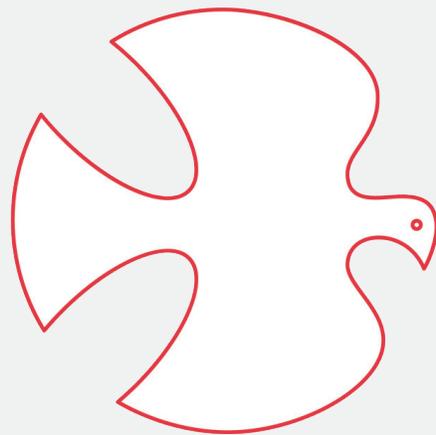
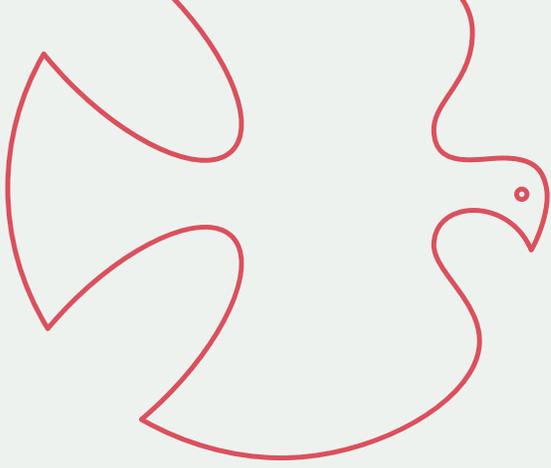


# A Vision for our Future 2020-2022



**ST. COLUMBA'S**  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH





**Dear Ones,**

*St. Columba's is a church on a mission to Live God's Love. I am excited to share this vision and plan with you. In our exuberance and giftedness, we St. Columbans have a tendency to try to be all things to all people. Our vision and plan affirms our particular gifts and passions, and sets a clear direction to inspire and unify us to strive toward common cause. At a time when we often feel divided and encouraged to put our own wants above all others, this vision and plan offers a clear Christian response, equipping us for ministry. We have Good News to share; it is our responsibility and blessing to find creative ways to reach younger generations. With St. Columba's 150th anniversary on the horizon in 2024, now is the time to draw upon our past with thanks for those who came before us. This vision and plan calls us to plant seeds so generations to come will be nourished by the Episcopal Church in Tenleytown.*

*As you will see, our priorities focus on four key areas: Strengthen Community, Practice Faith, Embrace our World, and Build Capacity. In each area, we will expand upon existing commitments and strengths while stretching in creative new ways. We have chosen a dove to signify our future. Known as a symbol of the Holy Spirit and of peace, "Columba" in Latin means dove. With the Celtic cross representing our roots, the dove will lead us beyond and into the future, guided by the Spirit and our patron saint.*

*I am in awe of the extraordinary number of people who participated in this effort and shared their dreams. I am grateful for our guiding task forces, the vestry, and staff members who focused our thinking. I am humbled and inspired by the surprising and generous guidance of the Holy Spirit, leading us to affirm ancient paths and chart new ways as followers of Jesus Christ. I am eager to take the next steps together, and I invite you to take a leap of faith; find your way to embrace this call as we Live God's Love.*

*Make no mistake. This plan is ambitious. Would we have it any other way? Please pray for St. Columba's, that in all things we may be ambitious for Christ Jesus, ambitious for love, ambitious to care for neighbor, self, friend, and stranger.*

*May God bless you and bless the ministry of this church.*

*Peace!*

*The Rev. Ledlie I. Laughlin, Rector*



## *a case for change*

In an era when the viability of many religious institutions is uncertain, where many predict an inexorable decline in the relevance of Christianity in the United States, St. Columba's Episcopal Church is blessed with energy and vitality. Our challenge is to harness that energy effectively to maximize impact. As the largest parish in the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, St. Columba's has the capacity to apply our Christian faith in powerful ways.

This strategic plan sets forth an aspiration for what we can accomplish together over the next three years, reflecting the contributions and commitment of hundreds of St. Columbans of all ages. It highlights four priorities that will guide our work, and it serves as a roadmap for where we will apply the bulk of our resources.



## our purpose

*St. Columba's is a welcoming Christian community of all ages that encourages spiritual curiosity, celebrates children and youth, and embraces the world in the spirit of God's justice and love.*



## our values

Our values inform our parish life, guide us in our mission, and lead us to realize our vision for the future. We are:

### ***Open-hearted***

Whoever you are, wherever you are in your journey of faith, you are welcome at St. Columba's.

### ***Growing in Faith***

We are growing in Christ's love through worship, song, study, prayer, and celebration.

### ***Grateful Stewards***

We approach our relationships and ministries with integrity and humility, and we preserve, protect, and restore God's creation and all resources entrusted to our care.

### ***Innovative***

We are forward-looking and creative, as we seek to embody and share God's love in a changing world.

### ***Called to Bold Action***

We practice Christianity to create a just society, seeking allies and nurturing partnerships to serve our neighborhood, our city, and the world.

# our priorities

*St. Columba's is committed to four core priorities:*



## **Strengthen Community**

We will be generous and open-hearted.



## **Practice Faith**

We will embrace discipleship and spiritual growth.



## **Embrace our World**

We will lead through acts of service.



## **Build Capacity**

We will ensure the parish has the resources required to achieve its mission.





