



SAINT LUKE'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Building Sustainable Ministries . . . One Church at a Time

<http://www.ministryarchitects.com/>

St. Luke's Episcopal Church of Birmingham, Alabama

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By Leslie Manning, Lead Consultant and Becki Manni, Staff Consultant

Leslie.manning@ministryarchitects.com

Becki.Manni@ministryarchitects.com

BACKGROUND

St. Luke's Episcopal is a dynamic, inviting congregation in the heart of Crestline, a beautifully charming area in Mountain Brook, Alabama. Nestled in the middle of the community, St. Luke's is known for creative worship styles, a strong day school program, multi-generational congregants, with a long history of excellent preaching and teaching. Church members describe their church family as "warm," "vibrant," "inclusive," and "diverse."

During the 1960s and 1970s, change was a major theme both within the church and the community as Birmingham moved from a steel-based city to a service-oriented metropolis. In the effort to meet the needs of the parish, St. Luke's responded to the desire to expand the roles of all lay people in the life of Saint Luke's. This church body remains committed to seeing that its outstanding facilities are available to the church's communicants as well as to the community for years to come.

The membership of the church is 2,986 on the rolls and on an average week, 925 people attend one of the church's six worship services. They are led by The Rev. Richmond R.

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Webster, The Rev. Rebecca DeBow, The Rev. Dr. Mark LaGory, and The Rev. Mary Bea Sullivan.

The weekly services include 8:00 AM Holy Eucharist, an elegant, classic worship / Rite 1; 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist, elegant, classic worship / Rite II; 10:30 AM The Word & Holy Eucharist is relaxed, family-friendly with modern worship and music; 5:00 PM Holy Eucharist with Jazz and folk inspired, intergenerational worship; 6:30 PM Holy Eucharist meets in the Chapel for Contemplative worship.

The Rector, the Rev. Richmond Webster has been at St. Luke's for 13 years and The Rev. Rebecca DeBow has been at the church for the past ten years. However, over the past two years the church has experienced a series of staff changes in children's ministry. Emily Boles served as full-time director from 2006-2015 and, since that time, the oversight of the children's ministry is under the Rev. Rebecca DeBow. She currently has two part-time support staff with an additional St. Luke's staff person that is paid to assist on Sunday mornings.

Currently, there are 336 children, 3 yrs. – 6th grade, on the rolls of the church. During a typical week, 75 children participate in Sunday school, Children's Chapel and Wednesday night programming. The children's ministry is described by some parents as a "full of joy" and a "warm and inviting place," while others say it is a "disconnected," "haphazard" ministry.

The church has a 2017 budget of \$3,400,000.00, of which \$127,630.00 is dedicated to the children's ministry. This includes the program budget as well as the salaries and benefits for the lay staff (including allotment for a full-time Director of Children's Ministry).

There are typically 15 adult volunteers involved each Sunday in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. During the Sunday school hour, this does not include the four paid staff positions and an additional parent volunteer helps the paid staff person in Children's Chapel each week. The Wednesday night offerings are led by volunteers and paid staff.

The church is currently in the middle of a capital campaign for the purpose of renovating the education and office spaces and creating a centralized entry. The current spaces are designed to house the Atrium and Little Lambs Sunday school needs as well as the Children's Chapel. Nursery and preschool rooms are shared with the attached Day School.

As the church begins the planning for renovating spaces and looks at current enrollment numbers for future growth, the Rector, Rich Webster felt that it was time to assess the

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current status of children’s ministry and hear what might be the current and future hopes, desires, and needs of the St. Luke’s families and staff.

Ministry Architects was invited to do an initial assessment of the children’s ministry and to make recommendations about how it might move strategically forward. Ministry Architects met with 65 individuals in 11 focus groups or one-on-one meetings. What follows are the findings gleaned from those conversations along with recommendations and a proposed timeline for the future.

CHILDREN’S MINISTRY IN CONTEXT

One lens Ministry Architects likes to use for understanding children’s ministry is the idea of the “three rents.” Children’s ministries that “pay these rents” tend to have much greater freedom to be creative, take risks, and experiment with innovative ideas. Those children’s ministries 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 children, parents, staff, and the congregation at large.

Rent #1: NUMBERS—A significant percentage of children 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 children’s 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. Although there is a committed core of children and families in both Sunday morning programming and Wednesday evenings, the current numbers are below what could be expected for a church this size.

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

This rent appears to be partially paid. While not everyone seemed to be aware of how the “atrium” or Catechesis of the Good Shepherd was run or is currently running, those that had experienced it had really positive things to say about the program. Particular moments in the formational process like the Sacramental Retreat for 3rd grade students

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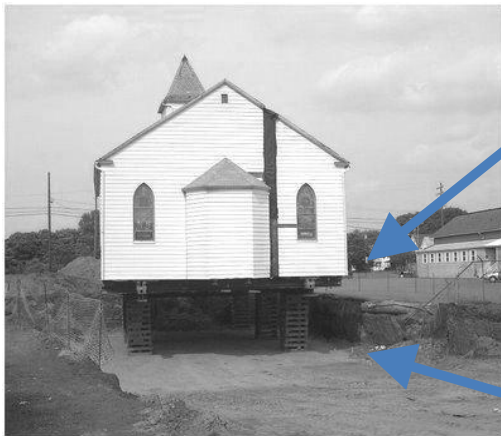
stood out for people.

Rent #3: ENTHUSIASM—The joyful enthusiasm and positive attitude of the children’s staff, volunteers, and the children themselves are essential to building trust with the leadership of the church and with the parents.

This rent does seem to be partially paid. With confusion over roles, and what is being offered and when, this rent is not currently being paid on time. The ministry will need to up its communication efforts and realign its staffing structure to be able to pay this rent.

As the leadership of the children’s ministry develops its long-range vision, it will need, at the same time, to be attentive to these “three rents.” In this sense, the children’s ministry faces parallel challenges.

Ministry Architects pictures the parallel challenge this way:



Laying the Foundation: Building a foundation and infrastructure that will ensure the children’s ministry’s *future* effectiveness, and at the same time,

Continuing to Do Ministry: Maintaining the *current* children’s ministry in a way that builds the enthusiasm of children, their families, the staff and the

As the children’s ministry leadership steps into this parallel process, four rules of thumb – “children’s ministry norms” – will be helpful to keep in mind. These are not necessarily targets for success; they are simply what an average church typically experiences:

1) 15% of the Worshiping Congregation—In a typical church, the size of the children’s ministry tends to settle at a number that is around 15% of the worshiping congregation. A church with an average worship attendance of 925 could expect an average weekly attendance of around 138 children per week. The current weekly

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attendance of 75 children is below what could be expected from the ministry

2) \$1,000 per Child—With a budget of approximately \$127,630.00 (including program budget and staff salaries) dedicated to the children’s ministry, St. Luke’s Episcopal Church has the capacity to effectively reach and maintain a weekly participation level of somewhere in the neighborhood of 128 children in some aspect of the church’s life. With 75 currently participating every week, the ministry is well-funded for continued growth.

