregation at large.

Rent #1: NUMBERS—A significant percentage of people need to be participating visibly in some aspect of the church’s ministry. It is important for this target number to be clearly agreed on by the church leaders and the staff. Ironically, when target numbers are not established, the ministry is typically *more likely* to be judged by numbers than if the target numbers are clearly established.

The consensus is that this rent is not being paid. Beyond the fact that attendance is far lower than before the pandemic began, the congregation does not have a shared idea of what a vibrant participation number would be. There is no consensus on what level of participation the church should be targeting.

Rent #2: PROGRAMS—In order to “earn the right” to experiment with changes, the leadership needs to provide the church with a few visible, effective programs that give people “something to talk about.”

This rent appears to be unpaid. Although St. Andrews had several successful programs before the COVID-19 pandemic, the church has had a difficult time gaining traction with any programs in the past 12-24 months.

Rent #3: ENTHUSIASM—The joyful enthusiasm and positive attitude of the staff, volunteers, and the congregation themselves are essential to building trust in the church.

The mix of both anxiety and dedication from the congregation suggests that this rent is partially paid. Members are very nervous about their church, yet an incredible number of people participated in listening groups as part of this assessment process.

As the leadership of the church develops its long-range vision, it will need, at the same time, to be attentive to these “three rents.”

CHURCH NORMS

There are seven rules of thumb – “church norms” – that Ministry Architects has researched from consultant work across the country which will be helpful to keep in mind. These are not necessarily targets for success; they are simply what an average church typically experiences:

1) Budget —The average church budget settles around \$1400 per attender. With a budget of approximately \$514,479 (including program budget, staff salaries and benefits), St. Andrews has the capacity to effectively reach and maintain a weekly total worship attendance level of somewhere in the neighborhood of 367 attenders. With 93 currently attending every week, the ministry is experiencing the generosity of its congregation above most other churches of this size.

2) Staffing—We've found that most churches have the equivalent of 1 full time staff member (40 hours per week) for every 75 people in average total worship attendance.

Considering the average worship attendance of 93 and all the positions giving time to the church's ministry, including the following positions:

- pastor and head of staff
- youth director
- music coordinator
- contemporary music leader/digital communication specialist
- media coordinator
- organist
- office manager
- custodian

St. Andrews has the equivalent of four full time staff persons, or one for every 23 attenders. According to this rule of thumb, St. Andrews has the capacity to sustain the engagement of about 300 worship attenders on a weekly basis. The current staff configuration allows room for significant numerical growth.

Keep in mind that churches that are in an active growth season are typically staffed in the range of 86-100 average worship attenders (AWA) per full-time employee (FTE).

3) Payroll Percentage—In a typical church, the percentage of the budget that goes to support the staff of the church (including salaries, continuing education, and benefits) tends to fall in the range of 45-55%. St. Andrews budget of \$514,479 has \$321,129 dedicated to the staff of the church, about 63%.

4) Facilities—A church's ministry is also impacted by the physical layout of its campus and the constraints it may contain. Typically, parking and seating become constraints for churches who are looking to see growth. Consider the following norms:

- **Parking Spaces:** Most churches need *three parking spaces for every five attenders*. With 100 spaces available, the church has a capacity of 165 worship attenders in a single service.
- **Seating Capacity:** Most churches will simply stop growing once the worship center is 80% filled on a regular basis. With 333 total seats available, the church has an attendance capacity of 266 in a single service.

Given these norms, St. Andrews can expect to reach its capacity in the current 10:00 AM service structure at 165 people in weekend worship. Additional capacity can be created by first addressing the need for more parking spaces.

5) Visitors' Retention—For the average church, about 10-30% of first-time visitors will turn into regular attenders. Therefore, in order to grow by, say 10-30 people in a single year, the church will need to see about 100 first-time guests in that year (including guests at regular services and special services like Easter Sunday.) In the past year, St. Andrews saw an estimated 15 first-time visitors and could expect to see their church add 1-3 regular attenders in the coming year with healthy guest enrolling systems and opportunities.

6) Volunteers—In an average church, 45% of the number of weekend worship attenders (adults and students, but not children) are serving regularly in a volunteer role. With 78 total monthly volunteers in the church and an average worship attendance of 93, St. Andrews estimates that 84% of its weekend worship attenders are serving regularly.

This number seems to be tremendously above average for what normal churches experience on a weekly basis.

NOTE: Normally this number is correlated to the amount spent on staffing; the more staff a church has, the lower the volunteer percentage becomes as more of the work is accomplished by paid workers.

7) Involvement in Groups— While the data for what's *normal* for churches in group involvement is not available, there are some targets worth noting. It's been observed that healthy churches have at least 40-50% of their adult attendance in some form of small group. Great churches have upwards of 80% of their adults in groups.

These groups can include Sunday school classes, small groups, Bible studies, youth groups, or men's or women's groups with fewer than 25 people. St. Andrews estimates that 25% of their average adult worship attenders are engaged in groups on a regular basis. This number falls below the target for healthy churches.