## Strengthen Community

We will strengthen the bonds of our intergenerational community by emphasizing fellowship in our ministries, programs, and parish life. We will be open and welcoming, creating deeper connections with one another as we journey inward and extend ourselves outward to be God's hands in the world. We will:

- Connect more people to one another through transformative faith experiences and a deeper religious practice, such as St. Columba's Circles.
- Create more opportunities for fun and fellowship to build community and celebrate God's love.
- Work with parishioners, ministries, and our partners, seeking new ways to open our hearts and doors to all people.
- Establish and nurture a culture for enriching and replenishing leadership.
- Increase accessibility and presentation of our physical space to offer a warm and inviting place for ourselves, our neighbors, and the wider community.



## Practice Faith

We affirm our commitment to spiritual growth and formation by building on the strengths of our current worship and formation programming. We will:

- Proclaim and celebrate God's love through excellence in our worship, music, programming, ministries, and outreach.
- Follow the call of our Presiding Bishop to reclaim Christianity as a faith that is grounded in love, compassion, and justice.
- Equip parishioners of all ages to embrace discipleship in daily life.
- Invite children, youth, and adults into a deeper relationship with God.
- Expand our programs, align our leadership, and leverage our facilities and resources to honor and express the many ways we experience spiritual growth and formation.
- Invite and create expressions of vulnerability such as our series of faith stories.
- Leverage social media to expand accessibility to and awareness of our messages and programs, to meet parishioners and the religiously unaffiliated wherever they are.



## Embrace our World

As a beacon of God's justice and love, we are called to embrace our city and the world, leading through acts of service. We believe that meaningful engagement with people with whom we share our city and our world is a compelling way to live out Christ's first commandment and to share the good news of God's love. We will:

- Define the position, hire and onboard a director of social justice ministries who will strengthen our existing programs and provide the capacity to build for the future.
- Invest in internal infrastructure to harness and leverage the talents and interests of the parish in our service to others.
- Create new opportunities to grow spiritually and to draw us closer to God and one another through serving others.
- Launch a comprehensive and integrated parish-wide initiative around family homelessness that provides parishioners different ways to engage and establishes long-term relationships with families and persons in their community and with our partners.
- Implement a strategy to invite and engage our neighbors and the wider community to bolster our efforts, build excitement and create bold action in the spirit of giving in service to others.



## Build Capacity

Achieving the ambitious goals to which we are called will require additional capacity within our staff and across our congregation. We must be intentional about securing the additional resources we need and equipping ourselves to pursue even greater opportunities for impact in the future.

To ensure that the church is the catalyst for peace and justice we need it to be, we will:

- Align staff resources to meet strategic priorities.
- Increase our annual pledges at a rate that exceeds inflation to ensure we have the resources to fund our operating budget.
- Build an endowment to secure our financial future in part by significantly increasing membership in the Iona Society, a planned giving initiative.
- Develop a comprehensive master plan for our campus and facilities that identifies how we can best use these assets to support our mission.
- Conduct a capital campaign in conjunction with our 150th anniversary to fund our future priorities.

# our process

At St. Columba's we are on a mission to Live God's Love through worship, service, and celebration. Prompted by our approaching 150th anniversary and inspired by a renewed spirit of adventure, hopefulness, and momentum, we took the call to anticipate how we best position ourselves to be a source of Christ's light for generations to come.

Under the leadership of our rector, Ledlie Laughlin, and guided by task forces focused on our mission and vision, outreach, and strategic planning, we embarked on a journey of planning for the future. In 2018, committee members, representing a cross section of the church community, began their work. Over the course of 20 months, we gathered and reviewed data, convened with staff, vestry, and congregational and community leaders, and held an eventful parish-wide Inspiration Sunday during which 449 children, youth, and adults shared their ambition for our future through 53 small group discussions and 72 questionnaires. This work led to the creation of St. Columba's updated mission statement, values, and strategic priorities. Further development of specific plans for each of the four strategic priorities grew out of the mission and vision work and entailed working closely with staff, the vestry, and congregational leaders.

This process was substantive, inclusive, and enlightening and led to a plan that will make us stronger by bringing us together with intention and a common purpose.

We are grateful for the work and contributions of all those who gave of their time and themselves in the spirit of God's love.

## **Strategic Planning Committee Members**

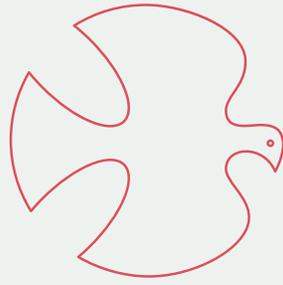
Susan Gray (co-chair)  
Patty Jensen  
Fletcher Jones  
The Reverend Ledlie I. Laughlin, Rector  
Lauralyn Lee  
Stephen Smith (co-chair)  
Josh Wilson  
Sandy Kolb, facilitator

## **Mission and Vision Taskforce Members**

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David Fahrenthold  
Susan Gray  
Patty Jensen (co-chair)  
The Reverend Ledlie I. Laughlin, Rector  
Elizabeth Vaden  
Josh Wilson (co-chair)

## **Outreach Vision Taskforce Members**

The Reverend David Griswold  
Alix Guerrier  
Lauralyn Lee (co-chair)  
Elizabeth Lewis  
Kris Moore  
Ron Wisor (co-chair)



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*Live God's Love*