3) 1 Full-Time Staff Person for Every 75 Children—Considering all the positions giving time to the children’s ministry, including the Associate Rector and four part-time Catechists/administrative assistants, St. Luke’s Episcopal church *does not* have one dedicated director for children’s ministry. Once the full-time staff person is brought on board, the program will be staffed for the capacity to sustain the engagement of about 150 children on a weekly basis. The current staff configuration allows room for significant numerical growth.

4) 1 Adult for Every 5 Children—Ministry Architects likes to think in terms of “spans of care,” recognizing that, realistically, most volunteers cannot effectively oversee the church’s Christian nurture of more than about five children on an ongoing basis. With 14 weekly volunteers, St. Luke’s Episcopal Church is currently at a ratio of 1 adult leader to every 5.3 children, giving the ministry a capacity for 70 children weekly. In other words, the team is too small to attend to the relational needs of the 75 children who currently attend. The volunteer pool will need to expand if the church wants to sustain its impact with children.

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE STAFF

When a ministry is based solely on the giftedness of a single 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 organization 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

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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 children’s ministry, a laborer might have particular skills in relating to children, in planning and managing events, or in teaching.

Each of these roles is important as St. Luke’s Episcopal Church pursues a more sustainable model of children’s ministry. Currently, St. Luke’s lacks an architect for whom looking at children’s ministry in the broader context is their sole job at the church. Volunteer recruitment, communication, and vision, all begin to fail without an architect. St. Luke’s has a General Contractor and several paid laborers, but past that, the church does not have a complete team. As the church moves forward, the following observations will be helpful to keep in mind:

- In many churches, there is no person or group playing the role of the architect. The ministry simply moves from one event to the next without a clear vision or stated outcomes.
- Sometimes paid staff are not given the time or training to do their important work as the “general contractor” of a complex ministry.
- The staff is often expected to serve in all three of these roles. This is a recipe for congregational dissatisfaction and staff burnout.
- Some churches hire a laborer who is skilled at leading singing, playing games or teaching a Bible lesson. These laborers often mature into an architect or a general contractor, but only if they are given permission, time, and training.

ASSETS

Strengths to protect in the current children’s ministry.

Clarity of Need

There seemed to be an across-the-board consensus that the children’s ministry is not all the children, the parents, the volunteers, and the staff would like it to be. This is a good thing and not often found in churches of this size. Although the theories as to the causes of this situation were varied, there was little disagreement that the children’s ministry, particularly what takes place outside of the atria, needed to be consistent and engaging. It was generally acknowledged that though there are some wonderful “components” to the children’s ministry, namely Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, these

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components lack the kind of integration and structure which would allow them to work together smoothly. This can be viewed as a good situation and leveraged to make needed changes and improvements.

Episcopal Identity

Participants in the listening groups voiced great identification and pride in their denomination and identity in the Episcopal Church. Parents want their children to understand and embrace the liturgy, traditions, and what it means to be an Episcopalian. “Teach the basics of what the liturgy means ‘why we do what we do.’” Through the sacraments and lectionary, one participant noted how excited she is to travel with her children so she can show them “that there are people all over the world that worship like we do.” Another participant noted how important it was for them to find the Episcopal church after being in a different denomination sharing, “It felt like coming home.”

The Word

In almost every session, individuals shared a love for ‘The Word’ worship service, even now as it has moved to Crestline Elementary. One participant shared, “The Word is our modern service that the kids love; younger parents really love it as well.” Another listener said, “My kids do not want to leave church because they enjoy it so much.” Although it was true that not all focus group attendees prefer a more modern worship style, there seemed to be consensus among participants that it offers a needed component to Sunday mornings and acts as a draw for families with children. In each listening group, something was shared to this effect, “The Word is very engaging to our kids.”

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Even as a new level is added, and members are still learning about this long-standing program, the feedback was positive for this spiritual formation program. One person said, “It surprised me that my child loves it so much. He is normally really wild and high-energy but he loves being in the atrium.” Over and beyond, those that have gone through the training and those that had children participating, each shared an appreciation for the “depth of engagement,” and “how it connects with the children on a spiritual and intellectual level.” Many of the catechists noted what a spiritually forming process the training was for them personally and “how it has helped deepen their faith.” While there is room to grow and solidify this program within the children’s ministry, especially at a large parish like St. Luke’s, the response received was positive. With over 30 people trained in Catechesis (that’s 90 hours of training per level!), there has been a significant level of resources, both financially and with time, to make this program a success.

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Healthy Budget

There wasn't a single mention of a limited budget and/or a lack of resources being a roadblock to achieving a sustainable children's ministry at St. Luke's. Usually, in the course of multiple focus groups and multiple one-on-one meetings, it might be expected to hear people talk about a lack of funding as a roadblock to achieving goals. This was not the case. Not only is the church ready to talk about building a sustainable children's ministry, they are currently—proven by the past—willing to put an appropriate amount of resources behind the endeavor.

Building to Suit

The people and staff of St. Luke's are ready and willing to try anything! One participant remarked, "It seems like we are ready to make another hire in Children's Ministry, and decide the best structure for the ministry." Others noted how ready they were to have a full-time person dedicated solely to children's ministry but "were excited to see how the staffing structure turned out." Often times churches are set in their "old ways" in terms of staffing patterns and structures but at St. Luke's, the leadership is willing to try new things and ready to change and adapt as needed.

Wednesday Nights

Despite trends all over the country where families are "too busy" or over-scheduled to attend Wednesday evening church activities, St. Luke's has been able to maintain a core group on Wednesday nights. As the Rector calls it, it can even be a time to "gather and scatter" (meaning dining in and then leaving as you must). "Children enjoy coming so they can see their friends," and the "young families are still able to attend because their kids are not yet in sports and other activities." Although Wednesday night needs some tweaking in the form of more structure and focus, it will be important to use this time wisely and leverage the gifts that have been given to the parish on this particular time in the week, finding even more ways to deepen existing bonds and reach new families.

CHALLENGES

Obstacles to moving the children's ministry strategically forward

Staffing

A supportive combination of volunteer leadership and staff support is necessary to build a sustainable ministry to children. One thing was clearly requested over and over in all

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the listening sessions: the need for dedicated leadership from someone with a clearly defined role and clearly defined goals. The current system of the associate rector and four part-time catechists is not a feasible solution for the whole scope of a vibrant and effective children's ministry. Children's ministry happens 24/7/365 and demands full-time focus and effort. Trying to communicate between these five people, plus the other various departments with whom children's ministry intersects, plus all the parents and volunteers, is an impossible task without someone playing quarterback. There needs to be someone drawing up the game plan and calling the plays in order for the team to be effective on both sides of the ball.

