MISSION STUDY
January 15, 2020

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Introduction
Welcome to this community of faith, devoted to the ministry of Jesus Christ! Ladue Chapel encompasses a highly-educated and engaging membership base with a broad range of programming and services for its members, the community, and those in need around the world. We are blessed with great potential and a desire to deepen our relationships with God and with one another. We are eager for even more meaningful mission experiences and opportunities.

Our church is rich in knowledge, caring, and the ability to take stock, assess needs and act on our goals. Located in suburban St. Louis, Ladue Chapel is a strong congregation of 1500+ members with financial security and endowment, a gifted staff, a wonderful sanctuary, organ, chapel and gathering area and a commitment to mission, as evidenced by 20% live donor mission giving annually. We are deeply committed to working together, communicating openly and caring for and about each other as we await a new Pastor, Head of Staff.

Recently, an above average number of members took part in an online survey conducted by HolyCow! Consulting, followed by more than 175 participants who attended one of 21 Community Conversation sessions to talk about their needs and dreams for Ladue Chapel. As a body, we are well aware that change is necessary and may be painful.

The results of this research are being used in multiple ways. First, Ladue Chapel’s Session is addressing the greatest needs of the congregation through the existing committee structure and newly-created groups. We understand that there is much the congregation can do prior to the arrival of the new Pastor, Head of Staff.

Second, the Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) has considered much data in preparation for a mission study, including core values and characteristics/skill needs of the incoming Pastor, Head of Staff. The depth of guidance and leadership our congregation will receive from this new leader will forever change lives for generations to come.

History of Ladue Chapel

There are many words that can be used to describe Ladue Chapel, but, in considering its history, four words in particular, seem appropriate:

- Longevity
- Tradition
- Awareness
- Appreciation

Longevity
While celebrating the church’s 75th anniversary in 2018, Ladue Chapel’s congregation reflected on its storied past including its long serving lead pastors and multi-generational members. There is longevity in the number of original members who have remained so for decades. There is permanence in the number of family names that have appeared on the rolls. There is a stability in the very few, yet high quality head pastors retained throughout the 75 years including: Dr. W. David McDowell, 33 years; Dr. Donald Howland, 19 years; and Dr. Mark Thomas, who retired in mid-2019 after 14 years.

World War II was in full force during the late 1930s and early 1940s, so to assist the European allies, the United States implemented federal rationing laws for many consumer goods. With strict gas rations and no nearby Presbyterian churches, a few families in the area began meeting together in private homes in 1940. By 1943, they moved to the Chapel at Mary Institute and, later that same year, petitioned the Presbytery of St. Louis to organize. An organization service for Ladue Chapel was held on November 7, 1943 with Dr. McDowell installed as pastor. To this day, some original members who recall attending the Chapel at Mary Institute remain at Ladue Chapel and still attend Sunday services with their children and grandchildren.

That same year, the congregation purchased four acres on Clayton Road in Ladue, Missouri. Later, in October 1948, the cornerstone for the sanctuary was laid, and on November 13, 1949, the “Opening of the Doors” dedication service for the completed sanctuary was held. Further expansion occurred eight years later with the dedication of Woods Chapel, the Fireside Room, and an educational wing, while in 1960, the chancel window was dedicated.

In 1993, Vision 2010, a capital campaign for the creation of the Gathering Place and new church offices, began. Dedication for the construction took place in May 1996. Later, the St. Andrew’s Memorial Garden-East was dedicated in 1998 and the Garden-West location was added 20 years later.

In 2014, Session approved a capital campaign to replace a failing organ and renovate a tired sanctuary. The “Giving Thanks Capital Campaign” exceeded its goal and the renovation was completed with a new Schoenstein organ playing in its first service in September 2015.

**Tradition**

With active congregants who remember the earliest of days and with many families who have been members for decades, respecting the past while planning carefully for the future is critical to Ladue Chapel’s continued progress. Change is difficult for any organization, and, while we honor the traditions and rituals rooted in the past, we desire ways to deepen and strengthen our faith as we navigate current times.

In addition to long-time members, the majority of our young families are drawn to Ladue Chapel specifically for its traditional reformed worship. Young and old delight in a plethora of strong traditions with unique celebrations including:
• Watchers Eve
• Three Kings procession on Epiphany Sunday
• Strawberry Festival
• World Communion Sunday
• Blessing of the Animals
• All Saints’ Day

Awareness
Ladue Chapel members are aware of their blessings and gifts and strive to help those not as fortunate. The Welfare Commission, the forerunner of the current Mission Committee, formally began meeting in September 1950 when it started dedicating at least 10% of donations to mission. The current percentage of 20% given to mission was approved and established in 1996, while during the most recent capital campaign in 2014, 10% of funds raised were allocated to mission.

Ladue Chapel does more than simply provide financial support. In addition to youth initiatives including Urban Plunge and mission intern programs, the church is active in tutoring, housing, food banks and disaster relief along with many other worthy organizations and activities.

Internally, Ladue Chapel is an aware congregation. Within, we are aware of how philosophically diverse we are yet respectful of one another’s social justice beliefs and actions. In addition to faith-oriented topics being incorporated into adult education, other subjects have been included addressing current events, societal matters and interfaith relationships.

Appreciation
Ladue Chapel has been blessed in so many ways with exquisite facilities, traditions, a history of strong pastors, and a remarkable, curious, creative and close staff. The church has a strong reputation for exceptional music in worship services. Together, the members of Ladue Chapel appreciate these gifts, yet continue to strive to enhance the overall worship experience, strengthen personal faith and connect more deeply with one another.

Core Values

We are a congregation of God’s people, welcoming all, illuminating faith, serving God and neighbor and making a difference on behalf of Christ. We collectively support the following values in our service to God and one another:

**Community** – Working to foster a community of hospitality where all members, friends and visitors feel welcomed, loved and affirmed.

**Curiosity** – Striving to use spiritual curiosity to discover God’s message for us today and how we reach outside the window of Ladue Chapel.

**Generosity** – Giving freely of time, talent and treasure.

**Compassion** – Serving others in our midst and beyond with love and understanding.
Beauty – Glorifying God and feeling the awe of God’s presence in worship through the abundant use of God’s gifts of art, music and nature.

Joy – Celebrating God’s gifts and being inspired in different ways to share God’s blessings.

Strengths

Members
Ladue Chapel features robust connections among members. There are members who still attend now as they did in 1945 and others who were baptized at Ladue Chapel and continue to attend with children of their own. Some members were raised nearby and began attending because their friends did so. These connections maintain an atmosphere of congregational warmth and are the strong ties that bind Ladue Chapel.

Ladue Chapel is especially proud of the recently-revamped youth program and children’s activities such as Church School, Route 3-4-5, youth choir and acolyting. Every summer, youth of upper high school and early college age can be hired by Ladue Chapel to be mission interns where they work at non-profit organizations supported by the church. They experience first-hand the extreme needs outside of their homes and church.

Staff
The Ladue Chapel staff is a strong, spiritual group with individuals who trust and support one another. Team members seek ways to deepen their own faith while challenging others to do the same. They are loved and respected by congregation members who view the staff as approachable and worthy of trust and confidence.

**Music**
The congregation has great appreciation for the arts, and, in particular, music. Members expect to hear exceptional music during worship services and concerts. The Minister of Music is loved and well respected, the choir is superb and the 2015 Schoenstein organ is a wonderful addition to accompany choirs, orchestras and soloists. Additionally, Ladue Chapel’s connections in the local music community help bring in high-quality musicians and choirs for concerts and other events to enhance the worship experience.

**Mission**
Since 1950, mission has been an integral cornerstone of Ladue Chapel. With generous pledging of money and time, Ladue Chapel has supported dozens of organizations, including struggling churches, soup kitchens, meal packing for the food insecure, nursery schools, clean up buckets for Presbyterian Disaster Relief, Habitat for Humanity, Rebuilding Together, I Have A Dream, L.E.A.D. tutoring, groups that reintegrate prisoners into society and more. Reinforcing our longstanding commitment to mission, the Session took one strong step toward addressing more societal needs on December 18, 2019. They approved a motion committing Ladue Chapel to the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s 2019-2020 focus – Matthew 25 – of building congregational vitality, eradicating systemic poverty and dismantling structural racism.
Facilities
Ladue Chapel is blessed with a beautiful facility and large grounds sufficient to accommodate multiple activities simultaneously. In addition to many internal meetings and activities that occur during an average week, we welcome groups from local communities to use our space as well.