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE STAFF

When a ministry is based solely on the giftedness of a pastor or staff person, instability is a predictable result. Ministry Architects has found that the most stable approach to staffing a ministry, particularly in the early stages of a rebuild, is to build a staff of three *different* kinds of people:

- **The Architect:** A person or group that designs the building plan and ensures that building is done in compliance with the agreed-upon plan.
- **The General Contractor:** A person or team who manages the flow and sequencing of work, manages the building process according to the agreed-upon blueprint, and ensures that the appropriate number of "laborers" is in place for each stage of the project.
- **The Laborers:** Those people charged with specific gifts and responsibilities for particular aspects of the work. In youth ministry, a laborer might have particular skills in relating to youth, in planning and managing events, or in teaching.

Each of these roles is important as St. Andrews pursues a more sustainable model of ministry. As the church moves forward, the following observations will be helpful to keep in mind:

- At St. Andrews, the Session serves as the architect, setting and stewarding the vision of the church.
- The pastor serves as a general contractor but at times takes on the tasks of a laborer.
- The youth director fills the role of both general contractor and laborer on a regular basis.

ASSETS

Strengths to protect in the current ministry

A Passion For Local Mission

This congregation's deep love for local mission and outreach came across in every listening group. As one congregant explained, "I feel like, as a church, there's a dominant attitude toward mission and all the colors that mission has. I just feel like, as a body, we have a high sensitivity to mission, a commitment to mission, and for me that is the thread through this whole thing." While other churches may look inward during a season of exploring their future, St. Andrews' congregation is committed to looking toward a continued presence in the community as a church that cares for others.

Our Supportive Senior Pastor

St. Andrews is blessed to have a caring and pastoral leader in Pastor Robin. Heads in the room nodded affirmingly when one member shared, "Pastor Robin's messages are so very personal. When she teaches, I feel like she cares about me." "I loved when Pastor Robin let us submit questions and she answered them in her sermons," shared another member. Though the last two years have seen a record number of clergy resign from their positions, Pastor Robin remains dedicated to the church and is a steady presence in the life of the congregation.

A History of Strong Music Ministry

The congregation of St. Andrews has fond memories of a time when their music ministry drew crowds to their musical events. "I'm excited to see our worship ministry begin to have life again," shared one congregant. The arrival of a new music leader, Johnathan Shuey, has ignited hope in the congregation. In the words of a church member, "Johnathan's ability to care for both traditional music and contemporary songs is truly a gift." Music on Sunday mornings is something that the congregation cares deeply for. "Our worship services have a new energy to them," shared a woman in one of the listening groups. She continued, "We're known in town for our music, and I'm delighted that we're moving into a time when I can eagerly invite my friends to worship with us on a Sunday morning. Our choir and praise team make me proud!"

Large Facilities

The campus and facilities of St. Andrews offer a great advantage to the church's ministry and programs. A beautiful sanctuary with padded pews, an abundance of classroom options, a sprawling underground section of the church, and dedicated spaces for children all contribute to this wonderful asset. One church member shared a dream she has of one day soon, hearing the rushing steps of children filling the hallways again. Another stakeholder shared excitedly, "Our facilities aren't just for us! We share them with the community and are always looking for new groups to share with. This building is a treasure to us that we love sharing with others." The building itself would be coveted by many churches across the country and is worth utilizing to its full potential.

Financially Strong

The financial stability of St. Andrews sets the church apart from others in the area. As one stakeholder said, "Finding funding for the church is not a problem." Another said, "We're fortunate financially. We have the resources to do what we need to do. I don't know of another church in such a strong financial position on this side of the last two years." Usually, during multiple focus groups and multiple one-on-one meetings, you would expect to hear people talk

about a lack of funding as a roadblock to achieving goals. In fact, not once in a listening group did someone mention lack of finances and resources as one of the challenges facing the church's ministries and that financial stability sets the church up to tackle problems with a level of confidence that less stable churches would struggle with.

Ready To Do What's Next

The overwhelming support for this process, as shown by the engagement in the listening groups during this visit, is a testament to the congregation's willingness to move into the next season of church life together. "We're ready," shared a congregant. Another participant in their listening session added, "We've been treading water long enough. If we know where we're heading, I think the majority of the church will follow. One of our problems has been not being able to decide where to go next. Now that we're ready to decide, we're ready to move."

CHALLENGES

Obstacles to moving the current ministry strategically forward

An Aging Congregation

St. Andrews is aging. “We buried so many of our members over the last few years. I’m not sure we have a future if we don’t get any younger,” shared one church member. Multiple listening groups spoke to the collective awareness that the church’s average age is the oldest it’s ever been. As one member explained, “We thought we could just build the right things, hire the right people, and run the right programs to keep young people in the church. But it’s harder than that. I think we need to figure out how to make them feel like they actually belong.” Young people aren’t the answer to all the church’s challenges, but St. Andrews needs to develop a plan for integrating young families into the life of the church when they’re invited to events and programs that are open to the community.

Communication Gaps

For a church the size of St. Andrews, communication shouldn’t be as hard as it is sometimes. The church has a website, social media pages, a newsletter, and various other ways to communicate what’s going on in the life of the church. Still, congregants and staff people alike shared that they sometimes don’t know all the things going on in the church. “We have ways to find things out, but nobody looks at them,” shared one participant. When another congregant exclaimed, “I didn’t know that we’re doing that ministry again,” in one of the listening groups, the rest of the room nodded. The leaders in the church feel like they’re overcommunicating sometimes, while the participants in the church tend to feel out of the loop when it comes to what’s going on and what their next steps are. Until a communication plan is developed that includes consistent expectations for where to find information and identifies who’s in charge of making sure that information is accurate this will continue to be a major struggle for the church.