A few thoughts from the groups:

- "A lot of tension and misunderstanding over who is in charge of the ministry."
- "There is a leadership void for the Children's Ministry."
- "Who do you go to when you have a question about Children's Ministry? Johnailla."
- "A large congregation like ours needs staff specified for departments."
- "We need a full-time Children's Ministry Director!"
- "No one knows who "owns" other aspects of Children's Ministry outside of the atrium."
- "Rebecca is spread too thin."
- "Need full-time Children's Ministry Director with the leadership capabilities to hold the ministry accountable."

Communication

One refrain that was repeated in every listening group was the need for better communication. This problem is church-wide. In this age of instant information, there seems to be a vacuum of accessible communications in St. Luke's Children's Ministry, and at times, even church-wide. The staff feels they are putting information out there but no one is reading it. Parents looked dazed and confused from information they learned just by being in the listening groups. Parents were unaware or unsure of what curriculum is being used in their child's Sunday school class, what ages were included in Atrium, and even who they could go to with questions about activities or events.

This leaves members of the congregation to interpret things as they perceive them to be and not as they really are. As one mother put it, "If no one knows who to listen to, they end up listening to no one." It is crucial that the ministry begin to over-communicate with every possible method to be sure members, visitors, and those who may be looking for a church home are able to find the stories of how really great is the parish life of St.

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Luke's.

Missing Organization and Infrastructure

There was general agreement among parents, staff, and volunteers that organization and infrastructure has not been one of the hallmarks of the current children's ministry. The vision and goals are not clear, major events feel a little haphazard, and no one seems to be in charge of team-building or infrastructure. "It seems like we're just throwing things together at the last minute," said one volunteer. "I feel like I always get called when it's an emergency and they can't find anyone else," stated another. "I don't know about things until my calendar is already full and I can't fit this last-minute item in to my family schedule," said a frustrated parent. The need for collaboration between departments and whole church calendaring is critical to allowing parishioners the tools they need to participate in the ministries of the church from the standpoint of the family -- and not just one age group.

Lack of a Strategic Plan

The current staff, volunteers, and parents are passionate about the children's ministry; they want to see marvelous things happen, and they are willing to work, and work sacrificially, to do so. But many indicated a need for strategic planning:

- "It must be organized and purposeful."
- "I don't feel like there is a plan or a commitment to a plan."
- "We have Sunday mornings covered but children's ministry is so much more -- it's every day of the week, all year long."
- "It seems like we don't always know what we're doing; we could use more concrete planning and structure."
- "Children's ministry doesn't just happen on Sunday morning. Determine what each program is designed to target and develop structures to meet a variety of needs."
- "It would be nice to have a permanent structure in the children's ministry that would outlast every personality. We can't keep re-inventing ministry every time we have a staff change."

Without addressing the need for long-term strategic planning, St. Luke's will continue to function in a series of fits and starts compounding the frustrations in the children's ministry.

Where's the Bridge?

In all churches, there needs to be an intentional plan for how children are moved from

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the children's ministry into the youth ministry. Regardless of which grade is determined to be the best place to make this transition, it is essential that kids and their families know how the progression takes place and are educated as to what new responsibilities and opportunities come with the move into youth. The step from being considered a "child" to being a "youth" is significant in the life of a young person, and if not handled proactively, can also be the place where a young person (and their family) walks away from the church (and sometimes the faith).

St. Luke's challenge in this area is that the move from a Catechesis to the youth ministry format will not only be a change in age but in the methods used to help them transition from one learning style to another. Concern was expressed by a number of people in the listening groups about 6th grade kids being included in the teachings and the experiences of the Jr High ministry. It was mentioned that there is a natural ebb and flow of attendance that occurs with specific rites of passage such as 'Created by God' in 6th grade and Confirmation in 9th grade. These milestones appear to keep kids connected and could be used at other ages and stages to keep kids attending consistently. St. Luke's will need to re-evaluate how and where these young people will best be served in each school year between 5/6th and 9th grade.

Not Enough Volunteers

It has been assumed that the search for children's ministry volunteers is so difficult because it would be unrealistic to expect them to participate in a serious training program. One-time orientation has been tried with less than stellar results. In contrast, the highly motivated, increasingly enthusiastic leaders of the catechesis program complete a 90-hour formation program before they can lead a class. The truth is that if given a vision of the value of their time and effort, volunteers are often willing to invest huge amounts of time. "I want something that has intentionality and energy behind it. If it's too easy, it gives the idea that it isn't important for me to be there," said one person. Another said, "Let people know what is going on so they can get involved." Seeking those committed volunteers is often more fruitful outside of the lives of busy parents. Investing 'recruiting time' in the non-parent demographic can be an effective avenue for new recruits and relationships for the children of St. Luke's. A renewed focus on recruiting is critical to sustainable effective ministry.

Facilities Update

The current capital campaign is proof that the church leadership has the best interest of all the ministries in mind. It will be critical at this juncture to have a healthy, sustainable,

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and well-defined structure and vision for all children's ministry needs. This allows everyone to get the most possible out of the planning stages before building actually begins. All programming needs should be considered and accessibility to all ages, stages, and levels will need to be studied. How will it work for Catechesis, as well as for Children's Chapel, Wednesday night programming, and Day School /Nursery needs? Questions that must be answered in order to ensure that the space is welcoming, Safeguarding God's Children compliant, open and welcoming. One person said, "We hope with the new space we will be able to welcome new families into the ministry; the idea is to have a better check-in welcoming space." Others expressed confusion over the plans and how it will affect the Day School and children's ministry saying, "Will there be enough room for solid Wednesday Night programming? Day School activities?" Communication and an assessment of current and future programming is key moving forward.

Reframing the Narrative

A common theme came from the listening sessions concerning the mystique that seems to surround the use of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Many parents are thrilled with what their children are learning in Sunday school but at the same time expressed their confusion and lack of understanding when it come to the actual curriculum being used. If St. Luke's moves forward with the decision to continue using this learning format as their weekly Sunday school curriculum, there will need to be a major emphasis on clarifying and de-mystifying it for the parents and parishioners. Here are comments heard about the curriculum:

- "I like the intellectual and theological focus of Atrium so the kids really get a deep view of the Christian faith."
- "We need Sunday school opportunities for parents to help arm them to help their children through atrium and their spiritual growth at home."
- "Let people know what is going on so they can get involved, they won't get involved unless they feel they know what is going on."
- "Are we doing Level III yet? I am not sure what the older kids get."

Parents are grateful for what their children are learning though they feel out of their own depths in supporting their children through it, and often times, not sure what is being offered.

Need for Identity

In talking with parents, they voiced their uncertainty about the purpose and goals of some of the programs in the children's ministry area. They asked, "How does our

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Wednesday night program blend with our Sunday morning program?" They wanted to see a way that all the programs could be tied together in an effort to meet a common goal of Christian formation for the children.

One area where parents felt uncertain about the purpose of programming was the extent to which Catechesis is used. This program has changed over the past two years, adapted to accommodate the needs of families in regards to schedules. In trying to accommodate everyone's busy schedules, the purpose and true intent has been overdone. It is a popular and well respected curriculum that parents are happy to see used on Sunday mornings for Sunday school. But by the time it is used again in Children's Chapel, Day School Chapel, and then again on Wednesday nights, both kids and families are "over it."