Weekly Activities
Between the daily office activities, nursery school, Bible studies, women’s and men’s association meetings, mission work, committee meetings, Stephen Ministry meetings & more – Ladue Chapel is a dynamic place. The church maintains strong connections throughout the week to the congregation as well as prospective members.

Growing Edges
Even after a vibrant 75-year history, Ladue Chapel faces several challenges moving forward. Some mirror what is happening in the denomination nationwide while others are unique to our church.

**Low Spiritual Vitality**
Based on information gleaned from both the *HolyCow! Consulting* survey and the follow-up Community Conversations, most of these challenges spring from a low level of spiritual vitality. Many members say their faith is not a driving component of their daily life. They tell us they want to leave worship feeling energized and inspired for the week ahead, yet some leave spiritually empty, which is distressing. Changing this so that members come to worship regularly and leave ready to serve is a growing edge for Ladue Chapel.

**Attendance Decline**
Attendance declines are being seen both at Sunday morning worship and in Church School. However, 67% of Ladue Chapel’s membership is under the age of 65, and this presents an opportunity to increase attendance if that age group is re-energized. Finding ways to reach out to young families both on the rolls and in the broader community tops the list of opportunities. Historically, children attend Church School up through 5th grade but disappear in the middle school years until time for confirmation. Following being received into church membership, these young people and their parents attend worship infrequently. Capturing the minds and hearts of these students and engaging them in the life of the church will greatly enhance the spiritual vitality of our congregation.

**Extending Genuine Hospitality**
Ladue Chapel received mixed reviews in the *HolyCow! Consulting* survey for hospitality. High marks, in general, are given for greeting guests but not for assimilating new members. Visitors and new members say they feel welcomed “at the door” but find it difficult to integrate into the life of the congregation. There is work to be done in terms of extending genuine hospitality to everyone.

**Adult Education**
Adult education, long a hallmark of Ladue Chapel, is also facing a rebuild scenario. Members express a desire for more interactive formats beyond traditional lecture. Many show an interest in more Bible study at varying times of the week. While Ladue Chapel has offered a 36-week Disciples Bible study for many years, members have requested other Bible study options with shorter durations for all ages. Some members even wish for Sunday morning sessions that include more topics relevant to today’s world and culture.

**Communication**
Communication within the church and greater community could be more effective. Reaching people of all ages requires creative, strategic thinking and planning. For example, members wish to know more about who their elected elders and deacons are, what they are doing and how they operate. Information about opportunities for education, service and worship may be delivered more effectively through alternative media channels. While the broad picture of
communication and outreach to the community is already being addressed by a Session committee, some members may still feel disconnected leading to low spiritual vitality in terms of attendance and giving.

**Diversity**
A desire for more diversity has come up numerous times, but what does it really mean? Diversity means whatever each person answering the question or stating a concern says it means to them. “I wish I felt my child would be welcome at Ladue Chapel.” “My mother came to church with me and did not feel welcome at all.” “I want to see more people from the city in worship and not just people from Ladue.”

The *HolyCow! Consulting* survey revealed that, compared with other congregations, Ladue Chapel’s theological diversity is high and the congregation has “a very healthy tolerance of differing opinions and beliefs.” But, Ladue Chapel is in a community lacking broad ethnic and racial diversity, meaning immediate neighbors cannot provide the ethnic and racial diversity some seek. Most members of the congregation believe that Ladue Chapel is open and affirming, but helping every person feel embraced when they worship with us continues to be a growing edge.

**Social Justice**
Social justice issues and Ladue Chapel’s response to them is considered another key challenge. The concept of “big tent” where many voices are welcomed is at work here. While we all view addressing certain societal needs as central to the gospel, we do not agree on how to address them as a congregation. The next Pastor, Head of Staff will need to be skilled and comfortable in helping the congregation through this stage of faith formation.

**Looking out the Window Today**
Ladue Chapel’s long history of serving others, dating to 1950, continues as a key element of who we are. In 1996, the church determined that 20% of live donor receipts would be Ladue Chapel’s mission commitment. Eight years later, Session voted to maintain that funding level with 50% going to denominational endeavors and 50% to numerous local and global needs as determined by our Mission Committee. Our commitment to mission goes beyond financial contributions.

For decades, Ladue Chapel members have engaged in opportunities to help the food insecure, to provide shelter for those who are homeless and to participate in hands-on ministry for children and youth. With new ideas bubbling up all the time, the church’s mission committee meetings are reported to be among the liveliest of any group.

**Serving the food insecure:**
- 1978 – “Lettuce Leaves” began
- 1983 – Meal-a-Month & food banks began
• Currently – Isaiah 58 Ministries Food Bank; turkey & ham drive; St. Patrick’s Center casseroles; Communion hunger offering (1st Sunday monthly)

**Serving those whose housing is insecure:**
• 1988 – Homes for the Homeless rehab work
• 1992 – Ecumenical Housing
• 1996 to present – Habitat for Humanity
• Present – Rebuilding Together St. Louis, Bridge Bread

**Programming for children & youth:**
• L.E.A.D. Promising Youth
• “I have A Dream” (ended in 2010)
• Tutoring in St. Louis public schools
• Urban Plunge for Ladue Chapel youth assisting children in urban areas
• Mission Interns

Another look outside from the church window sees **Interfaith Partnership**, literally, housed in the cottage on Ladue Chapel’s campus since early 2019. Interestingly, the idea for this partnership grew from a member’s desire to see Ladue Chapel work closely with Jewish congregations and other area churches. Today, this stands as one of the oldest and largest interfaith partnerships in the country with Ladue Chapel’s longtime associate pastor sitting on the board of directors and several church members regularly participating. This certainly could provide new opportunities for partnerships with other faith groups to meet other community needs.

Ladue Chapel’s nursery school was recognized for decades as a strong, creative program but has recently suffered declining enrollment. While the facility is a part of Ladue Chapel’s corporate entity, it is managed independently and has its own board of directors. With the advent of early childhood programs in the community, the half-day Parents Day Out (PDO) program may no longer fit the needs of many families in the community.

**Looking out the Window Tomorrow**
The **HolyCow! Consulting** survey also indicated that “activities beyond worship” are considered very meaningful to the congregation. Members state a desire to know more of how to be a better servant of God. This raises the question of how the church can engage even more members in mission work to spark spiritual vitality. Additionally, what else can be done not just for others but with others in the local community?

Obviously, Ladue Chapel is blessed with wonderful resources – space, talented members, finances, staff and more – but is there more that can be done to live out the gospel by reaching out to others in need? The next Pastor, Head of Staff will be one who can open our hearts to living into new possibilities.
Mission & Ministry Priorities Moving Forward

“I will bless you…and you will be a blessing…”

Acknowledging God’s gifts of financial riches and talents, we also enjoy faith, hope and love. It has been some time since Ladue Chapel took stock, prioritized and maximized its ability to care for one another, our community and global commitments. During this interim period, the church is focused on how to be most effective – by doing the right things – and most efficient – by doing them in the best way possible.

The HolyCow Consulting survey and Community Conversations provided direction for the Session to orient its committee chairs and to create new committees toward the immediate needs of the Congregation. Church leaders recognize that there is much the membership can do for and with each other before the new Pastor, Head of Staff arrives. Some outcomes will build on current congregational strengths to do things in different ways. This process has begun, with an experiment in Sunday scheduling from March-May 2020 including children’s church school at the same time as the 10:30 a.m. worship service.

The following are (8) core priorities along with some key questions raised by church members. For all constituencies, best type of media and communication must be identified to reach all ages and audiences, making it easy for them to know, participate and respond:

1. Make necessary changes to energize and attract young families
   How should Ladue Chapel organize Sunday morning services, youth study and adult study to stimulate spiritual development? What activities can different age groups enjoy together to build fellowship, respect and understanding? How does the church retain confirmands after confirmation, throughout high school and after their college years?

2. Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church
   Nationally, 40% of the population is unchurched. Members desire more diversity, which is defined as 20% of the congregation being of a different “population,” whatever that may be. So, how does the congregation attract and welcome someone who is not in our social circle, individuals or couples who are not heterosexual or Caucasian, individuals or couples of different races and those of different Christian theological beliefs, for example?

