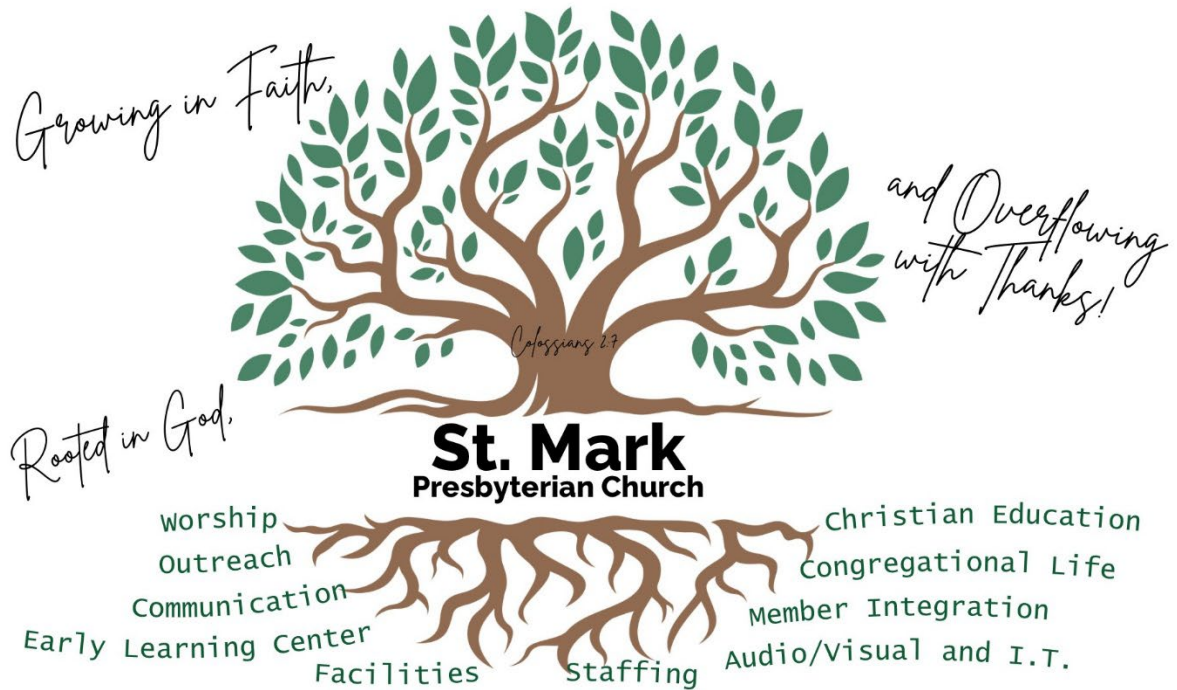


Strategic Planning Committee
Ten Goals for the Session

Adopted: March 18, 2024



Rooted in God – Growing in Faith – Overflowing with Thanks

Let your roots grow down into God, and let your lives be built on him.

Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught,

and you will overflow with thankfulness.

Colossians 2:7 (NLT)



TEN GOALS – Strategic Planning

Adopted by Session – March 18, 2024

CULTURE – There is an overall appreciation for the culture of St. Mark as a warm, friendly, caring, and welcoming church with a family-feel. There is a strong desire to hold onto this culture and emphasize maturing our members in faith and relationships.

Comments: Many talked about our congregation as warm, friendly, caring, welcoming, and having a family-feel. There is a strong desire to hold onto this culture and emphasize maturing our members, especially in faith and relationships. We have intergenerational strength; however, the demographic of families with young children is under-represented.

These goals are suggested for near-term action by mid-year 2024 but may continue for the next three to five years. They represent the comments and suggestions from the congregation who feel a sense of urgency for action.

I. WORSHIP – Many find our worship powerful and meaningful, especially the music, message, and variety of gifts and styles.

Purpose: Connect Members to God in Prayer, Word, and Music during Worship

1. Assign a youth member, or youth elder, to reach out to recent high school graduates to invite them to participate in the worship service, i.e., liturgist, say/write a prayer. Use local and/or out-of-town youth when they are in-town during school breaks.
2. Evaluate options to involve children and youth in worship.
3. Evaluate options to offer an alternative for children during worship service time.