Parents want more for their children in terms of variety and meeting all their children's needs. Catechesis teaches them about a personal relationship with God but what about building relationships with the other kids in the class? The need for fellowship, play, or group dialogue outside of the atrium is clear. Each time slot needs a specific purpose, goal, and engaging format to meet the needs of the families and children involved.

Control Documents

There are several missing important systems and documents in the children's ministry. Without these systems, this area of ministry will continue to struggle to grow until an adequate framework has been provided. Currently missing:

- o Attendance Tracking: Roster-based attendance is taken on Sunday mornings but not at other activities. Leaders know generally how many kids have been coming but cannot verify which youth have been coming from one week to the next.
- o Major Event Notebooks: These need to be created so that volunteers can take more of the lead on planning and implementing events for events. Helpful information and data is not being gathered to enable new volunteers to run these events in the future.
- o Children's Ministry Manual: The budgets, game plans, calendars, background checks, job descriptions, scope and sequence, and visioning documents, if available at all, are all spread out in different places and files.

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- o Communication Plan: St. Luke's does not have a normative process for communicating about the various programs being offered for children. A comprehensive plan using several different types and styles of communication has not yet been developed. However, young families are more likely to visit the website for upcoming event information. Several folks stated how much they would love to see "social media used for children's events," and "I would love to subscribe to a calendar of events on my phone so I am prepared and up-to-date with current offerings." Another participant commented, "Why can't we mirror the schools in terms of timely and relevant communication?"
- o Annual Calendar of Events: One participant in a focus group shared, "I would love to see a calendar for the year so our family can plan around children's ministry events. Even better if it came out with the Youth and Family Ministry calendar." Without this attention to detail and long-range planning, other departments can be left frustrated and the parents themselves will be disappointed when they are surprised by an event.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Reframe the next 18 months as a time of building long-term infrastructure for the children's ministry. Understanding that significant and immediate momentum will be built throughout the process of renovating the children's ministry, target October 2018 as the date when the children's ministry renovation will be complete.
2. Establish a Prayer Team to undergird this renovation process.
3. Present this report to the Vestry, requesting that they endorse an 18-month strategic design process for the children's ministry.
4. Establish a Children's Ministry Renovation Team, made up of at least three non-anxious, goal-oriented volunteers and appropriate staff who will work closely with Ministry Architects to ensure that the outcomes of this assessment are achieved. These recommendations include two overarching responsibilities:
 - I. **Addressing the immediate pressure points** facing the ministry as it transitions toward a thriving, sustainable children's ministry (e.g., keeping the trains running on time)
 - II. **Implementing the strategic, long-term** recommendations of this report (e.g., building a new railway system)
5. Partner with Ministry Architects to take responsibility for

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- I. Managing the renovation process, working with the staff and volunteers to ensure the achievement of the outcomes outlined in this report's timeline
 - II. Assisting the children's ministry in overcoming the obstacles that are certain to arise in the process of renovating the children's ministry.
 - III. Assisting the Renovation Team and Rector with the search process to fill the children's director position.
6. Address the current pressure points facing the children's ministry:

Pressure Point #1: Relieve Staff Pressures and Clarify Roles

Propose and approve an appropriate staffing structure for the size and scope of the ministry.

- o Construct a staffing blueprint that meets the needs and desires of St. Luke's Christian Formation plans
- o Update staff job descriptions

Pressure Point #2: Build the Team

Recruit enough volunteers to ensure that all bases are covered for a Fall Kick-Off.

- o Make a list of immediate volunteer positions that need to be filled.
- o Determine which of those positions can be available for "occasional" volunteers and which need to be filled by consistent volunteers.
- o Complete results-based, written job descriptions for all volunteer positions in the children's ministry.
- o Calendar a leadership launch where volunteers are equipped with all the information they need to know about their role, the resources needed in order to serve in their role (curricula, special knowledge, etc.), and an outline of the major events planned for the entire year.

Pressure Point #3: Parent Communication Plan

Create a parent communication plan that engages them with "at their fingertips" news, updates and tools to be spiritual leaders with the kids.

- o Determine communication strategies that resonate with the DNA of St. Luke's
- o Identify tools, skills, or resources that may need to be cultivated in order to develop serious strength in communication practices.
- o Create a game plan for developing strong communication practices, including a timeline for its implementation. This could include:

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- o Weekly emails with program highlights and information.
- o Handouts with follow-up information after each Sunday school class.
- o Tips on how to “talk Catechesis” with your child
- o Weekly text messages that are sent 10 minutes after the end of each service containing a question parents can ask kids about Sunday school at lunch

Pressure Point #4: Christian Formation Plan – Build clarity and consensus on the learning objectives of each age level and how these might be accomplished utilizing available Catechesis of the Good Shepherd formational program as well as the integration of clear milestones and rites of passage. Naming what the church wants the children to KNOW, FEEL, and DO is important work. A

Christian Formation Summit can take care of these questions and will establish:

- o Overall formation plan from birth to 6th grade
- o One-year detailed plan
- o Milestones & Rites of Passages
- o Special Events Calendar
- o Mission and Outreach Initiatives for Children and their Families

7. Build the long-term infrastructure required for a long-term, sustainable children’s ministry.

- o **Host a “Quick Start” Summit:** Invite the Renovation Team, key volunteers, and children’s staff to participate in a Quick Start Summit in which the renovation process is launched and the pressure points outlined in the Assessment Report are addressed. The Summit tackles the items that need to be done first, and builds momentum for the children's ministry renovation process.
 - Identify any progress in implementing the recommendations of this report.
 - Orient the Renovation Team to their specific responsibilities.
 - Assign Renovation Team members responsibility for implementing the recommendations of the report.
 - Calendar the dates involving Renovation Team.
 - Create a plan for communication between the Renovation Team and staff to ensure that all parties feel they’re “in the know.”
 - Draft the following documents, finalizing them within no more than two weeks after the Summit:
 - o A finalized version of the calendar for all weekly programs and

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- o major special events through December 2017.
- o There are results-based, written job descriptions for all paid and volunteer positions in the children's ministry. The job descriptions cover all current positions and also include additional, non-threatening opportunities for adult involvement in both visible and behind-the-scenes opportunities.
- o A clear and complete list of volunteer needs in the children's ministry, including relational and behind-the-scenes, weekly events, and special event leaders.
- o A broad "fishing pond" list of at least 100 possible volunteers to call about volunteer positions. The list includes people we are sure will say yes, and it includes people we think will never say yes (but we hope they will one day).
- o Reasonable participation goals have been established for all children's ministry events and weekly programs through August 2018 and clear lines of responsibility for filling those events have been established.
- o **Control Document Development:** Complete and publish an 18-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 (like "September: nail down the date for next year's 3rd grade Bible distribution").
- o **Visioning** - Build clarity and consensus of the mission, values, and goals of the children's ministry ensuring that each event supports the mission, values, and goals for the ministry. Consider scheduling a Visioning Summit to assist with these:
 - o Invite Children's ministry stakeholders together to participate in a process of visioning a new future for the children's ministry, resulting in the following documents which will direct the ministry:
 - A ministry mission statement
 - A statement of values
 - A set of three-year revolving goals
 - An organizational structure for the ministry
- o **Compliance Documents:** Ensure that copyright licensing for music and videos has been obtained, an application and screening process for every volunteer is in place, and all adults working with any children affirm a sexual abuse/child