Who Are We and What Are We Doing Here?

“We’ve tried to be all things to all people for so long that I’m not even sure who we are anymore,” lamented a long-time church member. The leadership teams at St. Andrews have tried to discern a clear direction for the church for quite some time, but the process tends to break down at some point each time. One leader in the church remembers a time when, as they put it, “We had these leadership retreats, and someone would get up to write a list of what was good and what we need to do. Then we’d come back a year later and nothing had changed. When we got back, things just went into a rabbit hole and never came out.” The congregation is hungry for an identity and wants to be able to articulate to others what makes their church different than the others in town. A clear identity will help the church determine what its future plans for worship services should look like. Until there’s clarity around the church’s identity, there will be confusion about what Sunday mornings at the church should look like.

Lack Of a Spiritual Formation Plan

“I want to grow in my faith, but I don’t know where I fit in,” expressed a participant in one of the listening groups. This isn’t just a concern shared about the lack of a spiritual formation plan for adults in the church, as one person explained, “I don’t know what the church’s discipleship plan is for our kids. It’s hard to invite young families to the church when I don’t know what we’re trying to teach our young people.” For all ages in the church, there should be a clear pathway for people to step onto as they pursue spiritual formation. Though the church currently offers a handful of Bible studies, book studies, and other gatherings where discipleship can happen, an

overall plan must be developed and clearly communicated so that there is clarity as to what each person's next step should look like.

The Lost Sheep

During the time that listening sessions were hosted, Ministry Architects also received letters and emails from former congregation members who had left the church without ever feeling like their absence was noticed. "When I reached out to the church, I never heard back," explained one former member. Another explained, "After I didn't show up for a while, I started visiting other churches. When they welcomed me in and St. Andrews still didn't notice I was missing, I knew it was time to find a new church home." The leadership and people of St. Andrews want to be able to follow up with people who stop attending, they simply lack a process that would let them know when someone goes missing or needs to be followed-up with. "Now that people are watching online, it's a lot harder to tell which people are still part of our church and who isn't around anymore," shared a leader in the church. Yet, even with the addition of online services, it's necessary that the church develop a plan for how to follow up with those who call St. Andrews their home.

Welcomed But Not Connected

"I've never felt as disconnected in a church as I feel now," shared a tearful congregant. The people who are part of St. Andrews are proud of how welcoming and family-like the church feels to those who've been around the church for decades. Yet even a long-time member shared an opposing thought saying, "I know the names and the faces of the people in this room, but I don't really feel like I *know* them." This lack of connection within the congregation can lead to church attenders looking to other places for a sense of community. During one of the listening groups, it was explained clearly and plainly when one person said, "There's a serious lack of connection in our church, especially since we got rid of social time on Sunday [because of Covid]. We need some sort of plan for where adults can get connected in the church. We can't just be a welcoming church. We need to be a connecting church."

Relying on Paid Saviors

"We could hire someone to do that!" was the response of a well-meaning congregant when faced with an area of deficit in the church. In fact, multiple groups had members who sought to solve the church's challenges with the addition of staff positions. As it stands, the church is already staffed for growth. When churches become reliant on paid staff to do the ministry of the church, they have the potential of robbing themselves from the ability to participate in the mission of the church themselves. St. Andrews will need to assess its current staffing structure to ensure that roles are clearly defined, and that the congregation is clear on what their expectations of the staff should be.

Low Numbers Across the Board

There's not a time in the history of the church that congregants can remember attendance numbers being as low as they currently are. However, clear targets haven't been set for people to understand where the church currently sits regarding where it could expect to be on this side of the COVID-19 pandemic. When a congregation's goal is simply "more," it can lead to exhaustion among the staff and leaders of the church who feel like their work is inadequate. After hearing someone express that there should be more children in the church, the question was asked to the room for people to name how many children would feel like a good number in this season of ministry. "I've never really thought of that being something we needed to think

about,” explained a long-time member. “I guess we’ll never have a number that feels good to me. We should always be aiming for more.” Numbers aren’t the things that matter the most in a church, but they help a church ask the right questions for the season they’re in. Until St. Andrews can determine what numbers would reflect healthy growth, the leadership of the church will tend to find themselves exhausted as they aim for a target that is definitionally just-out-of-reach.

The Need for COVID-19 Reconciliation

Like most churches, St. Andrews finds itself trying to find healing after years of cultural divisiveness and uncertainty. As one lay leader explained, “We’re divided about the playground. We’re divided over mask wearing. We’re divided over what worship services should look like. We’re divided over online or in-person attendance. Simply put we’re divided. But we don’t *want* to be. Covid has worn us all out and we just need to remind each other how much we love each other. It’s been a hard two years.” Uniting around a vision for the church and a calling to serve the community can be the bridge needed to bring divided groups together. When asked if they still love those in the church they disagree with, one member quickly spoke up, “Of course we still love each other! On days when I don’t understand my wife, I still love her. Just because I don’t understand someone else’s choices, doesn’t mean I don’t love them anymore. We’ve just been separated for so long that we don’t know how to show each other grace anymore.”