3. Provide more opportunities for Christian education and spiritual formation at every age and stage of life
   How can Ladue Chapel provide a variety of engaging opportunities for Christian education and spiritual development? While the church has a few small Bible study groups, they are not well-supported by the church. Our primary Bible study offering is
traditionally a 36-week Disciple class. What shorter-length opportunities can be provided on Sundays and weekday evenings? What curriculum will draw in youth? How can small groups pursue spiritual development together?

4. Develop ministries that work toward healing those broken in life
How can the church create ministry opportunities and connections to serve those trying to heal in similar ways? How can members learn to share their faith, love and hope with those whose lives are broken? How can faith take a step deeper and a step farther? How do members live with peace and grace so others want to seek a relationship with God and develop their own faith?

5. Expand outreach ministries that provide direct services to those living on the margins of society
Do members want to become more personally and directly involved with the people we serve? Does the congregation want to tutor children, visit the sick and lonely, sit down to eat with the hungry, fit the naked with clothing, rather than just donating money and remaining distant? With compassion for those in need of food, clothing and shelter, how can the church see change through Deacons, Stephen Ministers and even casserole crafters?

6. Create more opportunities for people to form meaningful relationships
God wants to be in relationship with our congregation and for us to be in relationship with each other. How will small groups find each other, nurture one other and grow in spirit and service to God’s people?

7. Deepen our sense of connection to God and one another through stronger worship services
Energized people feel and live their faith, exhibit their love of God for others and attract others to God’s house. Ladue Chapel’s new member/marketing committee is experimenting with a number of changes for short, select periods of time to explore solutions for young families and others who have expressed specific needs. Next, the new Pastor, Head of Staff has an opportunity to inject energy into praise of God in Sunday morning services, provide direction and fortification for the church week, show love for the congregation and send members out for the week renewed with a strong message from scripture.

8. Strengthen the process by which members are called and equipped for ministry and leadership
Members want to learn how to be better servants of God, how to spread the good news, how to live the good news and how to inspire others with the good news by an overwhelming sense of God’s love and message for us. First, church members need the confidence that they will learn how to be better stewards. Then, they can expect participation will increase because, with needs met, the congregation will feel better prepared to meet the needs of others.
It is significant that church members have asked and pursued deeper answers, listened and are acting now. The congregation wants to hear the message of the Lord, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” (Isaiah 6:8) The role of the new Pastor, Head of Staff will be to lead and compassionately inspire a dedicated congregation.

**Qualities & Characteristics of the Next Pastor, Head of Staff**

**Preaching**
The Ladue Chapel congregation is a complicated one. As a group, it is well-educated – with 50% having graduate degrees – yet widely diverse in its interpretations of the Bible, how current events are viewed, and how faith is lived. Members are blessed in worldly things, yet still search for more meaning in their faith formation. Differences aside, the group is connected in our love and respect for one other and Ladue Chapel, as well as the desire for deeper faith. The next pastor should be one who can stay connected with those who disagree with him/her.

Ladue Chapel’s congregation wants to be energized, challenged and surrounded by a highly-respected music ministry. The new Pastor, Head of Staff for Ladue Chapel will create a well-planned, worshipful and scripture-based Sunday experience that is motivating and inclusive. The ideal candidate will connect with the congregation through heartfelt, spiritual-based sermons that will challenge, inspire, and prepare members for the upcoming week.

**Strategic Leadership**
The future Pastor, Head of Staff will be a leader who recognizes the spiritual gifts of others and delegates responsibilities to a diverse staff and congregation which can help further connect and deepen the faith of others. Thoughtful planning and collaboration with staff, Session and church leaders along with open communication to church members is integral to Ladue Chapel’s successful progress. The ideal leader must be courageous, open to new ideas, flexible, capable of achieving tasks in creative and dynamic ways and able to draw the best of an excellent and close-knit staff.

As Head of Staff, this person is expected to be knowledgeable about best practices in organizational development and encouraging others to use their unique gifts and skillfully matching them to the needs of the church. The Head of Staff also holds others accountable for the work to which they are called or assigned. Ladue Chapel, being almost exclusively racially singular, is viewed externally as lacking diversity. While the geographical location of the church contributes to this perception, the church should reach out more strategically and visibly into communities where congregants live, along with the broader local community, to attract more prospective members. The role of the ideal candidate will be to guide Ladue Chapel as new ways are explored to reduce or dispel this perception.
**Pastoral Care**
The Deacons at Ladue Chapel are very active in helping those in need through visits, calls, prayers, cards, flowers and serving communion to homebound members. Stephen Ministers are also very strong and have helped hundreds over the years during times of personal need. The ideal Pastor, Head of Staff will recognize the vital roles these groups have at Ladue Chapel and ensure staff support is available for the wonderful work they perform.

Internally, ministry and relationship building are must-haves, so everybody feels they are included in growing their faith and are involved as desired. The ideal candidate must be able to deftly balance a healthy tension between those who want to continue to honor their beloved traditions and those who are eager for fresh, innovative approaches.

Ladue Chapel members yearn for a Head Pastor to know them by name. They want to feel connected to their pastor, which strengthens a feeling of belonging. The ideal candidate will share in member care responsibilities (i.e. hospital visits, planning funerals, weddings, etc.) with the other pastors and be eager to reach out to all members of all ages. This person must be approachable, open, and enthusiastic about participating in as many fellowship opportunities as possible.

**Mission**
Since the beginning of Ladue Chapel, mission has been a cornerstone commitment of the church. But as strong as the mission ministry is, the church still strives to be more effective, impactful and meaningful. This means exploring ways that ministry can reach out better to non-profit organizations, create or strengthen connections with other churches and offer more assistance during times of community crisis. The Pastor, Head of Staff will support current and new mission ministries.

**Faith Formation**
The *HolyCow! Consulting* survey and Community Conversations revealed that Ladue Chapel members of all ages strongly desire more meaningful and interactive education. Members hunger for more exciting opportunities throughout the week to continue to grow in faith and make new connections. In addition to opportunities to grow personal faith throughout the week, the congregation wants to create more community-building opportunities and explore more ways to reach out to those in need. Members see the church partnering with other faith groups to try to meet these community needs. The Pastor, Head of Staff must be up-to-date with trends and ideas to support a strong, very competent staff as they explore innovative, spiritual-based programs.

**Change Management & Conflict Resolution**
Congregations, eager to grow in new directions, often have difficulty keeping honored traditions. Large congregations, like Ladue Chapel, have members with a wide variety of viewpoints and interpretations. The Pastor, Head of Staff must be able to address conflict
fearlessly, compassionately and respectfully while maintaining relationships with those with whom they disagree.

**Vision**
What does Ladue Chapel look like in five years? Church leaders see a growing membership that is welcoming and hospitable to visitors from all walks of life. We see increasing attendance at Sunday worship with newcomers being connected and incorporated quickly into the life of Ladue Chapel. The congregation sees an ever-increasing number of younger families attending a Sunday worship that has a more casual feel and online media-streaming for those unable to attend Sunday worship. Even more pastoral care provided to sick, hurting and homebound members is part of the picture.

Furthermore, in five years, we envision even better youth and adult education activities and programs designed to build and strengthen faith foundation. Add in a variety of mid-week, spiritual-based and fellowship activities that are well-publicized and timed to fit members’ busy schedules and needs. The congregation foresees a multi-layered media communication process which successfully reaches all ages.

Within the local St. Louis community and our own PCUSA, in five years, Ladue Chapel sees stronger, more visible community connections and relationships with other churches and faiths, and a mission ministry even stronger through measured, bold, yet impactful efforts. In addition to providing financial assistance and support, members visualize providing business acumen and physical labor to other churches, faith communities and non-profit organizations that fit within church mission guidelines.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, Ladue Chapel needs an experienced visionary to help design and guide us on the path toward our goals. Our next Pastor, Head of Staff must be a special person: one who can lead a strong-minded, well-educated congregation; one who shows courage and compassion; one who is goal-focused, relatable, open-minded and respectful to all viewpoints; and ultimately, one who is energetic, creative and inviting.
APPENDIX

A. Outline of Pastor Nominating Committee Process
B. “Vital Signs” Congregation Assessment Tool
C. Survey Summary for Community Conversations
D. Summary of Community Conversations
E. Financial Summary – Annual Report, 2018
F. 2019 Membership Giving Brochure
G. Demographics
H. 75th Anniversary History Update
I. Ladue News Article (Nov. 30, 2018)
J. St. Louis Post-Dispatch Article re: Interfaith Partnership (Nov. 8, 2018)
K. Sustainable Youth Ministry Team (SYMT) Report
A. Outline of Pastor Nominating Committee Process

The PNC is devoted to presenting a true and thorough picture of Ladue Chapel.