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- protection policy.
- o **Attendance:** Track attendance for all children's activities.
 - o **Building Utilization:** Conduct a usage study for the Atrium. Space and timing are issues surrounding Sunday school. Assess its creative use and consider new ways to leverage this valuable resource. Give parents an opportunity to take part in this study as well as any creative design work.
 - o **Marketing:** Establish clear internal marketing processes that allow parents, children, leaders, and the broader church to be exposed to the successes and good news surrounding the children's ministry.
 - o **Schedule:** Tweak the weekly schedule for corporate children's group activities.
 - o **Communication:** Establish normative processes for effective and timely communication with parents, children, and leaders utilizing as many forms of communication as possible including updating the children's page of the church's website, Facebook, mass texting, mail, e-mail, etc.
 - o **Children's Ministry Manual:** Develop a Children's Ministry Manual, including the most recent children's directory, a 12-18-Month calendar, results-based job descriptions for staff and volunteers, compliance documents, budgets, game plans, a preventative maintenance calendar, and notes for every major children's ministry event.
 - o **Fall Kick-Off/Parent Orientation:** Develop an intentional, family-based, incredibly fun Fall Kickoff event to launch the children's ministry in the fall of 2017. Use that event to cast the vision, share information, and build enthusiasm about the year ahead.
 - o **Enlist an Experienced, Professional Coach:** Invite Ministry Architects to play the "coach" role during this renovation period. Ministry Architects would offer experienced direction for the building of an infrastructure for the children's ministry and provide ongoing coaching for the children's ministry staff members as well as the Renovation Teams.

DEVELOPING AND NURTURING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

- o **Strategic Staffing:** Propose a clear, appropriate long-term staffing plan, including the professional and volunteer components, for the children's ministry that will provide the church with significant capacity to sustain a thriving ministry to its targeted number of children.
- o **Staff Development:** Provide mechanisms for on-going education and coaching for the children's ministry staff including coaching, reading and seminars.

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- o **Sustainable Pace:** Help each children’s ministry 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).
- o **Leadership Development:** Complete results-based, written job descriptions for all paid and volunteer positions in the children’s ministry and create a structure for the ongoing training of all volunteers at least quarterly.
- o **Volunteer Recruitment:** Build a fortified volunteer leadership team, some of who will do relational ministry with children while others work behind the scenes. Create a clear and complete list of the volunteer needs. Create a “fishing pond” list of at least 100 possible volunteers to call on for weekly volunteer positions.
 - Create a list of potential volunteers.
 - Hold a Dial-a-thon – The Renovation Team can assist in making phone calls to recruit potential volunteers.
 - Determine what other heavy lifting roles can be established and recruit accordingly.
 - Visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0C1lfWfGJZ4> to learn about a volunteer recruiting process with proven effectiveness.
 - Ensure that all committed volunteers have had background checks.
- o **Broaden Volunteer Definition and Opportunities:** Create additional, non-threatening opportunities for adult involvement in the program. Encourage volunteer involvement in both visible and behind-the-scenes opportunities.
- o **Leadership Launch:** Schedule and implement an inspiring leadership-training event for all volunteer children’s workers at the beginning of each school year.
- o **Student Leadership Development:** In collaboration with the youth department, develop a written game plan for creating youth leadership opportunities into a system that gives increasing load-bearing responsibility for mentoring and ministry leadership to children.
- o **Fine-tune the Director’s Job:** Shift from the model of a mid-size church – where a full-time children’s director is the superhero who makes everything happen – to a large church model where the Director of Children’s Ministry equips others for doing the ministry, too. The Director becomes an architect and general contractor, nurturing the staff and the volunteers for ministry. That is, the director moves from being the “genius” to being the “genius maker.” Liz Wiseman’s book *Multipliers*, offers useful tips for making that shift.

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DEVELOPING CLEAR STRATEGIES AND NEW INITIATIVES

- o **Day School Connections:** Develop specific communication strategies for inviting the families of the Day School to church at St. Luke's Episcopal as well as children's ministry activities. Create communication timelines that coordinate with publications being created by the Day School staff. Seek opportunities to build exposure and welcome the families into the St. Luke's community.
- o **Parent Engagement:** Create a written process for engaging the majority of parents in the ministry in some way during the 2017-2018 school year.
- o **Parent Support:** Sponsor and execute an encouraging parent support event and create mechanisms for engaging the majority of parents in the children's ministry in some way.
- o **Measurable Markers of Effectiveness:** Determine reasonable participation goals for all children's ministry events and weekly programs through December 2017 and take responsibility for filling those events.
- o **Mission and Outreach:** Continue to build on the desire of children and parents to make a difference in the world, as well as their local community. Develop a clear, focused calendar for involvement in local agencies, as well as, regional, and possibly international missions. Evaluate the current mission opportunities for effectiveness. Create a plan for promoting and exposing the congregation to missions throughout the year.
- o **Integration:** Develop a strategic plan for helping the children become an integral part of the whole church, weaving the children's ministry into the fabric of the entire church.
- o **Personal Connection Plan:** Develop a system for ensuring that every family in the current children's directory is contacted personally at least once a year in order to make a connection, express support, and clarify if there are any parents requesting that their sons and/or daughters be removed from the church's directory.
- o **Children's Contact:** Develop and implement processes for ensuring that each child or parent in the church receives a contact from someone on the children's leadership team at least once a month
- o **First-Timer Process:** Develop a process for welcoming new families, children and guests to the church so that they feel warmly welcomed. Document a timely follow up plan to ensure their return to the church.
- o **Non-parent Recruitment:** Create a game plan to target specific demographics

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- in the congregation when recruiting volunteers.
- o **Facilities:** Determine current and future programming needs that can help influence new church space.
 - o **Ownership:** Create a game plan to encourage a culture where everyone feels valued and equally regarded. Foster a culture that all adults, regardless of their station in life, feel passionate about raising and supporting children in their Christian faith.
 - o **Relational Strategy:** Develop a plan for the staff and volunteers to foster a relational atmosphere and build incarnational relationships with children for deep & long-lasting impact in the ministry.
 - o **Pre-Teen Ministry:** Create a ministry plan specifically geared to 4th – 6th grades to build community among the children and ensure their transition into the youth ministry.
 - o **Family Ministry:** Work with Family Ministry to plan one or two family events throughout the year focused on building family relationships and fun fellowship.
 - o **Rites of Passage (or Milestones):** Develop a written plan for the processes, events, and privileges that includes:
 - o **First Steps Milestone**
 - Purpose: introduces the congregation to a few of the youngest members and makes both children and parents more comfortable with Sunday school. It reminds both children and their parents of the importance of attending Sunday school.
 - o **Welcome to Worship**
 - Purpose: intentionally extends the welcome mat to children and their parents. It also introduces children, and the adults who care for them, to worship and worship space.
 - o **Anniversary of Baptism**
 - Purpose: Reminds those who have been baptized during the past year, their families, and the congregation of the promises made to everyone at baptism. It is an opportunity to remind everyone that living our baptism is a lifelong journey—and one needs to be prepared to live and walk wet.
 - o **Prayer Milestone**
 - Purpose: To encourage the congregation to can keep its promise to equip and support parents to pass on faith. Through this milestone, children learn they have a direct relationship with God and Jesus through prayer.