A “Rich” History in the Community

There was someone present in every listening group who could remember when St. Andrews was known in the area for being the Bethlehem Steel church or, more simply, “the rich church,” as one congregant put it. The church has a history of being known as the church in town that affluent and highly educated people attend. At one point in the church’s history, one member explained, “Your seat in the church was determined partly on what job you had at the mill. The more important your job, the closer to the front of the church you got to sit.” Though Bethlehem Steel hasn’t been in operation in town for quite some time, the reputation of St. Andrews continues to be tied to their legacy. As a congregation who cares deeply for its community and wants to serve others, St. Andrews will need to do significant work to shift their community reputation from being a church of “rich, white people,” as one congregant put it and instead be known as a church that seeks to sacrificially care for others with grace, mercy, and humility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Reframe the next 24 months as a time of building long-term infrastructure for the ministry. Name March 2024 as the target date for ministries that have sufficient infrastructure and support to provide long-term stability, while enjoying incremental successes along the way.
2. Present this report to the Session, requesting that they endorse a 24-month strategic design process.
3. Invite a church prayer team to pray for this time of strategic development and share this timeline with them.
4. Establish a Transformation Team, who report regularly to the Session and pastor, to focus on the recommendations below. These non-anxious, goal-oriented people will free up the staff to focus on providing day-to-day ministry.
5. Ministry Architects has been hired to be responsible for the following items:
 - Chairing and leading the Transformation Team during the 24-month period of momentum building.
 - Ministry Architects has been invited to play the coach role during this renovation period. Ministry Architect offers experienced direction for the pastor and the Transformation Team.
 - Leading an onsite Vision Summit resulting in an updated mission statement, core values, and three-year goals
 - Working with the staff and volunteers to ensure the achievement of the outcomes outlined in this report's timeline.
 - Assisting the church in overcoming the obstacles that are certain to arise in the process of restructuring and fine-tuning the ministries.
 - An asterisk (*) denotes any recommendations that are not currently included in the contract between St. Andrew's and Ministry Architects.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations in this report fall into five main categories. A brief summary of the needs in each category is contained below with more detailed recommendations named in the following section of the report.

STAFFING AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

As St. Andrew's moves forward, it will be important for the staff members to have resources that help them to grow and for their roles to be clarified and supported.

MISSION, VALUES, AND GOALS

Develop Clarity for the Future: Begin the work of stepping forward into a new chapter of ministry together by clarifying the vision and the goals of the church's ministry. Align the structure of the ministry to live into this vision and craft a new narrative for the church's future.

VOLUNTEER AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Leadership Development: New ideas are not likely to take hold until the current leadership model changes. More volunteers will be needed, and helpers may need to become partners. The church must change the expectation that staff members are the professional geniuses in the room or that every challenge can be overcome by hiring someone to take care of it. The staff must become genius makers.

BUILDING SYSTEMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

As St. Andrew's begins to grow, infrastructure will become critical to maintaining any momentum gained. This includes communication, marketing a clear identity to the community, attendance tracking, database management, and documentation of regular church processes.

BUILDING COMMUNITY FOR BOTH VISITORS AND ESTABLISHED MEMBERS

When visitors make it to the front door, few are becoming woven into the life and leadership of the church. When younger families visit, they struggle to find their place among the congregation. Evaluate and expand existing practices of visitor welcome, follow up, and enfolding taking into account the needs and experiences of younger families.

STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION TEAM TASKS:

These specific initiatives will enable the church to develop the five categories summarized above.

STAFFING AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

- **Staff Development:** Provide mechanisms for ongoing education and coaching for the church staff including coaching, reading, and continuing education.
- **Leadership Clarity:** Write or review written job descriptions for all paid staff positions in the church. Work with staff to ensure the job descriptions accurately match the work being done. Prominently include the role of building volunteer teams.
- **Sustainable Pace:** Help each staff member develop a “rhythmic week” including a Sabbath and “balcony” time (that is, time to look at the big picture and make strategic plans).

MISSION, VALUES, AND GOALS

- **Visioning:** Invite leaders to participate in a multi-session, on-campus process of envisioning the future with Ministry Architects, resulting in the following documents which will direct the ministries and support the church's vision:
 - A Mission Statement
 - Defined Core Values
 - A Set of Three-Year Revolving Goals with One-Year Benchmarks

Vision Summits work best with a group representing pastors, staff, session, teams, and other key ministry leaders. Sometimes it may be helpful to include an open invitation to the congregation.

- **Sharing the Vision:** Upon completion of the long-term vision and goal-setting process, create a game plan that will outline the best ways to communicate the vision, values, and goals of the church's ministry (sermon series, guidebooks, small group curriculum, etc.)
- **Vision for Worship:** Following the completion and sharing of the updated vision, create a task force to begin to develop a worship strategy that reflects the goals and values created in the summit. This strategy should include mechanisms for healthy evaluation and pivoting where needed.
- **Develop a Clear Community Mission Engagement Strategy:** After engaging in strategic visioning, develop a game plan that will clarify the ways in which the church will joyfully engage in community outreach. Include ways the church will build relationships with the neighborhoods it serves. At the same time, create awareness and education opportunities among the congregation.

