

# DREAM, DISCERN & DIRECTION!

ST. JUDE'S MISSION COVENANT FOR PARISH FEEDBACK

NOV. 2014

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We, the parishioners of Saint Jude's Episcopal Church in Cupertino, strive to follow Jesus Christ and his Great Commandment to "love God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength...and love our neighbor as ourselves."

Therefore we covenant to:

- **Learn to live as disciples of Jesus in the modern world**
- **Focus energy and resources to make a greater impact in social justice and outreach**
- **Deepen our welcome and accessibility to people of various backgrounds, ethnicities, ages, and situations**
- **Support parishioners through all stages of their lives**
- **Strengthen our community by holding courageous conversations within a safe space**
- **Nurture our leaders and volunteers**
- **Joyfully share our abundance**

# Identity: Who We Are (1 of 2)

- We are a Christian community striving to be disciples of Jesus. We are followers of Christ and his Great Commandment to *love God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength ... and our neighbor as ourselves.*
- We are members of St. Jude's Episcopal Church, connected to the worldwide Anglican Communion, who value the balance of scripture, reason and tradition, knowing that shared traditions can connect multiple generations and cultures. Unity, not uniformity, has long been a guiding principle of the Episcopal Church. While we do not all think alike, we recognize there are many ways to put our faith into action as a community.
- We are a faith community that seeks to be a spiritual oasis where lives are transformed. We are blessed with a peaceful, calming and inviting campus designed for contemplation, spirituality, and fellowship, things that are too often lacking in Silicon Valley lives. Our campus offers both a welcome to our community and a challenge to deepen our own faith.

## Identity: Who We Are (2 of 2)

- We are respectful of other religious traditions and appreciate what they can teach us. In our ongoing youth and adult education programs, we are learning about our own faith as we explore other faiths and experience their worship. We embrace the opportunity to understand and strengthen the pillars of our personal faith by learning about the connections with other faiths.
- We are blessed with financial resources; a beautiful campus that is newly green-business certified; a history of strong lay leadership and commitment to service, outreach and social justice; and a diversity of generations, experiences, and personal beliefs.
- We are challenged by the hectic pace of our lives and work, by uncertainty regarding change, and a need to share the load currently carried by leaders and volunteers.

## Context: The World We Live In (1 of 2)

- As a 21<sup>st</sup> century church in Silicon Valley, the technology center of the South Bay, we live in a multi-cultural, multi-generational, international environment of innovation, imagination, creativity, education and wealth. There are great resources to share and to address local and global needs.
- Over the past fifty years, this formerly fertile, agricultural community has become the home of the most advanced technology in the world – the launching place of the digital revolution. The population has exponentially increased.
- The innovation, vitality, and productivity of Silicon Valley have created great wealth and opportunity for many, while significant numbers have remained poor, homeless, or in need. Alongside a high cost of living, there are persistent levels of poverty and large numbers of undocumented workers – an invisible class of migrant labor that helps supports the dynamic economy of the area. The area has one of the largest homeless populations in the United States, many of whom are veterans of armed conflict.

## Context: The World We Live In (2 of 2)

- Competition, productivity, and performance are the values of the Valley. Many parishioners and community members work long hours in the tech community. Our youth face performance pressures at school. Stress, disconnectedness, and anxiety are a result of long work hours, demanding work environments, and daunting school pressure.
- Globally, we see hunger, violence, injustice, and oppression. We live in a nation of polarized politics and a world that is often unable to resolve conflict without violence. We inhabit a world that is struggling to respond to climate change and its impact on God's creation and on future generations.
- We live in an era of virtual connectedness and social disconnectedness. Our surrounding community values connectedness via electronic communications, while experiencing a disconnectedness with our neighbors who dedicate their lives to connecting others.

# What We Believe

- We believe that God is Love, and that the world is thirsty for God's love made visible in action. God's love calls us to build a strong foundation of faith that energizes us for the larger mission of putting that love into action, bringing hope and healing to people and creation.
- We believe that Jesus invites us to join him in bringing about the kingdom of God, and to share his message of "*good news to the poor, release to prisoners, recovery of sight to the blind, and freedom for the oppressed.*" (Luke 4: 18) Jesus directs us to care for the hungry, the thirsty, the strangers, the naked, the sick, and the prisoners. (Matthew 25: 35-36) We live in a land of milk and honey. We understand our responsibility to use our talents to support our brothers and sisters in our local and global community.
- We believe that the Holy Spirit empowers us to share God's love with the world. We are called to live out the Good News of Christ in our community by our example and service. Believing that faith without action is meaningless, we encourage all parishioners to make individual service a priority.