II. CHRISTIAN EDUCATION (Adult, Children & Youth)

Purpose: Grow Members Deeper in Faith

1. Consider new offerings of Bible Study (one each year in the coming five years – can be short-term, and may be dropped after it ends):
 - a. In homes, including Lent and Advent seasons (could be organized geographically).
 - b. An evening class (for working members) for men, women, or mixed.
 - c. Through Zoom (current, new, or Sunday School) for those who are shut-in, cannot drive, or live far away.
2. Each year, for the next five years, engage at least ten people in a Bible study who were not previously engaged. Encourage Bible study participants to invite a newer member or visitor to attend Bible study with them.
3. Annual men's retreat (could be the annual Mo-Ranch Men's Conference).
4. Consider an after-school event for families with young children (class/speaker with childcare, meal?) This could be a partnership to start with the ELC.
5. Increase by five to eight the average attendance at Youth Group meetings/activities. Consider different days and have parents of those youth attend meetings as sponsors.



III. OUTREACH (Mission / Community Support)

Purpose: Grow Members Involvement to Serve Others

1. Offer two hands-on mission opportunities in the Boerne/San Antonio area in 2024, three in 2025, and four in 2026.
 - a. Supplement traditional means of communicating events with personal contact to invite and encourage member's participation.
 - b. Possibilities include projects with Love Kendall County Kids, Habitat for Humanity (Kerrville), Hill Country Daily Bread, Hill Country Mission for Health, etc.
2. Continue to foster relationships with our local mission partners, supporting them financially and periodically inquiring about community project opportunities.
3. Consider a new project, ecumenical with other local churches and/or program partners, to (1) provide a homeless shelter; (2) offer our facilities for a monthly soup kitchen; or (3) provide meals to the homebound.
4. Ensure mission trips remain a core value. Evaluate and offer mission trips each year, either within or outside the United States, in conjunction with other ministries.
5. Participate on the ELC Task Force, seeking ways Outreach can partner to support ELC leadership, staff, and families accomplish their mission of providing quality Christian based educational program to the community.

IV. MINISTRY WITH THE EARLY LEARNING CENTER (ELC)

Purpose: To Develop a Stronger, Deeper Relationship Between the Church and the ELC to Best Meet Future Needs of the Boerne Community and Extend the Church's Ministry.

1. The Session and the ELC Board will create a Joint Task Force to evaluate how the mission of the church through the ELC can best meet the future needs of the Boerne community.
2. Working together, extend the church's ministry with families with young children at the ELC and in the Boerne community.
 - a. Enhance quarterly ELC updates to the congregation (news updates, reports, or speakers, etc.) to raise congregational awareness regarding the ELC.
 - b. Formalize a joint support team that will encourage and coordinate church member and ELC family participation in both organizations' events throughout the year (e.g., special church and ELC activities, teacher appreciation events, and community events like the Boerne Christmas parade).
 - c. Leverage St. Mark and ELC resources to enhance support to families with children via programs such as: First Friday, VBS, God's Gift Factory, Evening Programs, etc.
 - d. Include a tour of the sanctuary with the tour of the school for prospective ELC families.
3. Working together, utilize our joint strengths to address strategic opportunities and challenges.
 - a. Explore, evaluate, and implement steps to ensure staff retention.
 - b. Explore, evaluate, and implement ELC program growth opportunities.



4. Develop a Five-year facilities program that identifies critical space needs and a maintenance roadmap.

V. CONGREGATIONAL LIFE (Fellowship/In-reach)

Purpose: Grow Members Involvement and Opportunities for Fellowship.

Consider adding new fellowship opportunities quarterly. Could be one-time events or on-going small groups. Some possibilities: Dinners for Eight, Wednesday Family Night with break outs, Pre-teen activities, Movie Night, Game Night, Church League, Church Picnic, Daytrips, etc.

1. These activities could intentionally target certain demographics. Each quarter focuses on one of the following: families with young children, empty nesters, retired, all-church, ELC families, etc.
2. Provide quarterly reports to Session to see how it was received/attended in order to forecast future events.

VI. DEACONS AND MEMBERS – (New Member Integration) A byproduct of growing deeper with God, and what we already do well, can result in a growth in numbers.

Purpose: Assimilate New Members and Maintain Culture.

As membership grows, we need to maintain our culture, and effectively assimilate new members.