VOLUNTEER AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- **Host a “Quick Start” Summit:** Invite the Transformation Team, key volunteers, and church staff to participate in a Quick Start Summit in which the renovation process is launched and the tasks outlined in the Assessment Report are addressed. The Summit tackles the items that need to be done first and builds momentum for the church’s renovation process (typically items in the first few months of the timeline).
- **Volunteer Leadership Clarity:** Draft and/or update written job descriptions for all volunteer roles in the church. Work with leaders to ensure the job descriptions accurately match the work being done, clarify to whom each volunteer is accountable.
- **Volunteer Development:** Provide sufficient training and development opportunities for all volunteers in a way that leaves them inspired to serve again rather than exhausted.
- **Volunteer Recruitment Process:** Create a master list of ministry opportunities in every area of the church, from weekly, to monthly, to annual opportunities. Once all volunteer opportunities in the church have been identified, begin the recruitment process to ensure that all positions are filled by August 1 of each year. Develop an annual leadership directory that lists all committees and leaders for all committees and groups (Session, Committee Chairpersons, etc.).
- **Leadership Launch:** Schedule and implement an inspiring leadership-training and vision-casting event for all volunteers at the beginning of each year.
- **Volunteer Alignment:** Do an audit of all volunteer teams and roles in the church and clarify their unique contribution to the church. Build a clear organizational chart for all volunteer teams and roles in the church and determine how best to align them for maximum impact in growing the church.

Consider Ed Stetzer’s research on churches who break the 200 barrier in worship attendance as a guideline for developing the right structure of volunteerism.

BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Communication:** Review and revise current church communication practices to ensure that all congregants, regardless of age or technological proficiency, feel informed. Utilize as many forms of communication as possible including updating the church's website, brochures, social media, mass texting, mail, e-mail, etc.
- **Marketing and Branding:** Create a written game plan that will address how to re-introduce the church to the community around it focused on highlighting the good that St. Andrew's is doing in the community and elsewhere. Create an intentional strategy in order to be consistent with your marketing approaches (logos, graphics, etc.). Consider the following:
 - Church Signage.
 - Upgrading the website with an engaging section just for newcomers.
 - Identifying communication channels for reaching out to those outside the church. family--flyers and mailers, posters, the NextDoor app, etc.
 - Identifying target programs for inviting newcomers.
 - Designing a database growth process.
- **Internal Communications:** Create a protocol by which all decisions and important information are shared throughout the whole church community, ensuring that the church is not just communicating information, but that people are actually receiving it.
- **Stabilizing Document Development:** Maintain and publish a 12-month calendar, create major event notebooks to help event planners succeed, and generate a preventative maintenance calendar that schedules behind-the-scenes activities for each month. (Example: October - Order candles for the Advent Wreath.)
- **Attendance:** Continue to record attendance for all programs (worship, Sunday school, Bible studies, book studies, special events, etc.) and develop a written game plan to track attendance in a consistent way in order to identify MIAs.
- **Leadership Directory:** Develop an annual leadership directory that lists all ministry teams and leaders for all committees and groups (Session, Small Groups, Community Care Deacons, etc.).
- **Ministry Manual:** Develop a Ministry Manual, including the most recent directories, a 12-Month calendar, results-based job descriptions for staff and volunteers, compliance documents, budgets, game plans, a preventative maintenance calendar, and notes for every major church event.
- **Compliance System and Management:** Ensure an Operations Manual is in place and updated annually. The manual should include all legal documentation needed for the ministry including background checks, financial documents, licenses, child protection policy, facility use policies, etc.
- **Database:** Numbers matter because people matter. Create a database of all the people who are connected to your congregation. This database will be an important tool as you communicate and as you determine who is active. We recommend using categories or reports that indicate the level of involvement of each person. For example:
 - **Active** are the families who are members of St. Andrew's and have attended at least 12 times in the past year – plus visitors who have become a regular part of the ministry.
 - **Member Inactive (MIA)** are still a part of the flock. You may not need to call them every time the doors are open at the church, but you'll want to regularly pursue these families, whether they ever show up or not.

- **Visitor Active** are those who regularly attend weekly worship and/or activities but are not official members of the church.
- **Visitor Inactive** are the ones who may have visited, but you are confident they will never become a regular part of the group. This group requires no follow-up. But you'll want to keep their information for the occasional big event, to which you'll want to invite everyone you know.
- **First Timers** refer to visitors who have attended worship for the first time. You'll want to have a process for capturing their information on their first visit and follow up with them within one week of their visit.
- **Visitor Follow-up:** Carefully develop a game plan for welcoming visitors who visit the church. Craft a plan for following up with adults and families that have become loosely connected to the church. Ensure the database is regularly updated with information from visitors.
- **MIA Follow-up:** Determine the approach to follow up with people who are MIA. Create a database to track who have gone missing, the reasons they have gone, and who, from the staff, followed up with them. Create a culture of care for MIA church members.
- **Discipleship Pathways for all ages:**
 - **Create an outline of discipleship steps for adults** choosing a life of following Christ. *Consider hiring Ministry Architects to conduct a 2-day Discipleship Pathway Summit focused on this or create a task force to brainstorm pillars of discipleship development and different methods of facilitating this growth in the adults in the congregation.
 - **Updated children's and youth ministry programming:** Participate in a brainstorming session led by Ministry Architects that leads to a plan designed to increase participation and excitement for the 2022-2023 school year

ENFOLD AND ASSIMILATE PEOPLE INTO CHURCH LIFE AND CULTURE

- **Young Families Connection Plan:** Plan three or four exciting family-friendly events that would be easy for the young families at St. Andrew's to invite friends to attend. Consider including families who haven't attended St. Andrew's in a while. Develop a strategy to connect with those families after those events and help them get to know the St. Andrews community.
- **Enfolding Process:** Develop a strategic plan for helping the newer families become an integral part of the whole church, weaving the new relationships into the fabric of the entire church.
- **Nurture Connections:** Develop a strategic plan for reconnecting members with each other. Consider some common interest groups such as book clubs, walking groups, supper clubs or other recreational activities that bring people together.
- **Young Families Onramp:** Explore 2-3 new ways to engage newcomers in this demographic in a way that woos them to a deeper relationship with God and the church. Develop a game plan that names the process from first time visitor to becoming an involved member of the church.