February 2019  The Rev. Dr. Mark P. Thomas announces his retirement
March-April 2019  Congregational Nominating Committee selects 11 nominees for PNC
April 28, 2019  11 members unanimously elected to PNC
June 10, 2019  PNC meets with Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery Leader; decided to engage HolyCow! Consulting to conduct an online survey; set up Google Docs as a central filing cabinet for minutes and documents.
July 2019  Online Pastor begins attending PNC meetings
August 1, 2019  • *paper surveys available after worship during August*
                • *paper surveys taken to retirement homes*
September 6, 2019  President of HolyCow! Consulting meets w/ PNC, Session and staff
September 2019  • *PNC member meets with Session members absent on Sept. 6*
October 2019  PNC conducts 21 small group Community Conversations to review survey findings and hear from members about their dreams for Ladue Chapel
November 2019  Session begins addressing highest priorities as expressed in survey and community conversations; Three PNC members serve as “writing team” for Mission Study and MIF
December 8, 2019  PNC presents findings from Community Conversations to congregation
January 29, 2020  PNC presents Mission Study and MIF to Session for approval
February 2020  Presbytery Leader begins as liaison to PNC; presents Mission Study & MIF to Presbytery
March 2020  Pastor, Head of Staff opening advertised in *Presbyterian Outlook*

Throughout these months, PNC published updates on its activities in multiple formats, including church bulletins, Chapel Bell newsletters, mailings, e-mail blasts and in-person “Ministry Minutes” during church services. The goal was to provide transparent, proactive information in order to foster trust and provide comfort to the congregation.

B. “Vital Signs” Congregation Assessment Tool
C. Survey Summary for Community Conversations

HANDOUTS:
Energy Satisfaction Map
Performance Dashboard
Priorities by (Age) Group (bubble chart)
Flexibility cartoon from PPT

SIGNIFICANT DATA:
- Membership: 1,700 people
  - 840 households
  - 24% under 35; 43% ages 35-64; 33% ages 65+
  - 50% own graduate degrees (very high)
- Average Worship Attendance: 275 current vs. 425 three years ago
- Pledging: 316 pledging units; 298 give without pledging
- Average household giving: $1,800 per year (0.91% of income; very low)
- Surveys Returned: 328 (119% of worship attendance)
  - 2% under 35; 37% ages 35-65; 61% ages 65+

SIGNIFICANT SURVEY FINDINGS:
1. Ladue Chapel appears to be a “static congregation”, meaning there is average satisfaction combined with low energy (refer to Energy Satisfaction Map)
2. Ladue Chapel is an internally “power-focused” congregation where there is a concentration on elected leadership, how decisions are made and a relatively low trust in lay leadership and unnamed power brokers

STRENGTHS OF LADUE CHAPEL:
Each index is composed of 2-5 questions. Some statistics below represent a single strength within an index (refer to Performance Dashboard):
- Music (85%);
- Education (80%);
- Activity beyond worship (62%);
- Visitor welcome programming (52%);
- Theological diversity (seen as strong)
- Facilities (no major building concerns)
- Staffing (seen as a strong team)
ISSUES / AREAS OF CONCERN:
1. Worship attendance is low as a % of membership and has significantly declined by 35% in the last three years (425 to 275 for average worship attendance)
2. Our active membership number of 1,700 appears to be inaccurate and overstated
3. Ladue Chapel’s morale index – a combination of passion and engagement – is low
   • *Example: “just going through the motions – isn’t much excitement” – 63% agree*
4. Ladue Chapel has a perceived low hospitality index – friendly (22%) and atmosphere of care (12%) – as well as low demographic diversity (4%)
   • *Despite this, training members to welcome others is high (52%)*
5. Of special concern, a wide gap exists between music quality (85%) and worship service quality and spiritual content (32%)
6. Our spiritual vitality index – or how central your faith is to your life – is low (31%)
   • *60% or above is considered healthy;*
7. Among 17 priorities listed, Ladue Chapel features a higher than average emphasis on:
   • Outreach to those on margins of society
   • Deepen connection to God through stronger worship services
   • Strengthen pastoral care to those with special needs

NOTED CRITICAL ABILITIES FOR THE NEXT PASTOR:
Key abilities are ranked in order based on composite scores. Ladue Chapel’s scores are generally average except those with an * are high when compared with other churches:
• Preaching
• Strategic Leadership
• Pastoral Care
• Teaching/Training *
• Change Management
• Administration *
• Negotiate/Resolve Conflict
• Community Catalyst
D. Summary of Community Conversations

2019 Community Conversations Takeaways

- **By the numbers:**
  - 21 sessions led by the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC)
  - 175+ church members participated in total

- **The takeaways:**
  - *Copies of the Holy Cow! survey are available again as background*
  - *Overall, we received some interesting feedback from the congregation:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT YOU LOVE ABOUT LADUE CHAPEL</th>
<th>WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT LADUE CHAPEL</th>
<th>WHAT CONCERNS YOU ABOUT LADUE CHAPEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Music experience</td>
<td>Adult ed options</td>
<td>Attendance drop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission work</td>
<td>Music programs</td>
<td>Music-to-worship gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's programs</td>
<td>Holiday services</td>
<td>Lower stewardship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The church itself</td>
<td>Traditional worship</td>
<td>Lower church vitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-generational</td>
<td>Youth activities</td>
<td>Inspired preaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warm atmosphere</td>
<td>Variety of groups</td>
<td>Worship options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current staff</td>
<td>Mission opportunities</td>
<td>Younger engagement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2019 Community Conversations Takeaways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT DOES MEANINGFUL WORSHIP LOOK LIKE?</th>
<th>WHAT ARE IDEAL QUALITIES FOR THE NEXT MINISTER?</th>
<th>WHAT DOES LADUE CHAPEL LOOK LIKE IN 5 YEARS?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unity &amp; community</td>
<td>Welcoming &amp; open</td>
<td>Full of young families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scripture-based</td>
<td>Dynamic preacher</td>
<td>Broader local base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energizing sermons</td>
<td>Easy to relate to</td>
<td>More diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applies to daily life</td>
<td>Inspiring &amp; caring</td>
<td>Strong attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stick to the clock</td>
<td>Strategic leader</td>
<td>More casual feel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep the music going</td>
<td>Good delegator</td>
<td>Sunday service variety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More relaxed vibe</td>
<td>Connects with kids</td>
<td>Vibrant social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More prayer focus</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Strong church vitality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Our timeline:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 2019</td>
<td>PNC elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2019</td>
<td>Survey sent to LC members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2019</td>
<td>Community leader interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2019</td>
<td>Community Conversation groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 2019</td>
<td>Development of Ministry Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Farm (MIF) &amp; mission study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2020</td>
<td>MIF &amp; mission study/approval by LC Session &amp; the Presbytery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2020</td>
<td>Begin nationwide search for new Pastor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&amp; Head of Staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
E. Financial Summary – Annual Report, 2018

Financials

During Fiscal 2018, the Operating results reflect a deficit of $40,000 when comparing revenues received less expenses incurred. There are three primary contributing factors.

1. General Fund revenues were 3% less than projected. Pledged contributions exceeded expectations while unpledged contributions fell short of expectations. We feel the poor performance of the stock market in the latter half of 2018 had a major impact.

2. Approximately 60% of the loss is attributed to the PDO program. The program did experience an enrollment drop which was higher than anticipated but much of the loss is due to timing issues. We have to bulk revenue on a cash received basis and the timing of the tuition payments was not accurately applied to the calendar budget. Looking at the school year results the program showed a slight surplus.

