“Seek and you will find.”
– Luke 11:9

St. Luke’s Episcopal Church ~ East Greenwich, Rhode Island
September 2011
Prayer for the Search for the Rector of St. Luke’s

O God of patient and gentle strength, who knows our needs even before we ask, may your loving presence guide us as we seek the next Rector for St. Luke’s Church. Give us an open spirit, discerning hearts and clear minds, that we may trust your will for us and become ever more united in your son our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Inspire our conversation, deepen our prayer, and make us a community of humility and grace. Raise up for us, we pray, a priest and pastor who will boldly proclaim your Gospel, faithfully administer your sacraments, and serve your people with love and compassion. All this we ask through Jesus our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

Our Mission

We are the Body of Christ, welcoming all to worship and serve God in order to reflect and pass on the light of Christ.
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**Contact Information**

To nominate a candidate for Rector of St. Luke’s Church, please contact Betsy Fornal, Canon for Congregations and Clergy, Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island: betsy@episcopalri.org or 401-274-4500, ext. 225.

If you have questions about any part of the transition process at St. Luke’s Church, please contact Fran Gammell-Roach, Chair of the Search Committee, at fran@thechemco.com or 401-595-3007.
Welcome to St. Luke’s

Walk into St. Luke’s Church on any given day and what will you find? A magnificent worship space… A welcoming staff… Volunteer parishioners tending to the church’s many ministries and outreach programs… Children scampering to classrooms for religious or musical instruction… Members of the local community using our facility for meeting space… Our music director’s Yorkshire terrier, looking for a treat…

But perhaps more important than what you will find within the doors of St. Luke’s is what you will feel: warmth… acceptance… openness… indeed, God’s grace at work. In that midst, we eagerly await the arrival of our new Rector.

Founded in 1834, St. Luke’s is one of the oldest and largest parishes in the Diocese of Rhode Island. We are a visible and active presence in the community, welcoming one and all to join us in worship and in doing God’s work. We take great pride in our Anglican traditions, our passion for music and Christian formation, our embrace of young families, and our growing commitment to outreach.

This Parish Profile outlines who we are today and who we aspire to be in the future. It was developed by a Self-Study Committee, following extensive research through surveys, group meetings, and interviews. As such, it reflects the responses and feelings expressed by our parishioners.

Thank you for your interest as we begin to write the next chapter in our long and rich history. We welcome the opportunity to discuss our church’s future further with you.

St. Luke’s Church Self-Study Committee
A Vision of Our Future

St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in East Greenwich will be the dynamic spiritual home for an engaged, committed, and growing family of Christians who live the Mission of St. Luke’s in their parish, community, and diocese. The spirit of Jesus and our church will be alive in all that we do, personified by our members inside and outside our walls. St. Luke’s will be a beacon for our community, drawing faithful people of diverse backgrounds and talents to worship and serve God together in a spiritually rich environment. We will emanate a warm commitment to be good stewards of our resources and abilities among our neighbors.

The environment that is St. Luke’s will embody many characteristics, most especially:

The people of St. Luke’s will be inclusive, welcoming and diverse in what they bring to their church. Families, singles, and children of all ages will openly engage with one another with a sense of caring, understanding, and a shared commitment to their faith.

The worship experience will define the core of who we are, enriching parishioners with engaging preaching, rich liturgy, and inspirational music. A flexible structure of service options will accommodate a variety of personal preferences. Most of all, we will balance an appreciation of our Episcopal traditions with an openness to contemporary worship experience.

St. Luke’s will be committed to Christian formation at all levels, providing ongoing and varied educational opportunities to our young people and adults to nurture their spiritual development and relationship with God.

A strong commitment to outreach and to mission will touch all who worship here. We will appreciate that the strength we receive from our inward experiences at St. Luke’s is only of value in the eyes of God when we carry it outward to people who will benefit from what we can offer, in our community, in our diocese, and beyond.

St. Luke’s will be a large and growing parish, a significant and visible leader in our diocesan and secular communities. While we will value our history and preserve the physical beauty and sense of comfort that our buildings provide, we will open our doors willingly to welcome all who can grow in God’s love in this place.

We will value an awareness of and commitment to stewardship, so that our parishioners may know the joy of faithful giving and so that St. Luke’s may have the collective resources to grow our mission.

We will demonstrate shared leadership in all that we do, with a balance of strong clergy and committed volunteer laity. Our leaders will have an appreciation for succession planning within our ministries, one that encompasses all parishioners as they seek to deepen their relationship with God.
Our Strategic Goals and Objectives

**GOAL I**

**Make worship more meaningful for all parishioners**

*Objective 1:* Expand worship offerings to appeal to the varied liturgical preferences of the congregation.

*Objective 2:* Evolve our worship experience to include new practices, while valuing and maintaining our traditions.

**GOAL II**

**Communicate, connect, and engage more effectively with our congregation and community**

*Objective 1:* Provide ongoing communications to our internal and external audiences via traditional and new media.

*Objective 2:* Heighten our efforts to welcome and incorporate newcomers into our congregation, to broaden our diversity and grow the parish.

*Objective 3:* Foster improved intra-congregation fellowship and support.

**GOAL III**

**Increase our focus on and participation in parish-supported outreach**

*Objective 1:* Strengthen and support our outreach programs, including a cohesive outreach strategy.