PRESSURE POINTS

In order to create a healthy climate conducive to change, Ministry Architects suggests addressing the most pressing needs in the first four to six months of the timeline. Pressure Points are the issues that, unless addressed, could very well keep the church “stuck.”

The following timeline outlines an intentional and strategic approach to implementing the recommendations listed above. The recommendations section is a broad and thorough list of recommendations for the church, but they are not presented in order or priority.

The timeline below prioritizes the following pressure points over the next four to six months:

- **Young Families Integration Plan**
- **Addressing a Lack of Identity at St. Andrews**
- **Filling the Communication Gaps**

PROPOSED TIMELINE

The following provides St. Andrews with a timeline that can serve as a blueprint for the strategic launch of a healthy, sustainable ministry.

Month #1 – March 2022

Outcomes:

- This report has been presented to the Session for the strategic renovation of the church's overall ministry and the Session has given full support of this plan.
- A Quick Start Summit has been scheduled for April.
- The Transformation Team has been recruited and the first meeting has been scheduled to take place during the Quick Start Summit.
- A prayer team has been recruited and charged with praying for the renovation process. They have received a copy of this report and timeline.

Month #2 – April 2022

Outcomes:

- A Quick Start Summit has taken place in which the renovation process was launched, and pressure points outlined in the Assessment Report have been addressed. The Summit tackled the items that needed to be done first to initiate the renovation process.
- A Church-Wide Visioning Summit has been scheduled for July and a save the date email has been sent to the church leadership (staff & volunteers)
- Volunteer recruitment guidelines have been developed to help guide current leaders in healthier volunteer recruitment practices while the full volunteer recruiting process is being developed.
- Current volunteers have been asked to evaluate and possibly renew their commitment to their ministry.
- An organizational chart has been developed for all the current volunteer roles in the church including different levels of leadership.

Month #3 – May 2022

Outcomes:

- Promotion of the Church-Wide Vision Summit has begun.
- A few children's and youth ministry leaders have participated in a brainstorming session led by Ministry Architects and has informed an updated ministry plan designed to increase participation and excitement for the 2022-2023 school year
- Job descriptions for all paid staff positions in the church have been written and reviewed. The staff has been included in the process such that the job descriptions accurately match the work being done. The role of building volunteers is prominently included.
- A Volunteer Ministry Job Description template has been created.
- Work has begun on the 2022-2023 ministry calendar.

- A game plan has been written that outlines how young families are integrated into the life of the church.

Month #4 – June 2022

Outcomes:

- Communication norms have been determined and those best practices have been implemented that ensure that all congregants, regardless of age or technological proficiency, feel informed. Utilize as many forms of communication as possible including updating the church’s website, brochures, social media, mass texting, mail, email, etc.
- Recruitment has begun for hands-on weekly volunteers, event coordinators, and behind-the-scenes volunteers for the 2022-2023 academic year.
 - Volunteer recruiting season has opened, and each ministry leader has been equipped to complete the following recruiting tasks:
 - Names of potential volunteers have been added to the fishing pond.
 - All volunteer needs have been determined for the 2022-2023 ministry year.
 - The volunteer needs list and the potential volunteers list have been merged.

Month #5 – July 2022

Outcomes:

- A Church-Wide Vision Summit with all major stakeholders has occurred and produced visioning documents for the church (mission statement, core values, goals, and structure).
- One-year benchmarks have been assigned to each three-year, revolving goal developed in the church-wide visioning process.
- A strategy has been developed to connect with those families who have attended family friendly events to help them get to know the St. Andrews community.
- All pressure points have been addressed.

Month #6 – August 2022

Outcomes:

- All pressure points have been addressed.
- Mechanisms for ongoing education and coaching for the church staff including coaching, reading, and continuing education have been provided.
- Volunteer ministry description information forms have been returned to facilitate the writing of result-based volunteer ministry job descriptions.
- The first of three or four exciting family-friendly events have been calendared. These are easy for the young families at St. Andrews to invite friends to attend. Invitations to this event should also be sent to families who haven’t attended St. Andrews in a while.

Month #7 – September 2022

Outcomes

- All volunteers have experienced a Leadership Launch, lasting 2-4 hours, that clarifies their roles, inspires them to grow in their own faith, and equips them to serve in their roles. The child protection policy has been reviewed and adopted by all volunteers working with children.
- A task force has been recruited that will begin to develop a worship strategy reflecting the goals and values created in the summit. This strategy includes mechanisms for healthy evaluation and pivoting where needed.
- A database and directory for all ministry leadership teams and leaders has been created to provide clarity and connection for all ministry leaders.
- Any new roles created in the volunteer organizational chart have job descriptions for their task.
- Any tools needed for the cascading communications strategy (such as newsletters, meeting minutes, internal websites, etc.) have been created and have begun to be used.