3. We have a few unexpected maintenance/technical equipment items occur during the year:
   - HVAC serving the Gathering Place
   - Security System Control Board
   - Network Server
   - Heat Pump for boiler servicing Sanctuary

Analysis of Revenue and Expense

Sources of Revenue

Sources of Expense

Donor Contributions
Income from Permanently Restricted Funds
Other Income
Per Capita
Income from Temporarily Restricted Funds
Property Usage Fee
Play Day Out

Administrative Expenses
Play Day Out
Deacons/Stephen Ministers
Youth and Young Adults
Worship & Music
Communications & Tech
Staff/Resource
Property
Other Misc Expenses
Fellowship & New Member
Childrens Programs

Revenues
Expenses
Net Results
H. 75th Anniversary History Update

The 60th Anniversary Celebration at Ladue Chapel recorded the history of our ministry together through the conclusion of the 19-year leadership of the Rev. Dr. Donald Howland, who retired in 2003. Following two years of interim leadership under the Rev. R. J. Thomas Green, the congregation called the Rev. Dr. Mark P. Thomas as its pastor/head of staff on August 7, 2005, who is now serving in his 13th year. Ladue Chapel has been blessed with long pastorates, which has not only provided for our stability and faithfulness, but which also speaks to the way we care for our pastors, and they for us.

Every Christian church has five areas of ministry, namely worship, education, fellowship, member care, and mission. The challenge for each congregation is to distinguish itself in one or more of those five ministries. Ladue Chapel has been fortunate to distinguish itself in all five of those ministries from its inception, and continues to progress in its ministry as it remains faithful to the call of Christ.

WORSHIP

While worship has gone through an era of changing expectations, and pressure to be “contemporary” in its practice and witness, Ladue Chapel’s worship has remained Reformed and traditional, but with an emphasis on excellence. We have continued, as well, the involvement of youth in our worship, who serve as acolytes, and lectors.

An excellent music ministry has been a perennial hallmark of Ladue Chapel, and under the leadership of David Erwin, who joined us in September of 2005 as our Organist and the Director of Music Ministries, that excellence has continued and our music ministry has flourished. David Erwin’s reputation in the community has soared, allowing him to recruit outstanding musicians, both singers and instrumentalists, to accompany and assist in our music ministry. Especially appreciated is the annual invitation to the Carol Beth True Trio, which brings the energy of jazz music to our worship. The Chancel Choir travelled to Paris in 2007, singing at Chartres Cathedral, Notre-Dame Cathedral, St-Roch Church (Paris), Notre-Dame d’Auteuil (Paris), and St-
Séverin Church (Paris) and the Carillon Ringers and their annual tour have been a source of musical expression and joy for our teenagers. We’ve hosted the Westminster Choir College Choir, their Bell Choir, The Purdue University Men’s Chorus, and the Bach Society of St. Louis, in addition to hosting chamber music concerts and vocal recitals in our sanctuary. David Erwin has been aided by Anne Peacock, who directs Kindermusik, the Carillon Ringers, plays the piano, fills in on the organ, and helps the Fellowship Committee. Anne is now our Ministry Assistant, who has served Ladue Chapel faithfully in a variety of capacities since 1996.

In 2014, the Session voted to have a capital campaign to replace our failing organ, and redecorate the sanctuary and its environs. The Giving Thanks Capital Campaign, exceeded its $5.5M goal, and the new Schoenstein organ is sublime, and the remodeled sanctuary is breathtaking. We are positioned for another century of exceptional worship and inspiring music. In 2017, we added magnificent banners to our sanctuary to provide additional color, interest, and proclamation. Advent season banners will be dedicated on December 2, and we anticipate acquiring additional banners to represent the remaining liturgical seasons.

EDUCATION

When our children are baptized, we make a vow as a congregation of God’s people to help them know and follow Christ. Our congregation has always taken that vow very seriously, and in fulfilling it, we have consistently provided an educational program for all ages to help our children, youth, and adults, know and follow Christ.

Our children’s ministry begins with a professionally staffed nursery to assure parents that their infants are well cared for during the Sunday morning worship and educational time. Good Shepherd helps our youngest children, following the Children’s Story in worship, to learn more about worship and its practices to prepare them as full participants beginning in third grade. Dr. Thomas introduced our children to Toady Groady, a servant of Christ in the land of St. Lou-Ladue, and by following the lectionary, the stories in church school correspond to the stories in worship. Church school is provided for every age thereafter. Twice during the last thirteen years, members have conducted thorough studies on how to create a sustainable, attractive, and effective ministry to our children and youth, the most recent study concluding in 2018. Adult education continues to be a highlight of Ladue Chapel’s ministry, offering between four and six classes every Sunday during the program year, as well as weekday evening events. The Disciple Bible Study Program, begun by Dr. Howland and Dr. Carothers in 1997 has continued, and now boasts over 266 graduates.

The Lee Institute Speaker Series, established by Des Lee, has enjoyed a twenty-three year run of providing Ladue Chapel and the Greater St. Louis area with the opportunity to hear from outstanding leaders in their respective fields, including preachers like Tom Long and William Willimon; public figures like Colin Powell, Rosalynn Carter, David Gergen and Hamilton Jordan; journalists like Bill Moyers, Nicholas Kristof and Bob Abernathy; spiritual leaders like Brian McLaren, Peter Gomes, Elaine Pagels, and Kathleen Norris; and theologians like Walter Brueggemann and Cornell West.
Although independent of our church, the Ladue Chapel Nursery School has been in our facility since 1957, and continues its exceptional early childhood education. And Play Day Out (PDO), our own pre-school enrichment program, has for over 25 years offered to young families with two to three-year olds, a safe, nurturing environment for them to learn through play.

Called to Ladue Chapel in 2001, the Rev. Dr. Dieter Heinzl has been our Associate Pastor for Faith Formation, giving shape to our entire faith formation ministry, but especially to Adult Education. In an effort to invest more fully in our ministry to youth, The Rev. Mel Smith was hired in 2012 as the Director of Youth Ministry, and then ordained in 2014 as our Associate for Youth and Young Adults. Robin Crawford became our Director of Faith Formation and Family Ministry—Children and Youth, in 2014, and was preceded by Allison Cline (2011-2013), and Karen Van Galder (2004-2011).

FELLOWSHIP

Our fellowship life as a congregation has been focused on a number of church-wide events that appeal to all our members, and on small-group fellowships. The Rally Day Picnic, hosted by the Ushers, has been a long-standing favorite, and brings all of us back together in September as we kick off the program year. The Strawberry Festival on the first Sunday of June, hosted by the Board of Deacons, has also been a perennial tradition, and marks the end of the program year and the beginning of summer. A new favorite, added by Dr. Thomas, is Watcher’s Eve, celebrated each year on the first Sunday of Advent, which helps prepare us for the birth of Christ. Associate Pastor, Rev. Brouwer brought us Trunk or Treat, celebrated each fall in the parking lot close to Halloween. We also enjoyed several years of Dinners for Eight, hosted by members of the congregation in their homes. To add greater flexibility, the Second Saturday groups were renamed to the Bread Breakers, so they didn’t feel obliged to meet on the second Saturday alone, and we continue to birth new groups of this popular and important small group fellowship ministry.

The Women’s Association has continued to provide a ministry of fellowship, Bible study, and service to the women of our congregation, and an annual Women’s Retreat in January has proved both attractive and meaningful to upwards of sixty participants.

The Men’s Fellowship also has enjoyed growing participation in its annual Men’s Retreat, and a new Men’s Grilling Group that cooks on the patio overlooking the golf course has proved to be great fun.

MEMBER CARE

The care we provide to our members in times of need is compassionate and comprehensive. The Board of Deacons provides a ministry of contact and compassion to our members who are homebound, to those enduring the heartbreak of grief, and to those who are recovering after a hospitalization. The Stephen Ministers continue to provide more in-depth and personalized
care to the hospitalized, those in nursing homes, and to those who are managing life’s more challenging situations and transitions. The clergy regularly visit those who are hospitalized to offer prayer and spiritual support. A support group for the grieving has been provided by the Stephen Ministers.

The Rev. Dr. Joe Wilson served as our Associate Pastor for Member Care beginning in 1998, and helped give shape to our continuum of care. Following his retirement in 2009, we called the Rev. Sarah Brouwer to this ministry in 2011, and after her departure in 2015, we called the Rev. Anastassia Sharpe in 2016.

MISSION

Ladue Chapel, even in the aftermath of the Great Recession, remained dedicated to contributing 20% of living donor gifts to mission, with half of that directed toward the Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly of our denomination, and half allocated by the Mission Committee to local and global agencies with whom we partner in ministry. We remember that we are blessed by God to be a blessing. In 2010, the Committee adopted a focus for our local work of addressing issues of poverty, which helped us pursue work that was making a difference in our community. In 2006, we began a partnership with Habitat for Humanity, with whom we have built ten homes, sponsoring half of each one, and to whom we have contributed more financial resources than any other church in the Greater Saint Louis area.