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- **Bibles to 3rd Grade Students**
 - Purpose: To invite children into the community's practice of reading scripture together through the Sacramental Retreat.
- **Acolyte Invitation to 3rd grade youth**
 - Purpose: To recognize leadership abilities of children in worship.
- **6th graders moving into the middle school ministry**
 - Purpose: To welcome the rising 7th graders into the middle school ministry.
- **Blessing of the Backpacks**
 - Purpose: To mark the passage of summer and to help children and adults transition back into the fall schedule, reminding the children that Jesus is always with us.

PROPOSED TIMELINE

The following provides St. Luke's Episcopal Church with a timeline that can serve as a blueprint for the strategic launch of sustainable, long-term children's ministry.

Many churches choose to use the services of Ministry Architects to provide coaching and experienced troubleshooting through this infrastructure-building process. If the church would like Ministry Architects to provide more specialized consulting in certain areas, particularly for the 18-month transition, we are available to help.

April 2017

Focus: Starting Right and Work Begins

Outcomes:

- This report has been presented to the Vestry for the strategic renovation of the children's ministry and the Vestry has given full support of this plan.
- A Quick Start Summit has been scheduled for May 2017.
- The Renovation Team for children 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 children's ministry. They have received a copy of the assessment report and timeline.
- A thank you event for all volunteers has been planned and scheduled to happen by the end of May. This event has also been communicated to all volunteers.

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- The church has partnered with Ministry Architects to serve as the architect for the entire renovation process including the Search Process for a new Children’s Ministry Director.
- **Parent Communication Plan** – Create a parent communication plan that engages them with “at their fingertips” news, updates and tools to be spiritual leaders with the kids.
 - Determine communication strategies that resonate with the DNA of St. Luke’s
 - Identify tools, skills, or resources that may need to be cultivated in order to develop serious strength in communication practices.
 - Create a game plan for developing strong communication practices, including a timeline for its implementation. This could include:
 - Weekly emails with program highlights and information.
 - Handouts with follow-up information after each Season and Feast Day.
 - Tips on how to “talk Catechesis” with your child.
 - Weekly text messages that are sent 10 minutes after the end of each service containing a question parents can ask kids about Sunday school at lunch

May 2017

Focus: Renovation Underway, Calendars, Volunteers, Database, Volunteer Thank You

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 children’s ministry renovation process.
- A Christian Formation Summit has been scheduled for July. The Summit will facilitate a discussion of the learning objectives of each age level and how these might be accomplished utilizing available curriculum.
- **Relieve Staff Pressures and Clarify Roles:** Propose and approve an appropriate staffing structure for the size and scope of the ministry. Consider a Quick Start Summit while accomplishing the following infrastructure tasks:
 - Construct a staffing blueprint that meets the needs and desires of St. Luke’s Christian Formation plans

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- o Update staff job descriptions
- o Recruit a Children’s Ministry committee
- o Assign roles to the members of the committee
- o Search Team is assembled and oriented.
- o Pursue hiring a full-time Children’s Ministry Director
- Mechanisms for on-going education and coaching for the children’s ministry staff and key volunteers have been provided.
- **Build the Team** – Recruit enough volunteers to ensure that all bases are covered for all programming for the Fall Kick-Off.
 - o Make a list of immediate volunteer positions that need to be filled.
 - o Determine which of those positions can be available for “occasional” volunteers and which need to be filled by consistent volunteers.
 - o Complete results-based, written job descriptions for all volunteer positions in the children’s ministry.
 - o Calendar a leadership launch where volunteers are equipped with all the information they need to know about their role, the resources needed in order to serve in their role (curricula, special knowledge, etc.), and an outline of the major events planned for the entire year.
- o Create a list of potential volunteers.
- o Hold a Dial-a-thon – The Renovation Team can assist in making phone calls to recruit potential volunteers.
- o Determine what other heavy lifting roles can be established and recruit accordingly.
- o Visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0C1fWfGJZ4> to learn about a volunteer recruiting process with proven effectiveness.
- o Ensure that all committed volunteers have had background checks.
- o Don’t give up!
- Work on the children’s database has begun, collecting the most recent information for families and children. All are categorized in a manner that will follow up on MIA families and children. Each child has been classified in the following categories:
 - Active Children** are the ones whose families are members and have attended at least once in the past year – plus visitors who have become a regular part of the group. They should show up in your printed children’s ministry directory.

Member Inactive (MIA) are still a part of the flock. You may not need to

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send them a Facebook message every time the group gets together, but you'll want to regularly pursue these children, whether they ever show up or not.

Visitor Active are those who regularly attend weekly programs and/or activities but are not an official member 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 a program 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.

- Work has begun on the 2017-2018 children's ministry calendar.
- A thank you event for all children's ministry volunteers has taken place.

June 2017

Focus: Calendars, Database, Communications, Visioning Promotion, Fall Kick-off

Outcomes:

- A usage study for the Atrium and all children's spaces has been completed. Recommendations have been made to the building planning team.
- A database of all children and their families has been compiled and each person is "tagged" with a category
- Communication norms have been determined in preparation for the new school year.
- The 2017-2018 children's ministry calendar has been completed. Key upcoming events are calendars: Parent Orientation, Fall Kickoff, and Blessing of the Backpacks.
- A Fall Kick-off for the children's ministry has been scheduled for September. A team of parents has been recruited to implement the Fall Kick-off.
- A Leadership Launch has been scheduled for August for the volunteers in the children's ministry.

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- St. Luke's search for the Director of Children's Ministries continues.

July 2017

Focus: Visioning Summit, Pressure Points, Compliance, Calendar

Outcomes:

- A Visioning Summit has been scheduled for October and a "save the date" email/postcard has been sent to all families.
- All programs have adhered to the Safeguarding God's Children policies as laid out by the church.
- All pressure points have been addressed.
- The 2017-2018 children's ministry calendar has been distributed to all children's and their families. The calendar has been publicized and major event dates are on the church's calendar & promotion of the Fall Kickoff celebration has begun.
- A small task force has begun to brainstorm and develop a ministry plan specifically geared to 4th – 6th grades to build community among the children and ensure their transition into the youth ministry.
- A game plan for Wednesday night programming and scheduling has been completed.
- In collaboration with the youth department, a written game plan has been developed for creating youth leadership opportunities into a system that gives increasing load-bearing responsibility for mentoring and ministry leadership to children.