1. Pastor and Deacons to establish and maintain a *New Member Ministry* to assimilate new members into the life of the church; monitor the sense of *Welcoming, Caring, and Friendly Nature* of the congregation by actively listening to members during visits, contacts, and Sunday fellowship; and connect new members into their areas of interest.
2. Items to be considered include:
 - a. Determine if this can be assigned to an existing Deacon or if an additional Deacon is needed.
 - b. Determine the new members' areas of interest/skill sets and connect them with those ministries accordingly.
 - c. Develop a pool of existing members who would serve as mentors to new members.
 - d. Assign a mentor to new members for 6 months, if acceptable to the new members.
 - e. Obtain feedback from new members at the end of 6 months regarding their integration process.

VII. STAFFING – (Personnel/HR) To maintain and support the Pastor and existing staff as required.

Purpose: Periodic reviews of staffing needs.

1. Conduct a meeting with Elders once a year (or as required) to discuss planning for future staffing needs and budgeting.
2. Review and identify tasks and activities of Elders' ministries to help determine those which require staff support or church volunteers.
3. Evaluate and provide information to Session on staffing requests.



4. Work with Finance and Treasurer to plan for additional staffing expenses as needed.
5. Begin planning and budgeting for Ann Marie sabbatical in 2027.
6. Support all Personnel/HR functions:
 - a. New hires
 - b. Terminations
 - c. Salary increases
 - d. Review of market surveys as appropriate
 - e. Performance Reviews

VIII. AUDIOVISUAL AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY – (Property and

Communications) This is the face of our church to members, visitors, and the public.

Purpose: Evaluate Audiovisual (A/V) and Information Technology (I.T.) capabilities to provide professional results to members, staff, and community.

1. The strategic focus of this ad hoc committee will be to review, evaluate, and update our A/V and I.T. capabilities and systems as necessary to ensure we have first class, reliable and maintainable systems that support our communications and other ministries both online and on campus, and that the church staff has the tools they need to do their jobs efficiently and effectively.
2. Areas to be considered include:
 - a. Online streaming support.
 - b. Sanctuary sound, lighting, and video capabilities.
 - c. Broadcast capabilities in the Hospitality Center and Family Life Center (FLC.)
 - d. Improved technology as needed for FLC classrooms.
 - e. Improved technical support for our systems, including potential part-time staff positions.
3. The cross-functional team to support this goal has already been formed and begun work, but new members with technical expertise and interest in helping optimize results are needed and welcome.
4. Session approved modifications and additions resulting from this evaluation will be implemented in 2024 and 2025.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS – To support the dissemination of information from our Pastor, from our staff, from our ministries, and from our congregation.

Purpose: Provide knowledge to the congregation and to the community which reflects how we grow our lives based on God through our worship and ministries.

1. Be intentional about a consistent look and messaging for all our communications to facilitate comprehension by our congregation and the community.
2. Redesign the current website for a more robust explanation of who we are as Presbyterians, who we are as a church, and who we are as a congregation.
3. Redo the current website's organization and language so that seekers can easily find information.



4. Identify opportunities to relieve Elders and committee members of certain communication tasks which should be accomplished by the current or future staff.
5. Explore existing software and technology capabilities to leverage the effectiveness of Elders and staff.

X. FACILITIES – (Property) To optimize for what we are doing now and moving into the future.

Purpose: Evaluate the Appeal and Function of Facilities for Improvements.

1. The strategic focus of this committee will be to evaluate the appeal and function of our existing facilities to identify and implement improvements to our campus to make it more welcoming and attractive to both visitors and church members.
2. Specific attention will be given to:
 - a. Optimizing the use of the existing facilities.
 - b. Considering how our facilities are experienced by visitors and improving those experiences.
 - c. Evaluating the church's "curb appeal" and making changes to improve first impressions.
 - d. Selective modifications to beautify and modernize our spaces.
3. While Property will take the lead in implementing approved changes, deciding what those changes should be will require active and enthusiastic participation from many ministries and members of the congregation.
 - a. A combination of cross-functional ad hoc committees with selective professional external support where required will be used to identify and evaluate specific improvement opportunities.
 - b. Implementation of simple and inexpensive ideas will begin in 2024 while more complex and expensive changes will likely be spread through 2025 and 2026.