The locations and recipients of our tutoring ministry, involving over 30 faithful members, have changed from time to time, but not our commitment to helping children learn and grow. Our weekly collection of and distribution of food to the hungry from our Food Bank Ministry annually processes some eighty tons of food. After Hurricane Katrina devastated the gulf coast, we partnered with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance to build a Recovery Village in Houma, Louisiana, and sent work teams there for seven years, and after the tornado that cut a one-mile wide, eleven-mile long swath through Joplin, Missouri, we also sent a work team there. Each January we fill and contribute 120 clean-up buckets to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA), which they distribute on our behalf to disaster zones, and in 2018, because of three natural disasters in our country, we doubled our effort, and made 240 buckets, along with 450 Hygiene Kits made by our youth.

The Cottage, used for years by Care & Counseling as a satellite office for counseling services, fell into disuse by them after the Great Recession. In 2018, we were pleased to invite the Interfaith Partnership of Greater St. Louis to house its ministry there, and members stepped up to refurbish the facility on their behalf. We look forward to a long and fruitful relationship with our new interfaith partners.

RESOURCES
No doubt the greatest resource at Ladue Chapel has been, and remains, its faithful, talented, and generous members. Its second greatest resource has been, and remains, its faithful, talented, and generous clergy, program, support, and custodial staff.

A third resource that is increasingly treasured by our members are the St. Andrew’s Memorial Gardens, East and West. The East Garden columbarium, though not full, is none the less fully subscribed. The West Garden, long anticipated, was built, landscaped, and furnished in 2016 as another final resting place for the saints of our church.

A fourth resource whose value continues to grow, both monetarily and as a benefit to our ministry as a congregation, is the Ladue Chapel Endowment Fund, which at this time is about eight million dollars. Used only by application from Session committees, it has allowed us to hire additional staff, make timely building repairs, support our exceptional music ministry, make special gifts to mission causes, hire consultants, and pilot new ministry projects. Each year the Endowment and Planned Giving Committee hosts a lunch in the spring to promote additional endowed gifts, and a thank you lunch in December for the members of the Legacy Society, who have indicated to the church that they have arranged for an estate gift to Ladue Chapel and its Endowment.

Our ministry of resources has been overseen and coordinated by our Church Business Administrators. Vicki Hampton was hired in 2003, leaving in 2015 to accept a call to ministry in the United Church of Christ as a pastor. In 2016 we were fortunate to hire Tom Sargent.

THE FUTURE

Looking ahead, the challenges that face the church of Jesus Christ are daunting. The advent of social media and cell phone technology have changed the communications landscape. Today, the least effective way to get in touch with someone is to call them on their landline telephone, which most often is answered not by a person but by an answering machine. Text messages and email messages are far more effective. A Web Site is the church’s new front door, and it is expensive to develop, launch, and maintain. Advertising worship services and special events in the newspaper is no longer effective, and the Yellow Pages will soon exist only on-line. Not that long ago, “regular” church attendance was defined as three out of four Sundays, but is now defined as one out of six Sundays. Small churches, unable to afford pastoral leadership, are closing one after another. Ladue Chapel is one of the few churches that still offers choirs for all age groups, but especially for children and youth. But Ladue Chapel loves a challenge, and has always found a way to rise to meet it. As we begin our next era of ministry, heading toward our centennial as a congregation, we fully expect to flourish as we have these past seventy-five years, confident in our faith, and gladly following our Lord Jesus Christ, whose church we are. To God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be the glory, both now and always. Amen!
I. Ladue News Article (Nov. 30, 2018)

ADVENT SERVICES & PROGRAMS:

At Ladue Chapel Presbyterian Church, all are invited to feel welcome as we look forward to the Advent season, beginning on Nov. 24, with several new traditions the church will host.

"Our mission is to provide a welcoming environment to those who have not experienced the love of Jesus," said the Rev. Richard Sharp, pastor of the church. "This is a time to connect with family and friends, and to reflect on the spiritual journey that lies ahead.

ADVENT SEASON AT LADUE CHAPEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Dec. 2: Watcher's Eve from 4:30 to 7 p.m.
Dec. 3: Service of Remembrance at 6:15 p.m.
Dec. 8: Children's Christmas Pageant at 10 a.m.
Dec. 16: Chapel Choir sings the Christmas section of Handel's "Messiah" at 11 a.m.
Dec. 24: Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 4:30 p.m.; Family Service with children's choirs at 7 p.m.; Candlelight & Carol Service at 8:45 p.m.; A Family Worship at 10 p.m.; Christmas Eve Communion Service at 11 p.m.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES & PROGRAMS:

"The Advent season is a time of reflection and preparation for the birth of Christ," said Rev. Sharp. "It is a time to renew our faith and to reconnect with our community.

During the Advent season, we will be offering a variety of services to meet the needs of our congregation. From the traditional Christmas Eve Service to the family-oriented Saturday Service, there is something for everyone.

This Advent season, Ladue Chapel Presbyterian Church is excited to offer a variety of programs and services to help us all reflect on the true meaning of Christmas. Whether you're attending in person or participating virtually, we hope to see you this Advent season.

Ladue Chapel Presbyterian Church
6800 Clayton Road, St. Louis, MO 63117
laduechapel.org
Interfaith Partnership of St. Louis Moves Office To House at Ladue Chapel

The Interfaith Partnership of Greater St. Louis has moved its headquarters from Eden Theological Seminary in Webster Groves to a newly renovated house on the grounds of Ladue Chapel Presbyterian Church at 9450 Clayton Road in Ladue. The new office provides larger space for Interfaith Partnership’s growing staff plus meeting and conference rooms under one roof in a central part of the St. Louis region. The stand-alone, five-room house known as The Cottage has served over the years as housing for some Ladue Chapel staff and more recently as the location for Care and Counseling, an interfaith agency providing mental health services for children, adults, and families, as well as congregational and clergy training and presbyterial programs.

“In 2016 we found ourselves outgrowing the office space Eden Theological Seminary generously provided to us since 2010 and started asking ourselves, what does our future look like and where do we need to be to best serve our broad-based constituencies and faith groups,” said Rev. Dr. David Mehl, Executive Director of the Interfaith Partnership of Greater St. Louis. “The Ladue Chapel congregation stepped up when we reached out to them. This new location came at the right time and in the right place, and it underscores our close working relationships with many different faith communities. We are not under Ladue Chapel’s roof, but we are nearby and grateful for their partnership.”

“This move is a win-win for everyone,” said Rev. Dr. Dieter Heimel, Associate Pastor - Faith Formation at Ladue Chapel and representative of the Presbyterian Church USA to Interfaith Partnership. “Helping Interfaith Partnership ties in with our Christian mission and demonstrates the breadth and depth of our outreach to the St. Louis community. Our members spent hundreds of hours preparing The Cottage for our new neighbors. The fact that this move took place during our 75th anniversary year has made it extra special for our congregation and further strengthens our relationship with Interfaith Partnership.”

Founded in 1943, the Interfaith Partnership of Greater St. Louis works to deepen the understanding, respect, and appreciation among all persons across lines of religious difference and move people toward greater peace and understanding. It is built on strong relationships and active programs that reach across the many religious divides that exist in the St. Louis metropolitan area. Membership includes nearly 30 communities of faith and conscience. For more information, visit www.interfaithstl.org.

Founded in 1943, Ladue Chapel is a congregation of God’s people, welcoming all, illuminating faith, serving God and neighbor, and making a difference on behalf of Christ. It is part of the Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery and the Presbyterian Church (USA). On November 4 the church will celebrate its 75th anniversary. For more information, visit www.laduechapel.org.
K. Sustainable Youth Ministry Team (SYMT) Report

Sustainable Youth Ministry Team
Final Report, August 22, 2018

The Sustainable Youth Ministry Team (SYMT) began its work in March of 2017 in response to the recommendation from Ministry Architects who conducted listening sessions with members of the congregation in December 2016. Ministry Architects were engaged by the Session of Ladue Chapel to help them better understand the desires of the congregation and needs of staff as it related to children’s and youth ministry at Ladue Chapel.

Ministry Architects recommended 18 months of rebuilding long-term infrastructure for the children’s and youth ministries and the establishment of a team to work with Robin Crawford and Melanie Smith to ensure that the outcomes envisioned from its assessment be achieved. Ministry Architects also recommended partnering with them to manage the “renovation” process and assist the team in overcoming the obstacles identified in its assessment.