August 2017

Focus: Participation Goals, Volunteers, Curriculum, Leadership Launch

Outcomes:

- Reasonable participation goals have been determined for all children's ministry events and weekly programs through August 2018 and steps to accomplish those targets have begun to be implemented.
- Curriculum has been chosen for the upcoming school year.
- All volunteer needs for the 2017-2018 school year for the children's ministry have been filled.
- A volunteer application, an application process and a screening process for

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- all weekly hands-on volunteers have been created and implemented
- All volunteers have experienced a Leadership Launch, lasting 2-4 hours that clarified their roles, inspired them to grow in their own faith and equipped them to serve. The Safeguarding God's Children Policy was reviewed and adopted by all volunteers.
- Blessing of the Backpacks has taken place.
- *Sunday Morning Parent Orientation has been set up for September.*

September 2017

Focus: Mid-Course Evaluation, Curriculum, Fall Kick-off

Outcomes:

- The Renovation Team has completed a 6-month mid-course evaluation of the renovation process and made any adjustments necessary to improve the work being done.
- Curriculum has been distributed to all teachers/volunteers and they are trained to implement the curriculum.
- Ministry Architects has spent a half-day onsite with the children's ministry staff building community, working through any current pressure points, and working on upcoming events.
- A Fall Kick-off has taken place that welcomed children and parents into a program they can get excited about, introduced parents to a format and structure they can feel confident about and provided a forum for receiving information from families. All participants felt energized and enthusiastic about the coming year's programs.
- A short and engaging "parent orientation" has taken place on a Sunday morning to inform and engage families regarding the Catechesis practice and intent.
- An engaging video is prepared to show at the parent orientation to reiterate material covered at the parent orientation in the atrium.
- The new tween ministry plan geared to 4th - 6th grades has begun.
- One or two family events have been calendared for the upcoming year. They have focused on building family relationships and fun fellowship.
- Children's Ministry Staff has met with Day School leadership to review calendar for the year and compare notes on upcoming events.

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October 2017

Focus: Major Event Notebooks, Compliance, Budget

Outcomes

- A Visioning Summit with all major stakeholders has occurred producing visioning documents for the children's ministry (mission statement, core values, goals and structure).
- **Visioning** - Build clarity and consensus of the mission, values, and goals of the children's ministry ensuring that each event supports the mission, values, and goals for the ministry. Consider scheduling a Visioning Summit to assist with these:
 - Invite Children's ministry stakeholders together to participate in a process of visioning a new future for the children's ministry, resulting in the following documents which will direct the ministry:
 - A ministry mission statement
 - A statement of values
 - A set of three-year revolving goals
 - An organizational structure for the ministry
- One-year benchmarks have been assigned to each three-year, revolving goal developed in the visioning process.
- A plan for the Rites of Passage processes, events, and privileges has been launched that includes:
 - **First Steps Milestone**
 - Has introduced the congregation to a few of our youngest members and made both children and parents more comfortable with Sunday school. It reminded both children and their parents of the importance of attending Sunday school.
 - **Welcome to Worship**
 - Has intentionally extended the welcome mat to children and their parents. It has also introduced children, and the adults who care for them, to worship and the worship space.
 - **Anniversary of Baptism**
 - Has reminded those who have been baptized during the past year,

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their families, and the congregation of the promises made to everyone at baptism. It was an opportunity to remind everyone that living our baptism is a lifelong journey—and one needs to be prepared to live and walk wet.

- **Prayer Milestone**
 - Has been a way a congregation can keep its promise to equip and support parents to pass on faith. Through this milestone, children have learned they have a direct relationship with God and Jesus through prayer.
 - **Kindergarten children invited to Children's Church**
 - Has invited younger children into the special worship experience of elementary age children.
 - **Bibles to 8 year olds**
 - Has invited children into the community's practice of reading scripture together.
 - **Sacramental Retreat**
 - **Acolyte Invitation to older elementary children**
 - Has recognized leadership abilities of children in worship.
 - **6th graders moving into the middle school ministry**
 - Has welcomed the rising 7th graders into the Jr. High ministry.
 - **Blessing of the Backpacks**
 - Has marked the passage of summer and helped children and adults transition back into the fall schedule and has served as a reminder that Jesus is always with us.
- Work has begun on major event notebooks – creating a template for the notebooks and collecting information on each children's event.
- Background checks have been done for all weekly hands-on volunteers.
- All paperwork for hands on, weekly volunteers has been updated and is in compliance with the safe church policy.
- Copyright licensing for music and videos has been obtained. Permission slips for each offsite event in addition to standard medical release forms for the entire year have been created.
- A detailed 2018 budget for the children's ministry has been completed and submitted to the appropriate group.
- Children's Ministry has partnered with the Day School to support the Trunk or Treat event.

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November 2017

Focus: Curriculum Summit, Communication, Compliance, Attendance

Outcomes:

- Interested staff, volunteers, and parents have gathered for a Christian Formation Summit to discuss the learning objectives of each age level and how these might be accomplished utilizing available curriculum, milestones and special programming. At the Summit, the team
 - Evaluated the upcoming curriculum to ensure its effectiveness.
 - Developed a long-range scope and sequence as well as a set of core competencies for the children's and youth ministries programming.
 - Develop a clear plan for milestones and special events to shape the faith formation through the ages and stages.
 - Determined how the curriculum selected will be communicated to volunteers.
 - Decided what level of training will be required prior to full implementation.
- Communication methods currently being used to promote the children's ministry and share the successes with the congregation have been evaluated and added to if necessary.
- Continuing education opportunities have been explored and calendared for the children's ministry staff.
- Building on the desire of children and parents to make a difference in the world and their community, a calendar for involvement in local agencies, as well as, regional, and possibly international missions has been well publicized. Current mission opportunities have been evaluated for their effectiveness.
- A process for tracking and recording attendance in all children's ministry programs has been created and implemented.
- All game plans that have been launched in last 12 months have been evaluated and tweaked as necessary for impact and sustainability.

December 2017

Focus: Summer Calendar, Catch Up, Marketing, Catch Up

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Outcomes:

- The Renovation Team has met monthly and decided how often they will meet for the remainder of the 18 months.
- Work has begun on the summer calendar for 2018.
- Continuing education opportunities have been explored for the children's ministry staff.
- Clear, internal marketing processes have been established that allow all church members to be exposed to the successes and good news surrounding the children's ministry.
- Each children's staff member has created a Rhythmic Week including balcony time and has begun to live into their Rhythmic Week.