*Objective 2:* Build awareness of outreach opportunities, especially “short-burst” options that are easier to embrace.

*Objective 3:* Grow parishioner participation in outreach ministries.

**GOAL IV**

**Engage all interested parishioners in education, mission, and ministry**

*Objective 1:* Support programming for youth and adult education on all levels.

*Objective 2:* Expand opportunities for youth and adults to participate in the ministries of the parish.

*Objective 3:* Recruit next generation of church school teachers, especially at the J2A level.

**GOAL V**

**Deepen stewardship awareness and improve financial condition of the parish**

*Objective 1:* Increase parish giving by 5% per year – time, talent and treasure.

*Objective 2:* Increase focus for ongoing stewardship training of all types, to deepen spiritual awareness and the joy of giving.

*Objective 3:* Increase our financial abilities to fund current and future parish needs.

*Objective 4:* Promote planned giving and endowments.

**GOAL VI**

**Ensure leadership continuity**

*Objective 1:* Ensure the comprehensive, effective and successful integration of our new Rector.

*Objective 2:* Plan and implement an effective succession for Music Director in a way that embraces our strong music tradition.

Please note that it is the Vestry’s intention to develop measurable actions for each objective once the new Rector has joined us.
What We Seek in a Rector

When we asked parishioners what they were looking for in a Rector, five important traits emerged. We want our next Rector to:

1. Be a strong spiritual leader

We look to our new Rector to be our spiritual leader, advisor, and shepherd. He or she will help us to explore and define our spiritual paths as they intertwine with current social, cultural, and political issues. Our Rector will openly welcome everyone into our church.

We look forward to hearing our new Rector’s personal views on all subjects, as well as the engaged discussion that those beliefs may generate. We are a congregation with a diversity of views, and we embrace the active and ongoing dialogue that such diversity creates.

2. Embrace a collaborative relationship with our strong lay leadership

A strong lay leadership has been a notable characteristic of St. Luke’s for many years, and became even more evident through our self-study period. Along with a very good interim team, our lay leaders have helped us navigate this period smoothly. We are looking for a new Rector who wants to take advantage of our lay resources and capabilities, provide direction to the laity, identify parishioner gifts (spiritual or otherwise), and further encourage people to get “plugged in”.

St. Luke’s has had a rich history of “assisting clergy” in the form of Curates, Priest Associates, and Deacons. Funding of paid assistant clergy has always been a challenge. Despite the strong “augmented leadership” that comes from our active lay involvement, we understand that the needs of our parish are best served by a full-time Rector and some additional level of clergy support.

We look forward to working with our new Rector to assess the needs of the congregation and our finances – including stewardship resources – so that the church can welcome an additional priest, either part- or full-time.

A very involved lay leadership will help our new Rector handle the workload at St. Luke’s. While we place “spiritual leadership” at the top of the list of what we are seeking from our new Rector, he or she will still be the “conductor” of St. Luke’s “orchestra”, responsible for running the church. Accordingly, our Rector needs to have a clear and realistic grasp of financial issues and stewardship. He or she will share responsibilities with the Vestry, finance committee, treasurer, and stewardship committee.

“St. Luke’s has a tradition of volunteerism, not only to assist the liturgy, but in the many small groups that make up the character of the Church.”
What We Seek in a Rector (continued)

3. Deliver thought-provoking, lectionary-based sermons

Parishioners voiced that they want a Rector who challenges us, most commonly through thoughtful and intellectually stimulating sermons, but would welcome them to be delivered succinctly. Spiritual challenge on social issues is welcomed, but preaching “party” political views is not. St. Lukers want someone who can connect real-life events to spiritual discovery, illuminated by the “light of Christ”.

4. Provide deeply spiritual and compassionate pastoral care and outreach

We will look to our new Rector for deeply spiritual and compassionate pastoral care. We know that this is not something where needs arise every day for every parishioner, but that the requirement for pastoral care represents a constant demand on every Rector. We will also look to our new Rector to be involved and supportive of our many forms of outreach and ministry, both inside and outside the walls of our church.

5. Continue and augment our leadership presence in the diocese

The Diocese of Rhode Island is being challenged to keep parishes healthy, as are many dioceses. St. Luke’s is one of the three strongest parishes in the Rhode Island Diocese, out of 54. As such, our new Rector will have the opportunity – indeed, perhaps the obligation – to be a leader amongst the diocese and possibly help other parishes become stronger.

“The church runs as a well-oiled machine. What we need is a Rector who will lead us spiritually and in outreach.”
Our Worship and Liturgy

The worship experience at St. Luke's is distinguished by rich tradition, sacred music, and the inclusion and participation of our diverse community in the liturgy. Our historic sanctuary provides a beautiful setting for prayer, reflection, and celebration. We are invited to become the Body of Christ as we gather to share the sacraments. From greeters and ushers and members of the choir to acolytes and Lay Eucharistic Ministers, we hope to reflect a genuine spirit of inclusion. At St. Luke’s, relationships are established and fostered between the worshippers and our Lord Jesus, just as they are built among the members of our parish community.