Session approved partnering with Ministry Architects (February 2017) and recruitment of lay members to serve on the Renovation Team (later renamed the Sustainable Youth Ministry Team) began in February 2017. Youth is used broadly to include the entire span from birth to grade 12. Documents and plans produced by the team often use the terms children and youth ministry but the simpler title of Youth Ministry was chosen as the team’s name. Ministry Architects (Lead consultant Kathy McCarron and Heather Quiroz) met with the team for a Quick Start Summit in late April 2017. The 18-month timeline was presented to the team and the flow of work outlined.

Ministry Architects’ assessment acknowledged the talented staff and excellent facilities at Ladue Chapel, but pointed out, “When a ministry is based solely on the giftedness of a single staff person, instability is a predictable result.” At Ladue Chapel, children and youth staff was referred to by Ministry Architects as the Dynamic Duo. They articulated the different kinds of people needed for a ministry to be sustainable and pointed out that often the people can be in place but the infrastructure or architecture is missing and those elements need to be added in order for ministry to be sustained.

First Steps

Developing a Child and Youth Safety Policy as required by the PCUSA General Assembly became an early priority. With input from the consultants, SYMT, Dr. Mark Thomas, Tom Sargent, Business Administrator, and Brian Plegge, Staff Resources Committee Chair, a Child and Youth Safety Policy was presented to Session for its approval in September 2017. All ministry volunteers receive training annually regarding the implementation of this policy.
Other critical needs became the focus of SYMT’s work:

❖ Creating an ongoing plan for recruitment and retention of ministry volunteers including nurture and training
❖ Infusing all aspects of ministry with a focus on Christian faith formation
❖ Developing a clear mission statement for children and youth ministry including values, and spiritual development milestones which express what we want children and youth to know, feel and do with their Christian faith
❖ Developing an intentional game plan for keeping Confirmands involved in the life of the church following their Confirmation (8th grade)
❖ Developing an effective communication plan so that both the congregation as a whole and parents, youth and children, in particular, will be well informed about program opportunities
❖ Strengthening fellowship opportunities at all ages, 3rd-12th grades

Listening & Learning

Building on the listening sessions conducted in December 2017 by Ministry Architects, SYMT (with assistance from the Ministry Architect Lead Consultant Kathy McCarron and Jen DeJong) planned two Summits as a means of engaging members of the congregation in dialogue about shared visions for Children and Youth Ministry at Ladue Chapel. A Visioning Summit occurred in September 2017 with 39 attendees. Discussion during that Friday-Saturday summit resulted in a set of Visioning Documents including a Mission Statement, Values, Three-year Goals and One-year Benchmarks. (Appendix)

Based on the articulation of our mission, core values and goals, SYMT continued its work in building an infrastructure capable of supporting that vision. These documents expressed the vision in broad terms, however, and greater depth of understanding came from the Christian Faith Formation Summit in October 2017 which had 29 attendees. Using a similar Friday-Saturday format, this dialogue probed deeper into exactly what our congregation expected children and youth to feel, know and be able to do. Based on those discussions, Forming Faith Core Principles were articulated and a curriculum scope and sequence were developed. (See SYMT Appendix)

Equipping The Ministry Workers

Aware of the challenges identified by Ministry Architects in its assessment, SYMT focused on developing tools which would aid staff and ministry volunteers as they engaged with our children and youth. Both game plans (broad strategies and processes for achieving a desired result) and specific tools were developed. Nearly all of them are designed with BOTH staff and lay leaders in mind. Most of these game plans and tools are included in the Ladue Chapel Children and Youth Ministry Manual. Additional Event Notebooks have been created for each special event currently a part of the children and youth programs. The goal of the notebooks
and documents in the manual is to provide detailed information so that any individual could follow the plan and coordinate an activity or assume a role as a teacher or youth advisor.

**Recruiting & Retaining Ministry Volunteers**

Recruiting teachers, advisors, covenant partners and event coordinators loomed large as one of the most discouraging aspects of the staff members’ work. A Game Plan for Recruiting, Training and Retaining ministry volunteers is now ready for implementation and has been tested as it was being developed. For example, Children and Youth Committees will begin brainstorming potential volunteers for the following year as early as August and October. Working documents which can be shared electronically are in place so that all committee members know who is making “the ask”, what the response is, and how close to completion the task of recruiting is.

Making it easy for a prospective ministry volunteer to say “YES!” when asked to teach Sunday School, lead Good Shepherd, serve as a youth fellowship advisor, or coordinate an event is a priority. Thus, the game plans and tools including the event notebooks tend to be practical, step-by-step guides. They are not intended to stifle creativity or flexibility, however, only to be a road map showing one way of organizing an activity or reaching a goal.

**Core Principles**

Great time and attention were given to laying out a scope and sequence to be used in developing learning programs for all ages so that forming faith core principles will not be overlooked, but rather become an intentional part of each activity, fellowship or class. For example, when youth engage in assembling hygiene kits as an activity the planners of that event are conscious that the purpose of the event is Faith Formation, Fellowship and Service. They intentionally talk with youth about the following core principles during and after the event:

- **Practicing Faith** - We offer our gifts to God and community.
- **Following Jesus Christ**
  - We love others as we love ourselves.
  - We share our lives with one another as a community of faith
- **Knowing the Holy Spirit**
  - I am a partner in God’s saving work.
  - God calls and the Holy Spirit empowers us to serve family, friends and church in Christ’s name.
  - God calls and the Holy Spirit empowers us to serve our neighbors locally and globally in Christ’s name.

**Curriculum Revisions**

In similar fashion, Sunday morning curriculum has been revised so that lesson plans provided to teachers also highlight the core principles addressed in each lesson. Teachers are provided
training each fall before the program year begins and provided support by staff throughout the year.

**Middle School Curriculum**

Curriculum for sixth and seventh graders was adapted to the Forming Faith Core Principles with emphasis on Biblical literacy and familiarity with key stories in the Old and New Testaments. One aspect of the pedagogy encourages questions and open discussion as reflected in the values articulated in the Forming Faith Summit.

**Confirmation Curriculum**

The confirmation curriculum was strengthened by cross referencing it with the Core Principles and infusing the Game Night/Lock-In with subtle learnings related to the curriculum. Stronger emphasis will be placed on confirmands getting to know their covenant partners and all of the pastors. Opportunities for how to engage in the life of the church will be highlighted throughout the year.

**Senior High Curriculum**

A newly formatted “Sunday Conversations” offering for senior high youth will be launched in the fall of 2018 during the traditional educational hour on Sunday morning. The series will explore a variety of topics throughout the year featuring different discussion leaders for each topic. Leaders will use a dialogue format, not lecture, to stimulate dynamic conversations about issues relevant to the youth at this unique stage of their lives. Several senior high members met with SYMT members and church staff to help create the list of topics for the first year.

**Communication Plan**

Staff can be brilliant and charismatic, volunteers can be dedicated, curriculum can be stimulating, but without communication to the congregation and families all elements of effective programming are for naught! Recognizing that lack of communication was highlighted by Ministry Architects as an obstacle to success, SYMT re-examined all the modes of communication available for children and youth programs at Ladue Chapel Presbyterian Church and experimented with using all the options. A Communication Game Plan was developed and a detailed spreadsheet illustrating how to stay abreast of the communication demands was created. Implementing this game plan requires active cooperation between the Children’s and Youth Committees and the staff.

**Fellowship Opportunities**

In addition to the offerings on Sunday morning, children and youth benefit from opportunities to know one another and spend time with pastors, member leaders and advisors. Learning to
BE a Christian is more than an intellectual pursuit and the experiences gained through fellowship groups is a vital part of forming one’s faith.

**Route 345**

Middle elementary years can be a formative time in learning how one is a part of the Church. Coming together each Monday afternoon, third, fourth and fifth graders engage in fun, fellowship and an occasional service project. New in the fall of 2018, Route 345 will have a Coordinator who works with the Associate Pastor in shaping the curriculum and activities. There will also be at least two adults consistently present with parents helping on a rotating basis. Previously, everyone but the Associate Pastor rotated from week to week.

**Middle School Youth Group**

Sixth graders will graduate from Route 345 into their own youth group which meets on Sunday evenings. Meeting simultaneously with the Senior High Youth Group, this group will have its own advisors and activities but share a quick Sunday evening meal before beginning the program portion of the evening. Activities will reflect the Forming Faith Core Principles. The Associate Pastor for Youth and Young Adults serves as a resource to the MSYG advisors.