# Values: What We Affirm

- Whoever you are, wherever you are in your journey of faith, you are welcome.
- We seek to provide an open, nonjudgmental, safe space to be yourself, to be audacious, or to be at rest - for *all* people, especially the marginalized, and the LGBT and questioning community whom the Church has historically excluded. We welcome anyone, of any faith, to join us on a shared journey. Sometimes this open welcome is a challenge, but we take it seriously. It deepens our faith and encourages us to act.
- Faith and spirituality are integral to our lives. We value the spiritual life as highly as any other aspect of life.
- Our lives are interconnected and interdependent; we are all in this together. We support one another and take care of each other with our God given gifts.
- All life is sacred. All people are precious and should be treated as such. We affirm the Episcopal baptismal covenant that asks us to seek and serve Christ in all persons and respect the dignity of every human being.

## Actions: What We Will Do

- *We have identified seven areas for action. We recommend that the Vestry adopt these as Parish Goals and develop the appropriate plans and strategic actions to make them come alive and bear the fruit of the Spirit. These goals will guide the work of the vestry and the parish for the next three to five years and will be revisited annually.*
- We affirm that relationships are at the center of who we are and what we do. Our relationships with each other, with ourselves, with God and with creation are the basis for putting our faith into action beyond our community and within our parish.
- We are a community that gives of our resources: people, time, money, expertise and service. We enjoy fellowship, celebrate with joy in good times, and provide care during hard times. Through such actions, we build and sustain relationships that expand our community and invite occasional attendees to become enthusiastic participants in the deeper life of God's church.

# To transform the world through Christ's reconciling love, we will . . .

- ① Learn to live as disciples of Jesus in the modern world
- ② Focus energy and resources to make a greater impact in social justice and outreach
- ③ Deepen our welcome and accessibility to people of various backgrounds, ethnicities, ages and situations
- ④ Support parishioners through all stages of their lives
- ⑤ Strengthen our community by holding courageous conversations within a safe space
- ⑥ Nurture our leaders and volunteers
- ⑦ Joyfully share our abundance

## ① Learn to live as disciples of Jesus in the modern world

- Our action is founded in faith, so developing and nurturing strong faith across our entire congregation is essential. Like the parable of the sower, we will plant small amounts of seed in many different ways, to find approaches that nurture people on their lifelong journey of faith development, especially as they transition through different ages and stages of life.
- In order to provide mutual support for ongoing faith development, we will develop and promote participation in small groups such as book studies, covenant groups, and more contemplative options such as Taizé prayers, the labyrinth, Wednesday healing Eucharist, and contemplative morning prayer. Small groups support the types of learning, discussion and action that build a strong community.
- We view lifelong learning as vital to our spiritual maturity, for children, youth, and adults. Living as we do in a multi-cultural, multi-religious area, we will develop a multi-year, multi-age, interfaith curriculum that builds on our successful children and youth programs, and which allows all ages to clarify their faith, and share it in an understandable way. We will also learn how to discern our spiritual gifts and calling so that we can better live as disciples of Jesus in the modern world.

## ② Focus energy and resources to make a greater impact in social justice and outreach

- We will build on our tradition of social justice and outreach, and encourage all parishioners to make service a priority.
- As a first step for serving the needs of our community, we will engage with community leaders to understand the needs around us, being mindful of the covenants and partnerships we already have. At the same time, we need to inventory our resources of people, time, money, and expertise.
- We will explore the possibilities of collaboration or developing relationships and partnerships with organizations such as, West Valley Community Services, De Anza College, Rotary, and the City of Cupertino.
- We will identify a small number of long-term, local service projects that are designed to address social issues. We will support these with our hands-on help, money, and where appropriate, advocacy. We will partner with other social or faith based organizations, as well as our Diocese of El Camino Real and our national Episcopal Church.
- We intend that this focus on a few service projects will increase our impact and effectiveness, encourage more parishioners to be involved, and potentially create legacies like Santa Maria Urban Ministry and Live Oak Adult Day Services. We recognize that like-minded parishioners and clergy can and will work together on other causes.
- Because global needs are so universal we will focus financial support in those areas where we can build relationships and work with other organizations.

### ③ Deepen our welcome and accessibility to people of various backgrounds, ethnicities, ages and situations

- Our shared Sunday morning Episcopal worship experience is enriched with contemporary and traditional music offered by musicians of all generations. We will explore innovative worship and liturgies that engage all ages and backgrounds of seekers, while continuing to offer traditional services.
- We need to continue to enhance our worship experience and options as part of our invitation to new individuals and families who reflect the economic and cultural diversity of Silicon Valley and the Bay Area. We will welcome all people and family situations, such as single people, young families, single parents, non-parents, empty nesters, etc.
- We want to communicate clearly and transparently, allowing all parishioners to stay informed and involved through collaborative meetings, special events and publications. To attract and communicate effectively with newcomers and younger members, we will keep our electronic and social media topical, fresh, and exciting.

## ④ Support parishioners through all stages of their lives

- As a multi-generation church, we respect and honor parishioners of all ages who are the foundation of the St. Jude's church we love today. To sustain that foundation, we will embrace full participation in church life, worship, and service by young adults, families, youth, and children. They bring energy, strength, and new ideas, but find it difficult to balance their work, home, school, and church commitments in the midst of a hectic Silicon Valley life. We will support them with creative ideas such as flexible scheduling, dedicated spaces, and different worship times and formats.
- We cannot take care of others without taking care of ourselves. Within our own community, we will care for parishioners in need by maintaining and growing our pastoral care ministries. We will respond to those in medical or personal crisis, and support those in times of transition.
- Older parishioners have specific needs, and unique gifts. We want to educate ourselves in the "spirituality of aging." To continue to be effective and faithful disciples in our community, we will find ways to share stories and experiences and enhance our quality of life as we age.