Sunday services include celebrations of the Eucharist at 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. While the earlier service embraces quiet and traditional forms of the liturgy, the worship service at 10:00 always features music. Encompassing a variety of styles, music at St. Luke’s is distinguished by the sounds of our magnificent Karl Wilhelm organ, as well as piano, guitars, trumpets, bells, and of course, the choir itself.

We encourage the participation of Lay Eucharistic Ministers and lay readers at every service. On special occasions, such as the celebration of Christmas, Palm Sunday, Easter, and Pentecost, we see even greater participation of parishioners in our services. We set aside one week each month for the specific purpose of encouraging young people to take part in the liturgy. The youth choirs sing and young people read the lessons. Our worship is not restricted to Sundays, as many small groups meet in the sanctuary and the chapel during the week for prayer and healing. During recent summers, we have held Saturday evening services in the courtyard, weather permitting. We also conduct a monthly chapel service at St. Elizabeth’s Home.

We are open to welcoming new and different forms of worship into our church. Several years ago, we hosted a U2charist service, featuring the music of U2 in the liturgy. And for many years, we have held a Taize service on Good Friday, which attracts both parishioners and non-parishioners and is among the most beloved services of the year.

“Coming to church challenges us spiritually, intellectually, and makes us think about the hard issues – this begins with a Rector and we need someone to challenge us accordingly.”
Music at St. Luke’s

St. Luke’s is well known throughout Rhode Island for its strong music ministry. Parishioners enjoy numerous opportunities to be involved in the various vocal and instrumental programs that the church offers. And whether or not they are a singer, ringer, or strummer, many parishioners are passionate about our music.

The program ranges from the Angel Choir (4-7 years old), and the St. Cecelia Choir (8-16 years old) to the Canterbury Choir (adults). Also within the music ministry are the Jubilate Ringers, a handbell group that performs at church services and community events.

The music program has flourished under the dedicated and professional guidance of our current music director, Priscilla Rigg, for more than 45 years. As she states, “Music brings rhythm and harmony, and a deeper appreciation for the beauty of the liturgy.”

Currently, there are about 100 people who sing in the choirs or play handbells, with many other dedicated parishioners working behind the scenes. The children’s choirs alone have over 50 members. The St. Cecilia Choir is a member of the Royal School of Church Music Chorister Achievement Program, and there is a comprehensive music and Christian education format for all rehearsals.

The children's music ministry program is truly exceptional. Not only does it teach children about the church and the liturgy along with their musical education, but music becomes essential to their growth at St. Luke’s. The music program goes beyond teaching traditional church music during choir practice; the children also learn music theory, Christian and Episcopalian traditions, life lessons, socialization, and outreach. Many see the children’s music program as one of the most important ministries of the church. As one parent states, “Our children are starved for cultural and artistic food; it’s awesome to be up in the choir with so many children. It’s important for children to have this. It is vital to their growth and development.”

The music program has been an integral part of the liturgy, delivery of worship, and life of the church for over 100 years. The music, both sung and played, has a unique style and variety, from ancient to modern, and thus there is music for everybody. The music helps members learn about Episcopal liturgy and traditions. This is important for both those who have been raised
Music at St. Luke’s (continued)

in the Episcopal Church as well as those that are new to the church. Furthermore, the music program has a mission outside of our church. We reach people throughout the community through our music.

Our new Rector needs to be appreciative of music and eager to support this part of our church’s tradition. He or she needs to understand the importance of music and how it is not only deeply intertwined with our liturgy and worship, but also brings celebration and a sense of community to the church. Indeed, many new families have come here because of our outstanding music program. And it is the music program that keeps many of our families and parishioners at St. Luke’s.

It is critical for our new Rector to understand that our current Music Director will be retiring soon and therefore will have to be replaced. In addition, the operating budget has never been large enough to pay her to work full time, but her dedication and passion have led her to expand the number of activities and keep a full-time pace.

As one would expect in a church where music is such an integral part of the culture and tradition, most of our parishioners embrace music. There are also those who feel there is a disproportionate amount of attention given to music, at the expense of other programs such as Christian Education. Our new Rector needs to be cognizant of these diverging views. He or she will have a challenge as well as a unique opportunity: to recruit a new Music Director and foster coordination among all programs involving children. We hope our new Rector will welcome this challenge.

“The music program teaches children not only music, but Christianity, our Episcopal faith, church traditions, life lessons, socialization, and outreach, while bringing joy.”
Christian Formation at St. Luke’s

Christian Education is vital to our mission as witnesses to Christ in our everyday lives and as effective members of the Episcopal Church community. Parishioners are very supportive of our Sunday School program and impressed by the number of children involved – approximately 150 students in 2010-2011. Many parishioners credit the Christian Education program for drawing families to St. Luke’s in a similar fashion that the children’s music ministry does.

The Christian Education/Formation ministry at St. Luke’s is divided into three parts: Sunday School, Youth Formation, and Adult Formation.

Our Sunday School program includes the teaching of classes from preschool through grade six, including a Corporate Communion preparation class for grade three. The curriculum is lectionary-based to familiarize the children with the day’s Gospel.

For grades three and above, we hold Sunday school classes at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings. For children in pre-K through second grade, classes are held at 10:00 a.m., with children joining the service during the Peace. This practice reflects Bishop Wolf’s belief, firmly expressed in the late 90s, that children in grade three or above should attend the entire worship service with their family. By holding classes for these children at 9:00, families are able to attend either the 8:00 or 10:00 worship service together.