January 2018

Focus: Benchmarks, Summer Calendar, Volunteer Training, Calendar

Outcomes:

- 50% of the one-year benchmarks have been accomplished.
- A mid-year training event has taken place in which all volunteers received support and training in their specific roles. A "check-in" with each volunteer has taken place to evaluate how the volunteer has been doing in their role and addressed any concerns.
- Work has begun on the 2018-2019 children's ministry calendar.
- The summer 2018 calendar for the children's ministry has been completed and distributed.
- A game plan to encourage a culture where everyone feels valued and equally regarded has been implemented. A culture has been fostered that all adults, regardless of their station in life, feel passionate about raising and supporting children in their Christian faith.
- A game plan has been written for the staff and volunteers to foster a relational atmosphere and build incarnational relationships with children for deep & long-lasting impact in the ministry.

February/March 2018

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Focus: Calendar, Volunteer Recruitment

Outcomes:

- The 2018-2019 children's ministry calendar has been completed through August 2019 including a Fall Kick-off.
- New, non-threatening opportunities for adult involvement in the program have been created. Parent involvement has been encouraged, both visible and behind-the-scenes.
- A game plan for inviting specific, non-parent demographics in the congregation when recruiting volunteers has been created.
- Volunteer recruiting seasons has 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 2018-2019 school year.
 - The volunteer needs list and the potential volunteers list has been merged.
 - Current volunteers have been asked to evaluate and possibly renew their commitment to the children's ministry.
 - Recruitment has begun for hands-on weekly volunteers, event coordinators and behind-the-scenes volunteers for 2018-2019.

April 2018

Focus: Database, MIA, Volunteer Thank You

Outcomes:

- A volunteer thank you event has been scheduled and promotional materials have gone out to all children's volunteers.
- **Parent Support:** An encouraging parent support event has engaged the majority of parents in the children's ministry in some way.
- Reasonable participation goals have been established for all children's ministry events and weekly programs through December 2018 and there are clear lines of responsibility for filling those events.
- MIA children have been systematically contacted.
- The collection of updated information from each child and family has been completed and the database for children's ministry has been updated with that new information.

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- A game plan has been created to develop student leadership in the children's ministry. The children have been given charge of creating a welcoming environment.
- A process for engaging the majority of parents in the ministry in some way during the 2017-2018 school year has been written and implemented.

May 2018

Focus: Volunteer Recruitment, Major Event Notebooks, Fall Kick-off, Volunteer Thank You, Reflection & Re-Assessment

Outcomes:

- A review of the renovation process has been completed.
- An online diagnostic has been completed to re-assess the children's ministry.
- Current pressure points have been named
- A volunteer thank you event has taken place.
- All major event notebooks have been updated by the event coordinators and given back to the children's staff to pass along to the next year's coordinator.
- Volunteer recruitment has continued.
- A Fall Kick-off team has been recruited to begin planning for the start of the fall children's ministry programs.

June 2018

Focus: Manual, Directory, Volunteers

Outcomes:

- All volunteer needs for the 2018-2019 school year for children's ministry have been filled.
- With the most recent information on children and their families, a directory of all families and a directory of all volunteers have been created to be distributed at the Fall Kick-off.
- A written communications process has been established for inviting the families of the Day School to church at St. Luke's as well as children's ministry activities.
- A strategic plan has been created for helping the children become an integral part of the whole congregation, weaving the children's ministry into the fabric of the entire church.

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- The Children’s Ministry Manuals (both hard copy and digital) have been completed, including
 - Visioning documents
 - Directories
 - Volunteer directory
 - Volunteer training agendas and notes
 - Attendance records
 - Annual calendar
 - Results-based job descriptions
 - Game plans and new initiatives
 - Meeting agendas and minutes for Children’s Ministry Committee/Renovation Team.
 - Christian Formation Plan and record of curriculum resources used for the current year
 - Budget and other financial documents
 - Recruiting template, with a record of all the volunteer needs for the year
 - Compliance documents

July 2018

Focus: Compliance, Preventative Maintenance Calendar, Curriculum, Benchmarks

Outcomes:

- A preventative maintenance calendar has been created for the children’s ministry that will help regularly deal with on-going “behind the scenes” ministry maintenance.
- The effectiveness of this past year’s curriculum has been reviewed and decisions have been made for any necessary changes for the upcoming school year.
- All paperwork for hands on, weekly volunteers has been updated and is in compliance with the safe church policy. Background checks have been completed on each volunteer.
- A game plan for welcoming new families, children and guests to the church so that they feel warmly welcomed has been implemented. The plan has included a timely follow up plan to ensure their return to the church.
- All one-year benchmarks have been achieved. Goals have been re-upped and new one-year benchmarks have been established.

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- All children's programs have adhered to the Safeguarding God's Children policy.

August 2018

Focus: Major Event Notebooks, Strategic Staffing, Leadership Launch, Participation Goals

Outcomes:

- All volunteers have experienced a Leadership Launch, lasting 2-4 hours that clarified their roles, inspired them to grow in their own faith and equipped them to serve. The Safeguarding God's Children Policy was reviewed and adopted by all volunteers.
- With the changes in the children's ministry, the volunteer staffing to meet the size and scope of the children's ministry has been evaluated and a game plan to meet those needs has been created if necessary.
- Major event notebooks for each major event for the children's ministry have been handed out to this year's event coordinators.
- Reasonable participation goals have been determined for all children's ministry events and weekly programs through August 2019 and steps to accomplish those targets have begun to be implemented.
- A process has been implemented to ensure that each child or parent in the church receives a contact from someone on the children's leadership team at least once a month
- A plan has been implemented for ensuring that every family in the current children's directory has been contacted personally at least once a year in order to make a connection, express support, and clarify if there are any parents requesting that their sons and/or daughters be removed from the church's directory.

September 2018

Focus: Sustainability, Curriculum, Fall Kick-off

Outcomes:

- 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.

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- Game plans have been put in place to sustain the processes and procedures during the renovation
- Ongoing coaching has been secured and a sustainability plan has been put in place.
- The staff and Renovation Team have celebrated what God has done with their 18-month investment.
- The Renovation Team has transitioned their role to providing support and accountability to the children's volunteers and focusing on strategic issues such as three-year goals and one-year benchmarks, curriculum selection, calendars, and volunteer recruitment.
- Curriculum has been distributed to all teachers/volunteers and they have been trained to implement the curriculum.
- A Fall Kick-off has taken place that welcomed children and parents into a program they can get excited about, introduced parents to a format and structure they can feel confident about and provided a forum for receiving information from families. All participants feel energized and enthusiastic about the coming year's programs.

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The *Ministry Architects* Team Serving St. Luke's Episcopal Church Birmingham, Alabama



LESLIE MANNING – LEAD CONSULTANT
Leslie.manning@ministryarchitects.com
205-470-9482



BECKI MANNI – STAFF CONSULTANT
becki.manni@ministryarchitects.com
970-232-5756



STEPHANIE CARO- SENIOR CONSULTANT
Stephanie.caro@ministryarchitects.com
727-215-4067

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