## ⑤ Strengthen our community by holding courageous conversations within a safe space

- We do not all think alike, and historically we have avoided airing differences. We will hold courageous conversations among ourselves and with the larger community so that we learn how to draw on diversity of opinion, different points of view, and ways of doing things, while respecting that we are all coming from a place of faith.
- We will also become a more visible and recognizable presence in Cupertino and Silicon Valley, by providing a safe place for dialogue on controversial or difficult topics, by hosting community events and activities, and organizations that are compatible with the mission and vision of St. Jude's.

## ⑥ Nurture our leaders and volunteers

- Volunteering helps integrate us better into the life of St. Jude's, and we have a tradition of strong lay leadership working closely with clergy. We especially value those "quiet doers" who work tirelessly to keep the church vibrant. To sustain that strong laity, we will raise up new parish leaders who share and rotate responsibility to avoid tiring or burning out.
- We need to grow our parish and increase volunteers with time and energy to contribute to our parish life and participate in outreach and action. We will provide appropriate training about how to invite, incorporate, listen to, and encourage other volunteers.
- To respect the time and busy lives of leaders and volunteers, we will covenant with them that their commitment is consistent with their desires, skills, and passions and for only as long as makes sense for them and St. Jude's.

## ⑦ Joyfully share our abundance

- A vibrant community calls us to joyfully share our abundance outside the parish while supporting the other goals of this Mission Covenant. We will increase our total financial giving to social justice and outreach, by annually increasing the budget percentage given and by encouraging parishioners to give individually alongside St. Jude's.
- We are financially strong because of a tradition of frugality in spending and generosity in giving, embodied in our parish goal of the tithe. We will educate ourselves about financial giving, tithing and the spirituality of money, while also learning how to be more faithful stewards of our gifts, resources, and property, and of God's creation.
- We are thankful for the parishioner generosity which has allowed us to develop a beautiful campus. We recognize that now we must look outward and will share our campus generously with organizations with compatible missions; host community events, discussions, and activities; and welcome to our peaceful oasis any person, regardless of beliefs, who seeks relief from the tensions and worries of the world.

# Our Call

- We seek to be visible and engaged in sharing Christ's Love with those around us  
We have energy and faith and a willingness to engage and we ask for God's direction in supporting our community.
- Above all, we want St. Jude's to be known as the church in Cupertino that puts faith into action. With God's help, we will achieve this.

***“Faith that does not result in good deeds is not real faith.”*** (James 2:20b)

We, the parishioners of Saint Jude's Episcopal Church in Cupertino, strive to follow Jesus Christ and his Great Commandment to "love God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength...and love our neighbor as ourselves."

Therefore we covenant to:

- **Learn to live as disciples of Jesus in the modern world**  
We will cultivate lifelong education and spiritual foundation through a variety of ways. Reflecting our multicultural, multireligious area, we will develop a multiyear, multiage, interfaith curriculum that allows all ages to clarify their faith, and share it in an understandable way.
- **Focus energy and resources to make a greater impact in social justice and outreach**  
We will build on our tradition of social justice and outreach, and encourage all parishioners to make service a priority. We will engage with the larger community to identify a small number of long-term, local service projects that are designed to address social issues, while respecting our existing local and global partnerships.
- **Deepen our welcome and accessibility to people of various backgrounds, ethnicities, ages, and situations**  
We will especially welcome the LGBT community that has historically been marginalized by the church. We will make church life welcoming by better use of electronic media, innovative worship, and alternative liturgies, and by training parishioners on inclusion and full incorporation.

Therefore we covenant to:

- **Support parishioners through all stages of their lives**  
We will embrace full participation in church life, worship, and service by young adults, families, youth, and children. We will grow our pastoral care ministries to care for parishioners in need. We will educate ourselves in the “spirituality of aging” so that we can continue to be effective and faithful disciples as we age.
- **Strengthen our community by holding courageous conversations within a safe space**  
We will learn how to draw on diversity of opinion, different points of view, and ways of doing things while respecting that we are all coming from a place of faith. We will also become a more visible and recognizable presence in Cupertino and Silicon Valley, by providing a safe space for dialogue on controversial or difficult topics.
- **Nurture our leaders and volunteers**  
We will provide training, support, and respect for volunteers’ time and energy. We will raise up new leaders where necessary to avoid burnout and share the load by engaging more of the parish in service and action.
- **Joyfully share our abundance**  
We will share our campus, our money, and our resources for local and global needs. We will educate ourselves about the spirituality of money and encourage generous individual giving, embodied in our parish goal of the tithe. We will be faithful stewards of our gifts, resources, and property, and of God’s creation