Both the Interim Rector and the Coordinator of Youth Christian Formation agree that children in grade three or above should participate in the full worship service as well as attend their class. However, some parishioners have identified this as an issue for young families, due to the attendance-time expectation for their children in grades three to six – two hours between Sunday school and church. Some parents whose children get religious instruction with the choir forgo Sunday school for these years.

From grades seven through twelve, teens participate in the Journey to Adulthood Program, which comprises Rite-13 (7th and 8th grades, and including Confirmation), J2A (9th and 10th), and Young Adult Christians (11th and 12th). The Journey to Adulthood Program is a complete youth ministry
program of spiritual formation that uses Bible study, prayer, rites of passage, and outreach ministries to help our young people grow in their relationship with God.

The Rite-13 class celebrates the individuality of each young teen and their creative potential. It also recognizes the growing importance of peer relationships in our young people’s lives, and seeks to plant the seeds for a strong peer group right at St. Luke’s. The highlight of the class is the Rite-13 ceremony, which celebrates our teens’ movement beyond their families into a widening world. The service emphasizes that these young people have the love and support of their parents, their peers, and the congregation as they begin their journey.

If the Rite-13 class plants the seeds for a strong and supportive youth group, J2A cultivates it, using a mission trip to the Dominican Republic as its focus. For the majority of our teens over the last 10 years, the DR mission trip has been the highlight of their Christian education experience at St. Luke’s. Our young people spend a week in the barrio village of El Pedregal, experiencing firsthand what outreach means – building a school, fixing a roof, planting a banana grove, painting a home… More important, they experience the light of Christ as they stand side by side and hand in hand with the people of El Pedregal. And when they return to St. Luke’s, they give witness to the church about their experiences.

Some youth have expressed concern that we need to do more to retain the interest of our younger church school children. Activities such as plays and cantatas were suggested, as well as a local mission trip for our junior high students. Such trips are an effective way to engage young people in our program.

Our Young Adult Christians (YACs) group is made up of high school juniors and seniors. They are usually DR mission trip alumni, bonded to one another through that experience and emerging into adulthood with one another’s friendship and support. The group meets on Sunday mornings at St. Luke’s and at various coffee houses on Main Street in town.

Adult Formation at St. Luke’s includes Theology on Tap, a men’s group that gets together to discuss theology and share fellowship in a relaxed setting; the Inquirers class, a seminar for those who want to learn more about the Episcopal Church; the Tuesday Book Group; annual Lenten Study Series; prayer groups; and the recent addition of a clergy book review and discussion, held between services on Sunday.
Outreach and Stewardship

Outreach and stewardship are integrated concepts at St. Luke’s. We embrace the notion of committing our time, talent, and treasure for stewardship.

We are well out of the starting gate. There are outreach ministries underway, with many people involved. Yet, we yearn for more strategic focus, to link what we do in a common thread and a broader ownership throughout the parish. On the stewardship side, we embrace a year-round stewardship process and surge to a focused pledge-drive program in the fall. Despite achieving reasonable financial success to fund annual operations, our appetite to grow programs and extend outreach ministries is financially constrained. More important, joyfully embracing a spiritually grounded understanding of stewardship is owned by only a portion of the parish family. We seek to evolve our stewardship model to build on our stable foundation and carry us to higher appreciation of the faith statement: “All things come of thee, O Lord and of thine own have we given thee.”

Outreach

Current outreach ministries at St. Luke’s are broad and varied:

> **Youth trip to the Dominican Republic** – an every-other-year highlight for the participants and the entire parish, and related CHANCE scholarships to local DR children.

> **Christ Community Kitchen** – a community-based monthly dinner that reaches those in need in our community along with many in our own parish family.

> **Commitment to St. George’s Church in Central Falls, RI** – a broad ministry encompassing soup kitchen, food pantry, financial support, and more, at one of our diocese’s fastest-growing Hispanic congregations.

> **Episcopal Charities** – where St. Luke’s and its members are leaders among the R.I. parishes supporting this Diocesan-wide charity.

> **Giving Tree** – a Christmas outreach of gifts to those in need in our community.

> **Interfaith Food Pantry** – a ministry shared with the Methodist Church.

> **Habitat for Humanity** – engaging locally with financial support and personal volunteerism.

> **Missions Committee** – with funding from a portion of our endowment, offering financial grants to local charities.

> **Episcopal Relief & Development and United Thank Offering** – parish-wide fund-raising support.

> **East Greenwich Interfaith Social Concerns Committee** – clergy engagement with an interfaith communion.

Despite these many and varied outreach ministries, we have lacked an adequately cohesive and strategic outreach focus. We also sense that the individual nature of these efforts leaves many parishioners unengaged in structured outreach. To remedy that, the Vestry recently appointed a chair of Outreach Ministries, to form a committee that will help us grow and focus our outreach efforts.
Outreach and Stewardship (continued)

Stewardship

Many aspects of financial stewardship are functioning well at St. Luke’s, but there is room for improvement. Pledged stewardship income has risen slowly but steadily. The number of pledging units seems relatively stable (despite a slight drop in 2011) but is not growing. We appear to be a little “stuck”.