Month #8 – October 2022

Outcomes

- Volunteer recruitment has continued, and ministry leaders have begun asking potential new volunteers to fill roles for 2022-2023.
- A Community Engagement Outreach Strategy has been created that will help the church engage the community around it and be good news to its neighbors.
- The Transformation Team has completed a 6-month mid-course evaluation of the renovation process and made any adjustments that are necessary to improve the work being done.
- Each staff member has developed a rhythmic week including a Sabbath and balcony time (that is, time to look at the big picture and make strategic plans).

Month #9 – November 2022

Outcomes:

- An attendance-tracking game plan has been written that ensures attendance has been tracked throughout key ministry gatherings (worship, youth & children's ministry, major events, etc.)
- A cascading communications strategy has been created that helps to easily identify "who needs to know what" throughout the church when decisions are made. Consider the concentric circles of leadership in the church and the timeline in which they should be informed of decisions. Ensure a list of communication tools is created that will help carry the information to the correct groups.
- Three more family-friendly events have been calendared. These are easy for the young families at St. Andrew's to invite friends to attend. Invitations to this event should also be sent to families who haven't attended St. Andrew's in a while.

- A marketing game plan has been created that selects the best communication methods for the community and assigns next steps for implementing them.

Month #10 – December 2022

Outcomes:

- Results-based job descriptions have been written and distributed to the appropriate volunteers for their feedback.
- An enfolding process has been created that helps move people from guests to part of the church family and focuses particularly around building connective relationships.
- * A Christian Formation Summit has been calendared for March and the appropriate invitations have been sent out OR a task force has been recruited to brainstorm the pillars of adult discipleship and create a plan for helping church members to grow in their faith.
- The Transformation Team has met monthly and decided how often they will meet for the remainder of the 24 months.

Month #11 – January 2023

Outcomes:

- A Leadership Launch has been scheduled for July for the volunteers in the church where each team leader gathers with their volunteers to launch their team's ministry. This could be a church-wide event, or different gatherings for each department or team.
- An outreach follow-up strategy has been created to capture information from guests who attend outreach events and provide timely follow-up to invite them to take a next step in the church.
- The 2023-2024 ministry calendar has been completed.
- 50% of the one-year benchmarks have been accomplished.

Month #12 –February 2023

Outcomes:

- *A group of stakeholders has met for a Christian Formation Summit to discuss the discipleship pathway the church will use to disciple its people. At this retreat, the following objectives were met:
 - Evaluate the existing discipleship opportunities to ensure their effectiveness.
 - Develop a set of core competencies for the discipleship programming.
 - Determine the best adult formation strategy and consider the use of small groups.
 - Develop a clear communication piece that will outline the discipleship pathway to church members
- A prioritized list of all ministry programs at the church has been created along with the named target audience, and a strategy has been determined relating to how best to retire programs near the bottom of the priority list.

- A review has taken place of the current membership strategy and changes have been recommended in a young families' onramp plan for the purpose of outlining clearly the steps a visitor in this particular demographic would take to becoming an invested church member.
- The 2023-2024 ministry calendar has been publicized.

Month #13 – March 2023

Outcomes:

- Volunteer recruiting seasons have opened.
 - Volunteer job descriptions have been reviewed and updated as needed.
 - Names of potential volunteers have been added to the fishing pond.
 - All volunteer needs have been determined for the 2023-2024 school year.
 - The volunteer needs list and the potential volunteers list have been merged.
 - Current volunteers have been asked to evaluate and possibly renew their commitment to their teams.
 - Recruitment has begun for hands-on weekly volunteers, event coordinators, and behind-the-scenes volunteers for 2023-2024.
- All game plans that have been launched in the last 12 months have been evaluated and tweaked as necessary for impact and sustainability.

Month #14 – April 2023

Outcomes:

- Work has begun on major event notebooks – a template has been created for the notebooks and information has been collected on each major event.
- A strategic plan has been developed for reconnecting members with each other. Possibly including some common interest groups such as book clubs, walking groups, supper clubs or other recreational activities that bring people together.
- Volunteer recruiting has continued.

Month #15 – May 2023

Outcomes:

- A preventative maintenance calendar has been created for the church's annual ministry that will help regularly deal with on-going behind the scenes ministry maintenance.
- A game plan has been developed to capture information for events and worship services and provide invitational follow-up to visitors. Be sure to include mechanisms for updating the database.
- A game plan has been developed to identify and follow-up with church members and regular attenders who are MIA, which includes a database to track who is missing, reasons they are gone, and tracks follow-up.
- Major event notebooks for each major event have been completed.

Month #16 – June 2023

Outcomes:

- A Church Operations Manual has been created/reviewed and contains all legal documentation needed for the ministry including background checks, financial documents, licenses, child protection policy, facility use policies etc.
- A database and directory for all ministry leadership teams and leaders has been created to provide clarity and connection for all ministry leaders.

