

St. Luke's Sharing God's Love Encouragement Center and Congregation

Movement of Congregation: St. Luke's at one point was a programmatic size congregation with membership and facilities to support that mission. Members of the congregation for the most part lived geographically closer to the church and were able to participate and support these programs in person.

Over the years, many members moved to other parts of Charlotte or into South Carolina. This disconnection from the neighborhood made it harder for families and children often very active in the communities where they now live to fully participate in programs and activities of the church during the week. There was still a deep relational connection for a number of those families with each other, but less so with the geographical building and neighborhood surrounding.

These changes led to the church growing demographically older and smaller. No longer able to support the facility or the size of the staff, the building began to become a burden. The maintenance, upkeep and improvements it takes to keep a facility operational began to overwhelm the smaller congregation. As the congregation became smaller with less resources, the staff also needed to reduce. This reduction has happened but not without significant conflict as is often the case.

As all of this was happening, the neighborhood and world around has significantly changed. They no longer need or desire the same kinds of programs and ministries that served the families that came before. None the less, St. Luke's is blessed with a loyal group that wants to see St. Luke's have a future and share God's love as they have through their almost 100 years of history.

The following plan has the potential to honor the movement of St. Luke's by planting it in this new day and time. It has the potential to turn the facility back into the gift for sharing God's love through welcoming, encouraging and serving, rather than the burden it has become. It offers this loyal group of servants the opportunity to support God doing something new and exciting.

Encouragement Center

Encouragement Center Mission: The Mission of the Encouragement Center is to Develop an inviting and safe space for community events and nonprofits to headquarter and create a home base for their missions. St Luke's Encouragement Center provides resources, training, and support to nonprofit organizations and individuals working in the nonprofit sector. The Center will allow for networking and collaboration. In addition to working for nonprofits, the center will also provide space for community events. All activities invited into St. Luke's space will align with its mission.

Leadership: The Development and Leadership of the Encouragement Center in the beginning will be through a Board and Encouragement Center Director. The Encouragement Center Director will supervise the Facility Maintenance Manager (Contract), Custodian/Cleaning Service, Financial Recording Specialist and any other contract service personnel. The Facility Use Manager will report to the Board.

Shared Leadership With Congregation: There will be several positions shared with the congregation and will need clearly defined expectations, responsibilities and accountability. The Called Pastor of the Church will be called to serve as both the Encouragement Center Director and the Pastoral Leader of St. Luke's. Services for Financial Recording and Custodian/Cleaning will be shared with the Congregation.

Financial Management: The Encouragement Center will begin as a separate Fund of St. Luke's Lutheran Church. This Fund will account for all income from and for the Encouragement Center including Lease Income, Facility Use, Grants, etc. It will also include all expenses related to the facility and grounds including maintenance, repair and improvements (With the exception of the Welcome Center Projects). The Congregation will pay an agreed upon amount for their footprint in the facility to the Encouragement Center.

Congregation

Mission of the Congregation is the Encouragement Center: The Mission of Sharing God's Love through welcoming, encouraging and serving will be lived out through the Encouragement Center. The Encouragement Center will offer the greatest opportunity to connect with families and neighbors in the neighborhood and reach far more people than trying to build programs and activities within the congregation.

Synod Authorized Worshiping Communities (SAWK): This is an option to be explored. The Pastor would be both the Director of the Encouragement Center and the Pastor of the Worshiping Community. The congregation would grow from engagement with Encouragement Center activity and connections. It would no longer feel the pressure to grow from those who are already members. The Congregation would be a worshipping and learning community with the potential that something might grow through the Encouragement Center.

Preparation Steps

The following steps are needed in preparation for this path:

- Move the Footprint of the Congregation to the Front
- Develop Position Descriptions for Encouragement Center Director and Pastor
 - Clarify Time and responsibilities
 - Working with Synod to focus the descriptions

- Clarify Governance, Authority and Accountability
 - Explore SAWK as an option – Work with Synod
 - Bylaw changes regarding authority and accountability Encouragement Center
- Identify and Present to Congregation Funding Proposal
- Process to Identify Call Committee
- Develop Ministry Site Profile
 - Writing Team (Combination Transition Team and Call Committee)
 - Review by Congregation and Synod
 - Council Approval
 - Posting
- Search Begins
- Prepare Congregation for Direction Identified