We have a clear need for greater financial resources to fully fund desired levels for ministry programs, staff compensation, physical plant needs, and outreach. As important, there is a sense that spiritually embracing stewardship as a central part of one’s faith is a value that penetrates only a modest portion of our parish family.

St. Luke’s has embraced a “Year-Round Stewardship Model”. And the Stewardship Committee functions on a year-round basis. The year’s stewardship schedule encompasses planning and preparation, and culminates with pledge drive execution in the fall. We are trying to convey that stewardship is an attitude and lifestyle, not just “fundraising” to meet the needs of the church. We focus on proportionate giving with the tithe as the goal. We rely on parish-wide communications, followed by telephone follow-up to past pledgers from whom we have not yet heard.

We think we do several things well: Personal witnessing about stewardship at pledge-drive time during worship services; creating awareness of the importance of stewardship; Vestry tithing special offerings (Christmas and Easter) to special outreach needs; and written communications to parishioners in the fall campaign. Finally, we are corporately responsive to urgent special needs when funds are short. However, these responses largely come from the same people who are already faithful pledgers.

On the other hand, clearly we can do much better in stewardship. Most important, we need to get more pledging families committed to growing their support through a spiritually based understanding and proportionate giving. We can engage and educate parishioners one-on-one. We need to develop the commitment to deal with financial stewardship as well as we do with the time/talent aspects. We need to get past our “stuck” level of 50% of the congregation being truly committed to pledging. We need to become less reliant on the handful of major givers. Finally, we should more effectively convey to newer parishioners the importance of a commitment to stewardship.

Accordingly, we will welcome some traits in a new Rector to help lead us in the ministry of Stewardship. We seek someone to guide us to a more comprehensive and spiritually based stewardship commitment; who embraces and “buys into” the importance of this concept as a part of the overall experience at St. Luke’s; who focuses on the importance of stewardship as a part of the worship experience; and will be supportive, challenging, and encouraging to the Stewardship Committee leadership.

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Our Parish Life

“St. Luke’s is a seven-day-a-week church.”

St. Luke’s is most importantly a spiritual place. Our parishioners pride themselves on maintaining a small parish feel despite the fact that we are one of the largest parishes in the state. It is a place where old and young, conservative and liberal, married and singles can worship and share fellowship in a warm and accepting atmosphere. There are all types of families and friends worshipping together. Many people express that they have stayed due to the feelings of warmth, and community. God’s love in action here. There is agreement that we will not agree on everything, but we will grow together in faith. Many have stated that it is very important to maintain the Episcopal values of inclusion and acceptance for and of everyone, while honoring, maintaining, and teaching our wonderful traditions. We view ourselves as “compassionate Christians with a sense of humor”.

This sense of community is accomplished through a dedicated group of volunteers who welcome newcomers and regulars to our services with warmth and information. The pews themselves have welcome cards that people can fill out, and next to that a card that reads “God put the wiggle in children” which is a lovely way to make sure parents don’t feel self-conscious joining the service with their children. During the service, there are many ushers available to guide those who are unfamiliar with the routine, or just need a welcoming hand to participate.

After each service, there is a coffee hour with baked goods provided by a very talented group of parishioners. Many generations enjoy fellowship as one Christian family, and the occasional four-legged friend is also warmly welcomed.

Parishioners at St. Luke’s are committed to being a welcoming church for all sorts of families and single people. We are striving to accomplish this openness with a sense of warmth, community, spirituality, and love. Small groups within the Church provide opportunities for spiritual growth, development of mission outreach, and fellowship. Some say St. Luke’s has a motto of “Get a grip…get a group.” The list of programs and groups is long and evolving, and includes:

| > Acolytes | > Missions |
| Altar Guild | Pastoral Care Committee |
| Centering Prayer (prayer group) | Property Management Committee |
| Choirs | Property Breakfast |
| Christ’s Community Kitchen (monthly community dinner) | Salt Shakers (small dinner groups) |
| Coffee Hour | Soup Kitchen support groups |
| Columbarium/Memorial Garden | St. Elizabeth’s Community and The Seasons (services for local nursing home and assisted care) |
| Ecumenical Food Cupboard | Stewardship |
| Eucharistic Ministers and Visitors | The Giving Tree (Christmas gifts for needy) |
| Faith in Film (monthly movie night) | Theology on Tap (men’s group) |
| Finance Committee | Ushers |
| Gifts and Memorials | Women of Wisdom (book group) |
| Greeters | Women’s Evening Prayer Group |
| Habitat for Humanity | |

St. Luke’s Episcopal Church: Parish Profile 2011
Governance and Leadership

Staff
St. Luke’s has a paid part-time staff of seven, complemented by many volunteer parishioners.

Paid Staff

Our Bookkeeper (Gayle Bundy, ~15 hours per week) maintains financial records and payroll, and validates and pays invoices, under the direction of the Treasurer.

Our Administrative Assistant (Barbara De Fusco, ~25 hours per week) is the office chieftain and guides most administrative and scheduling activities. She publishes a monthly newsletter, manages our web site, and is responsible for office and technology budgets.

Our Coordinator of Youth Christian Formation (Susan MacDonald, ~15 hours per week) establishes the Christian education curriculum and manages a staff of volunteer instructors. She is responsible for associated budgets and organizes children’s participation in parish-wide activities throughout the year.