**Senior High Youth Group**

Presently, Senior High Youth Group will continue under the leadership of the Associate Pastor and a team of volunteer leaders. This group shares a quick evening meal with Middle School Youth Group before engaging in its own program. Activities reflect the Forming Faith Core Principles. Future plans include a team of ministry volunteers working with the Associate Pastor so that the Pastor is able to spend time with both HSYG and MSYG.

**Continuing Needs**

While most challenges highlighted in Ministry Architect’s assessment have been addressed in a robust manner, two areas continue to need attention:

**Non-engaged or Disconnected Parents**

Some parents are quite engaged by teaching, contributing to events, or responding to one-time requests. However, a sizeable number of parents are not connected directly with the children and youth programs.

A stated goal for 2020 is “Each year 25 parents participate in church programs designed to equip them to support their child’s faith journey.” In the spring of 2018, one session of the “Family Matters” course offered by Adult Education was devoted to an update of the work of the Sustainable Youth Ministry Team. A 2018 benchmark was having eight parents participate in a quarterly Christian Faith formation group with each other to support and encourage their child’s faith journey. No such group has been formed yet for 2018.
Learning from the Numbers

Most would agree that relationships are more important than numbers in ministry, however, numbers reveal important information. Are we reaching ALL of our children and youth? Who are we missing? What do we know about who participates when?

As SYMT began its work in early 2017, attendance records, lists, databases, etc. existed in varying formats and few of them “communicated” with one another. ACS, Ladue Chapel’s database, was often cited as having the capability but not being utilized. The clear goal is to be able to access all of the attendance data for each of the programs in one place - ACS! Progress is being made, but this goal has not been met quite yet.

Transition from SYMT to Christian Education, Children’s Committee and Youth Committee

SYMT envisions the Christian Education Committee as the group having broad responsibility and oversight of Ladue Chapel’s faith formation programs for all ages. Children and Youth Committees are sub-committees responsible for those particular ministries and report to Christian Education. The best laid plans often gather dust in some remote file unless skilled, dedicated people are on board to interpret and implement those plans.

To that end, a newly invigorated Youth Committee is in its formative stages with the expectation that additional members will join that group. Children’s Committee is currently being formed with the expectation that the Co-Chair of SYMT will assume leadership of that committee in August 2018. Other members of SYMT have expressed willingness to either be part of the committees or be “on call” for interpretation of particular plans/strategies should that prove helpful.

Several tools were created to assist the committees in their work and include the following:

- Annual Planning Calendar for Children and Youth Ministry provides a quick visual of the tasks requiring attention by each of the three committees.
- Agenda Planning provides helpful tips for making committee meetings productive and relevant rather than simply a format for hearing reports.
- Children and Youth Volunteer Recruitment spreadsheet provides a format to track the work being done in recruiting volunteers.

In summary, the infrastructure for a sustainable children’s and youth ministry is largely now in place. Implementation of the plans by using the tools, game plans and strategies and adhering to the Vision, Values, and Forming Faith Principles is in the hands of not only the staff but also is very much the work of the Children and Youth Committees. Every aspect of the ministry can be described as ongoing. A few pieces are still in the beginning stages, but most are up and running.
Ladue Chapel is fortunate to have had highly skilled and dedicated members who stepped forward to eighteen months of intense examination of Ladue Chapel’s ministry with children and youth. The Sustainable Youth Ministry Team is grateful to Session for its support through engaging the services of Ministry Architects as well as listening and providing feedback throughout the process. We especially thank those elders who participated in the two Summits.

Sustainable Youth Ministry Team

Sarah Yancey, chair
Laila Crabtree, co-chair
Martha Baur
Sharon Fenoglio
Frecky Lewis
John Meyer
Katie Spencer
Robin Crawford
Melanie Smith
SYMT APPENDIX

Ladue Chapel
Visioning Documents

Mission Statement
Our ministries provide a welcoming, loving and safe space for children of God to worship, learn, grow, serve, and lead as followers of Jesus Christ.

Values
Faithful: We worship God and demonstrate God’s love in word and action.
Inclusive: We fully embrace and respect everyone’s race, creed, sexual orientation, gender status, economic standing and those with special needs and provide a safe space for all.
Welcoming: Every child and youth feels joyfully received and wants to return.
Loving: Our actions are grace inspired and demonstrate that we care for each other.
Exploring: We value our Reformed tradition which encourages questions and open discussion.

Three-year Goals and One-year Benchmarks
(Target Date for Goals: Sept. 1, 2020   Target Date for Benchmarks: Sept. 1, 2018)

The Sustainable Youth Ministry Team will evaluate and revise the 3-year goals and 1-year benchmarks annually. When SYMT is dissolved, the Christian Education Committee will assume this role.

2020 Goal: Each week during the program year, 150 unique* children and youth participate in a church program (Worship, choirs, Sunday School, youth groups, etc.)

2018 Benchmark: An attendance tracking system has been developed in which unique weekly children and youth numbers are captured.

2018 Benchmark: A target number of unique children and youth have been determined for the 2017-2018 school year.

*Unique means a child who participates in three different programs is only counted once, not three times.

2020 Goal: To fulfill the desire of our members to know our children and youth by name, all children and youth on the roster have meaningful relationships with at least 5 adult members (non-staff) at Ladue Chapel other than their parents.

2018 Benchmark: A system for tracking the adults connected with the children and youth in the ministries has been created.

2018 Benchmark: 50% of active children can identify meaningful relationships with at least five adults (non-staff) at Ladue Chapel other than their parents.
2020 Goal: At least 50% of the adults ministering with children and youth are members other than those with children and youth in the program.

2018 Benchmark: At least 25% of the adults ministering with children and youth are members other than those with children and youth in the program.

2020 Goal: Each year 25 parents participate in church programs designed to equip them to support their child’s faith journey.

2018 Benchmark: Eight parents participate during the year in a quarterly Christian faith formation group with each other to support and encourage their child’s faith journey.

Youth Ministry Specific

2020 Goal: At least 20 youth worship at Ladue Chapel weekly during the year.

2018 Benchmark: At least 10 youth worship at Ladue Chapel weekly.

2020 Goal: Eight youth serve as leaders who invite and connect youth from inside and outside the Ladue Chapel community.

2018 Benchmark: Work with students to define youth leadership positions in youth ministry.

2020 Goal: At least one annual service trip for high school students of 4+ days duration, (one local and one global in alternate years), which includes at least 20 youth participants.

2018 Benchmark: 70% of the adult leaders for Urban Plunge participate for the full week.

2018 Benchmark: Recruit needed adult member leaders (other than Mel) for the global trip in 2019.

2019 Benchmark: Implement a global trip for high school youth.

2020 Goal: 25% of 6th-12th grade students serve as assistants or leaders with a K-5th grade special event or activity during the church program year.

2018 Benchmark: At least 10% of 6th-12th grade students serve as assistants or leaders with a K-5th grade special event or activity during the program year.
Ladue Chapel
Forming Faith Core Principles

1. Knowing God
   a. God is sovereign; holy and worthy of worship.
   b. God is Triune; whom we experience as God, Jesus and Holy Spirit.
   c. God’s love is steadfast; forgiving, reconciling and embraces all.
   d. God’s love is personal; I am a beloved child of God.

2. Knowing the Bible
   a. Bible as the word of God: the story of God and God’s people
   b. Bible as Old & New Testament/Covenant
   c. Bible as guide for life and faith

3. Knowing Jesus
   a. Jesus lived, died and rose for us.
   b. Jesus reveals God’s love.
   c. Jesus saves - from sin and for abundant life.
   d. Jesus is Lord.

4. Following Jesus Christ
   a. We love others as we love ourselves.
   b. We forgive others as we forgive ourselves.
   c. We share our lives with one another as a community of faith.

5. Practicing Faith
   a. We worship God as a community of faith.
   b. We pray, sing hymns, study and observe the liturgical seasons, and celebrate the sacraments.
   c. We are shaped by the Reformed tradition.
   d. We express what we believe.
   e. We offer our gifts to God and community.

6. Knowing the Holy Spirit
   a. I am a partner in God’s saving work.
   b. God calls and the Holy Spirit empowers us to serve family, friends and church in Christ’ name.
   c. God calls and the Holy Spirit empowers us to serve our neighbors locally and globally in Christ’s name.