Month #17 – July 2023

Outcomes:

- With the changes in the ministry, the staffing to meet the size and scope of the church has been evaluated, and a game plan to meet those needs has been created if necessary.
- All volunteers have experienced a Leadership Launch, lasting 2-4 hours, that clarifies their roles, inspires them to grow in their own faith, and equips them to serve in their roles. The child protection policy has been reviewed and adopted by all volunteers working with children.
- All one-year benchmarks have been achieved. Goals have been re-upped and new one-year benchmarks have been established.

Month #18 – August 2023

Outcomes:

- Volunteer recruitment calendar has been created so that each ministry team has a timeline for the search, recruitment, training, and review of volunteers.
- The church database has been evaluated for effectiveness and strategies have been developed for cleaning up the rolls of the church. We recommend using categories or reports that indicate the level of involvement of each person. For example:
 - **Active** are the members of St. Andrew's and have attended at least 12 times in the past year – plus visitors who have become a regular part of the ministry. They should show up in your printed directory if you use one.
 - **Member Inactive (MIA)** are still a part of the flock. You may not need to call them every time the doors are open at the church, but you'll want to regularly pursue these families, whether they ever show up or not.
 - **Visitor Active** are those who regularly attend weekly worship and/or activities but are not official members of the church.
 - **Visitor Inactive** are the ones who may have visited, but you are confident they will never become a regular part of the group. This group requires no follow-up. But you'll want to keep their information for the occasional big event, to which you'll want to invite everyone you know.
 - **First Timers** refers to visitors who have attended worship for the first time. You'll want to have a process for capturing their information on their first visit and follow up with them within one week of their visit.

Month #19 – September 2023

Outcomes:

- A ministry manual for the church has been completed, including
 - Visioning documents
 - Directories
 - Volunteer directory
 - Annual calendar
 - Results-based job descriptions
 - Game plans and new initiatives
 - Budget and other financial documents
 - Recruiting template, with a record of all the volunteer needs for the year
 - Compliance documents

Month #20 – October 2023

Outcomes:

- Catch up on lingering timeline items.
- The team has reviewed all game plans and processes that have been put in place during this timeline and has made any necessary adjustments for future use.

Month #21 –November 2023

Outcomes:

- Volunteer recruiting has continued.
- Catch up on lingering timeline items.

Month #22 – December 2022

Outcomes:

- Volunteer recruiting has continued.
- Current pressure points have been named.

Month #23 – January 2023

Outcomes:

- All major event notebooks have been updated by the event coordinators and given back to the church staff, to pass along to the next year's coordinator.
- A review of the renovation process has been completed.
- Current pressure points have been named.
- A timeline for the next 12 months has been created that included game plans for the current pressure points and items from the online diagnostic.

Month #24 – February 2024

Outcomes:

- Ongoing coaching has been secured and a sustainability plan has been put in place.
- The staff and Transformation Team have celebrated what God has done with their 24-month investment.
- The Transformation Team has transitioned their role to providing support and accountability to the church and focused on strategic issues such as three-year goals and one-year benchmarks, calendars, and volunteer recruitment.

The *Ministry Architects* Team Serving St. Andrews Presbyterian Church (Lebanon, PA)



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Anthony Prince is a husband, dad, and pastor—in that order. Anthony currently serves as the Executive Pastor at Real Life Church of LA, a growing church plant in the foothills of Los Angeles, CA. He is a graduate of Fuller Seminary, with an M.A. in Global Leadership and an emphasis in Youth, Family & Culture. Anthony is a sought-after speaker on the topics of children & family ministry, strategic church leadership, and volunteer recruitment. He is also a contributing author to two books: *What Matters Now in Children's Ministry* (2011) and *Sunday School that Works!* (2014).



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Rev. Aqueelah Ligonde, an ordained PCUSA clergywoman, is an enthusiastic speaker, preacher, and leader with a passion for today's generation of youth, women, and leaders. She has worked with organizations such as Princeton Seminary Institute For Youth Ministry, Leadership Education at Duke Divinity, Urban Youth Workers Institute, and Youth Specialties. She has written various blog posts, articles, and devotionals. Her writing can also be found in the book *InterGenerate: Transforming Churches through Intergenerational Ministry*, a book on the power of intergenerational relationships. She also co-hosts a monthly podcast called *The Sustainable Ministry Show*.

Aqueelah holds a Master of Divinity from McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, IL. For over a decade, Aqueelah served as the Associate Pastor at the First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica, Queens NY and more recently as the Transitional Pastor at Far Rockaway Presbyterian Church. Currently, she is the Director of Coaching with Ministry Architects as well as a coach with Ministry Incubators. She is also pursuing a Doctor of Ministry from Louisville Theological Seminary. She and her husband live in Long Island, NY.



ANNETTE SAFSTROM - SENIOR CONSULTANT & DIRECTOR OF MARKETING

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Annette fell in love with ministry in the 1980s and has never looked back. After graduating from Bible college in 1991 with a certification in children's ministry, she earned a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Texas A&M University, and a master's from SMU. Over the years, she has consistently served in various roles in the church from volunteer to director of children's ministry. Annette has been a member of the Ministry Architects team since January of 2012, and co-authored *Sustainable Children's Ministry* with Mark DeVries in January of 2018. She loves to share the joy of children's ministry with others through workshops, trainings, and national conferences. She lives in McKinney, TX with her husband Kevin, and their two children, and enjoys traveling, cooking, and writing.