Our Music Director (Priscilla Rigg, paid for ~20 hours per week, but probably works 35-40 hours) is responsible for music planning for all liturgies. She directs our three choirs, as well as an ecumenical handbell choir, and provides leadership and liaison with other musical organizations.

Our Nursery Coordinator (Karen Simas, ~20 hours per month) operates the nursery at Sunday services and special events.

Our Lead and Assistant Sextons (Steve Yanku and David Rodriguez, ~15 hours per week each) provide regular and long-term maintenance and repair of the church property. Their efforts are augmented by external contractors for gardening and snow removal tasks.

“St. Luke’s is more of a ‘bottom-up’ rather than a ‘top-down’ parish. Parishioners really take responsibility for many things.”
Governance and Leadership (continued)

Unpaid Staff

As an Episcopal church, St. Luke's is governed by a Vestry, which comprises a Senior and Junior Warden and nine Vestry members. The wardens typically serve for two years each; Vestry members sign on for a three-year term. In addition, the parish elects a Clerk and Treasurer at each annual meeting.

The Rev. Deacon Dorothy L. “Ricky” Brightman has been assigned to St. Luke’s by the Bishop of Rhode Island. Ricky focuses on outreach and also heads up the Interfaith Social Concerns Committee. She will be reassigned with the arrival of our new Rector. It is our hope that another Deacon will be sent to St. Luke’s. Of course, the request for a new Deacon would come from the new Rector to the Bishop after the new Rector has become established at St. Luke’s, and we recognize the demand for vocational deacons in the diocese is high while the supply is currently short.

Volunteers Sandy and Peggy Rubel co-chair the Property Committee, which is responsible for property repair, landscaping, and snow removal budgets. They report directly to the Junior Warden.

Evelyn Brchan is our Membership Coordinator. She works closely with the Newcomer Committee, Administrative Assistant, and Greeters to stay closely connected to the various groups that make up our parish. She assists the Stewardship Committee during its annual fall campaign by recording the pledge receipts, issuing offering envelopes, and tracking donations as well as other important information about parishioners throughout the year.

Lay Leadership

St. Luke’s has a legacy of active lay leadership at the parish, diocesan, and national levels. Members of St. Luke’s have served on Diocesan Council; Standing Committee; Commissions on Ministry, Finance, Investments; Congregational Development; Episcopal Charities; Companion Diocese; Mission Task Force; 2015 Task Force; St Mary’s Home for Children; Clergy Compensation and Benefits Committee; Executive Council of The Episcopal Church; and as delegates to Province I and General Convention.

Many groups and ministries are managed and coordinated by unpaid lay members at St. Luke’s. Our previous Rector did an excellent job of helping parishioners to discover what God was calling them to do at St. Luke’s, and then empowering them to do it. We want to maintain the same high level of volunteer service under the leadership of our new Rector. It allows many dedicated and committed parishioners to get involved at St. Luke’s.

All groups and ministries serve the Rector, the Wardens, and the Vestry. Their respective coordinators submit reports that are published in the St. Luke’s Church Annual Report. A copy of the 2010 Annual Report is available to all Rector candidates upon request.

“We want to maintain the same high level of volunteer service under the leadership of our new Rector.”
Our Facilities

St Luke’s sits on a 2.3 acre lot that includes the church, a connected two-story office, classroom and meeting room wing, a historic cemetery, memorial garden and columbarium, and an adjoining parking lot. The property and buildings are currently valued at $2.9 million.

Our present building was erected in 1876 and is a splendid example of Gothic Revival architecture. A bell tower was added in 1923 to accommodate a 6 ¼ ton 11 bell set. Several other changes were made to the office-classroom sections over the years, the latest being a second-story addition in 2000 to add a choir room, choir office, storage, and three classrooms.

The nave is approximately 4,500 sq. ft. and seats 400 people. With its high-arching ceiling, imposing granite altar, over 45 beautiful stained glass windows, and magnificent tracker organ, hand-crafted in Canada in 1989, the church offers a conducive atmosphere for meditation and worship. A small chapel on a lower floor is used primarily for morning worship.

The remaining part of the church structure contains three floors of offices, classrooms, a small formal meeting room, and two large community rooms. One of these rooms, the auditorium, is 2,950 sq. ft., holds 172 persons, and contains a small kitchenette and a large elevated stage. The second community space, the dining room, is 2,650 sq. ft., includes a full commercial kitchen, and seats approximately 170 persons. All floors are handicapped-accessible, through the use of a 750-pound capacity elevator.

The church is used by numerous outside groups, including the Rhode Island Philharmonic’s Music School, the local food pantry, Al-Anon, and AA. While these groups provide a modest source of income to St Luke’s, opening our facilities to the community is a long-standing and active outreach goal.

A fund-raising drive, “Restore, Refresh, and Renew”, was launched in 2010, as a part of our 175th Anniversary celebration, and has received pledges of approximately $150,000, to be applied to major projects to improve the physical structure of the church. These include boiler replacement (complete), clerestory window repair (complete), and dining room refurbishment.

“Our church building is inspirational, comforting, and warm.”
Our Finances

Our Congregation:
St Luke’s has 1,199 communicants in good standing, as cited in the 2010 Parochial Report. We currently have 245 pledging units, offering $383,000 for 2011. Our average Sunday attendance is 249 persons.

Financial Management:
The Finance Committee is composed of eight lay persons, including a lay Treasurer, and meets monthly. Its responsibilities include recommending an annual budget for Vestry approval, monitoring performance, recommending actions to the Vestry as required, and advising Vestry and the Rector on financial matters.

Endowment & Restricted Funds:
The church has temporarily and permanently restricted funds that are invested in the Diocesan Investment Trust of the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island. The Treasurer uses fund accounting to properly track the various funds, and a complete list is part of the Treasurer’s Annual Report (available upon request). Our total endowment and restricted funds total just under $1 million.

Budget Commentary:
Our financial position is strong, with just under $4 million in assets. We have met or exceeded our budget in each of the last two years, due in part to a conservative philosophy of limiting programs to funds availability. A separate funds campaign (“Restore, Refresh, and Renew”) was conducted in 2010 to address major facilities projects that were unattended in prior years.

We ran small deficits in 2008 and 2009, due mainly to the addition of an associate Rector. When that individual left in 2009, the decision was made to eliminate the position, in order to improve our financial picture. Given our current level of revenue, it is improbable that we will be able to support two full-time clergy positions in the foreseeable future, unless and until stewardship resources and the annual operating budget can so justify.
Our Finances (continued)

Operating Income: 2007 – 2011

Operating Expenses: 2007 – 2011
Our Finances (continued)

Pledge Income $399,119

Rental Income $18,279

Personal Offering, Other $57,808

Investment Income $13,619

Other Income $1,300

2010 Operating Income Total $490,125

2010 Operating Expenses Total $490,125

Clergy Expense $154,593

Outreach/Apportionment $79,072

Christian Education Program $25,893

Music Program $51,120

Parish Life $25,473

Building Expense $87,420

Administrative Expense $54,818

Transition Expense $11,736
Our Community

The spire of St. Luke’s Church rises above the historic Hill and Harbor District in East Greenwich, Rhode Island. The town is located on the west side of Narragansett Bay in the geographic center of Rhode Island. Named after the city of Greenwich, England, it has a population of approximately 14,000 people.

East Greenwich is just 15 miles south from the capital city of Providence, which has much to offer in the way of culture, sporting events, fine dining, and shopping. As you travel south from East Greenwich, you will discover some of New England’s finest beaches as well as the vibrant, exciting city of Newport. In addition, East Greenwich is conveniently located 10 minutes from T.F. Green airport (PVD).

The town faces picturesque Narragansett Bay and enjoys all the natural beauty and appeal of a tranquil seaport setting. The lively waterfront provides anchorage for motor and sailing watercraft, and features several restaurants.

The downtown area anchors a vibrant local economy and population. Main Street is quintessential New England in its character and offers many restaurants, coffee shops, and specialty retailers. Historic homes nestle against the downtown hillside, while larger executive homes dot the town’s western fields and woods. Holiday parades, Main Street Strolls, a Farmers Market, and an annual Summer’s End Concert by the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra are community events that create “a small town USA” feeling.

Warm, friendly, and family-oriented, East Greenwich boasts an outstanding school system and provides recreational, social, and cultural activities for all ages. St. Luke’s draws parishioners from the town as well as many surrounding communities, attracted to our spirit-filled atmosphere, genuine hospitality, and outstanding programs.
Our History

The town of East Greenwich was officially founded in 1677. The earliest settlers were primarily Quakers and Baptists. Through the 17th and 18th centuries, East Greenwich remained an agrarian community. A small port developed along the waterfront, and support for limited merchant trading grew.

Following the Revolutionary War, there was not great tolerance for things British in New England, including the Anglican form of worship. However, Rhode Island was founded on the principle of religious tolerance, and four Episcopal churches were established in the state.

Some East Greenwich members of St. Paul’s in Wickford and others, who had been attending services of the Catholic Congregational Society of East Greenwich, began to meet together for worship in the Kent County Courthouse under the leadership of the Reverend Sylvester Nash. He began traveling across the bay from Bristol to lead services in the Anglican tradition using the Book of Common Prayer.

In 1833, this group of prominent East Greenwich residents called the Rev. Nash to found and lead an Episcopal parish that would be named St. Luke’s. By 1834, the church was incorporated. A wooden structure was built at the corner of Peirce and Church Streets. By 1838, the parish had 42 members.

At about this same time, the Stonington Railroad had completed the installation of tracks through the center of the harbor district, providing rail service to New York and later to Boston. Over 34,000 tickets were sold at the Duke Street train station in 1876. The introduction of train service led to commercial growth in the town.

By 1875, the parish was growing. The old wooden church structure was sold and moved (without the Bishop’s permission, incidentally). The cornerstone for the St. Luke’s we continue to use today was laid on October 30, 1875 and the first service was held on Christmas Day in 1876.

The town grew through the mid 19th and early 20th century with the introduction of steam-powered textile mills that were staffed by an influx of immigrant labor. Many Irish Catholics and Lutheran Swedes settled in East Greenwich. The new residents worked in the mills, the farms, the docks of the harbor, and the retail shops along Main Street.

Through the end of the 19th century, lay groups such as the Parochial Aid Society and the St. Luke’s Guild formed to promote the work of the Church. This resulted in further growth, and the leaders of the parish moved to construct a Parish House to provide space for the activities of these lay groups. That building (on the northeast corner of Peirce and Church Streets) was completed in 1896.

By 1900, the parish community included 135 families. Involvement of the laity also continued to grow. Youth groups such as the St. Luke’s Messenger Corps (for boys 7 to 14) and the Girls Friendly
Our History (continued)

Society were formed. The Altar Guild and the Parish Aid Society were founded by the women of the parish and were active in supporting local missions including the Neighborhood Cottage in Scalloptown – an outreach to the poor living in shacks down by the waterfront. The men of the parish actively participated in the work of the church but with fewer organized groups. The choir formed in 1899.

From the late 1930’s right through the 1960’s, East Greenwich continued to change from an agrarian town with a small but active Main Street into a suburban town, serving the needs of professionals from the Providence metropolitan area and workers from the new Quonset Point Naval Air Station in nearby North Kingstown. In the post-war years, as young families moved into town, St. Luke’s continued to grow. With space at a premium, Sunday school classes were being spread out all over town, from the East Greenwich Free Library stacks to the Public Welfare building. Sunday morning services were full to overflowing.

Plans for a new Parish Hall were drawn up and construction began in 1961. The old parish house was sold, and in June of 1962, the new Parish Hall was opened. From the time it first became available, church leaders recognized the value of the space, and developed rules for sharing the space with other community groups (a tradition that continues to this day).

The 1970’s were a time of change for the church. Attendance fell off for a variety of reasons. While a general questioning of traditional values was occurring throughout the country, East Greenwich and St. Luke’s were dealing with specific issues closer to home. The Quonset Naval Air Station was closed in 1973, and some of the older “established” members of the parish retired and relocated. Changes in liturgy, the introduction of the new Book of Common Prayer, and the debate over the ordination of women were all challenging strongly held traditions. But the 1970’s and 1980’s were also a time of renewal. In the Diocese of Rhode Island, the Cursillo movement was generating some new energy among the laity and the clergy. Lay involvement in the liturgy also increased through this time, including the use of Lay Readers to administer the chalice, read the lessons, and participate in the intercessions. In 1977, girls first entered the Acolyte Guild.

Through the 80’s and 90’s, the size of the parish remained stable with approximately 1000 communicants. At the same time, East Greenwich developed into a desirable bedroom community with the highest per capita income in the state.

By the millennium, St. Luke’s had developed into an active Christian community supporting many small groups with various goals and missions. A significant building expansion increased space to accommodate both parish and community groups. In 2009-2010, the parish celebrated its 175th birthday, and said farewell to its 14th Rector. Now the search for a new Rector is underway, and with our history to support us, we prayerfully await and embrace our future.
Leadership at St. Luke’s

Staff
The Rev. Dr. J. Gregory Prior, Interim Rector
The Rev. Dcn. John E. Higginbotham, Assistant to the Rector
The Rev. Dorothy (Ricky) Brightman, Deacon
Susan MacDonald, Director of Youth Christian Formation
Priscilla A. Rigg, Music Director and Organist
Barbara De Fusco, Parish Administrator
Evelyn Brchan, Membership Coordinator
Karen Simas, Nursery Care
Gayle Bundy, Bookkeeper
Steve Yanku, Lead Sexton
David Rodriguez, Assistant Sexton

2011 Vestry
Lisa Johnson, Sr. Warden
Arlene Serdakowski, Jr. Warden
Cynthia Fogarty, Clerk
Greg de Groot, Treasurer
Balmore Alvarez
Ruth Batchelor
Leslie Gunther
Jennifer Hague
Heather MacDonald
Jamie Millard
David Sampson
Dave Savage
John Walsh

Self Study Committee
Jim Rezendes, Chair
Paul Brookes
Sue Clement
Fran Gammell-Roach
Sandy Horton
Keith Hudson
Ellen Palmer
Al Potter, Transition Leader
Dave Savage
Dave Seifert, Consultant
Leon Sibielski, Consultant
Dana Sparhawk

Search Committee
Fran Gammell-Roach, Chair
Geo Borgia
Neal McNamara
Donna Pallister
Al Potter, Transition Leader
Jim Rezendes, SSC Chair
Dave Savage, SSC, Vestry
Meg Stowe

St. Luke’s Church Vestry
Useful Links

St. Luke’s Church Website:
www.stlukeseg.org

Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island
www.episcopalri.org

East Greenwich Summer Arts and Festival Organization:
www.summersendeg.com

East Greenwich Official Website:
www.eastgreenwichri.com

East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce:
www.eastgreenwichchamber.com

East Greenwich Preservation Society:
www.eghistoricpreservation.org

East Greenwich website:
www.eastgreenwichpatch.com

East Greenwich New Neighbors:
www.egcnn.org

East Greenwich School District:
www.egsd.net

East Greenwich Free Library:
www.eastgreenwichlibrary.com

Southern Rhode Island Magazine:
www.sorhodeisland.com

Rhode Island Daily Newspaper:
www.projo.com

Rhode Island Monthly Magazine:
www.rimonthly.com

Official Rhode Island Tourism Website:
www.visitrhodeisland.com

Statistics on Rhode Island School Systems:
www.ride.ri.gov
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