

Episcopal Diocese of Georgia Strategic Plan 2025-2030

Encourage, Strengthen, Love One Another

MISSION STATEMENT

Guided by the Triune God, the Episcopal Diocese of Georgia exists to build a vital network of churches that is devoted to Christ and each other and transforming communities across Georgia.

VISION STATEMENT

We envision a network of churches where every member is equipped and empowered for ministry, reflecting the diversity of the Body of Christ. Through collaborative efforts, spiritual growth, and creative responses to local needs, we strive to welcome, include and affirm all, especially those historically underserved.

VALUES

Faith in the Triune God | Respecting the Dignity of Every Human Being | Anglican Tradition | Collaboration | Connection | Community | Communication

SUMMARY

The Episcopal Diocese of Georgia's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan centers on three interlocking priorities drawn from our baptismal call to mutual support:

- Encourage one another by creating new pathways for collaboration and communication that enable parishes to share resources, learn from each other's successes, and build stronger connections across the diocese.
- Strengthen one another by investing in leadership development at all levels—lay and ordained, young and experienced—ensuring every member is equipped to exercise their baptismal ministry with confidence and competence.
- Love one another by actively welcoming, including, and affirming all people, especially those historically underserved, making visible Christ's radical love through our communities and ministries.

Together, these five strategic goals create a comprehensive framework for building a vital network of churches that is devoted to Christ and each other and transforming communities across Georgia.

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ." - 1 Corinthians 12:12

STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Encourage one another - *New ways to collaborate to foster bold steps*

Goal 1: Improve Collaboration & Resource-Sharing (0-12 months)

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Overview: Building meaningful relationships and community between parishes at the convocational and diocesan level through shared resources, coordinated efforts, and mutual support.

Key Objectives:

- 1.1 Create a Resource Hub

- Establish a centralized resource hub (Google for Nonprofits platform) for sharing outreach and engagement ideas
- Integrate seamlessly into diocesan website, YouTube channel, and Zoom/livestreaming capabilities
- Create platforms for publishing formation materials, directories (lay and clergy), success stories and best practices on theology & Anglican identity, polity, canons, stewardship, formation, evangelism, children & youth ministry, parish vitality, inclusivity, rural ministry, and shared clergy models
- Responsible: Diocesan Strategy Committee, Communications Committee, Communications Officer, Diocesan Council, Diocesan Staff

1.2 Support Parish & Convocational Vitality

- Develop operational guidelines and role-specific resources for wardens (including directory), vestry, clergy, and committees (transitions, supply clergy, treasurers, audits, administrative items, fostering belonging, parish growth, children & youth ministry)
- Convocations organize resource-sharing, gatherings, and convocational youth and children's ministries
- Pursue Trinity Wall Street grants, Lilly Foundation UTO grants for rural/small church/multilingual ministries
- Responsible: Deans and Diocesan Council

1.3 Encourage In-Person Coordination

- Facilitate annual in-person gatherings for key diocesan leaders to coordinate efforts (Commission on Ministry, Standing Committee, Diocesan Council, other relevant bodies)
- Maintain public diocesan calendar for coordination
- Include strategic planning, collaborative problem-solving, and relationship building opportunities
- Responsible: Diocesan Staff (Bishop), committee and commission leaders, Standing Committee, Diocesan Council

Goal 4: Enhance Diocesan Communication, Public Relations, & Branding (0-24 months)

Scripture: Proverbs 15:23; Romans 10:14

Overview: Creating clear, consistent, and compelling messaging about the Episcopal Diocese of Georgia that resonates with internal and external audiences, strengthening identity, fostering engagement, and supporting growth.

Key Objectives:

4.1 Develop a Compelling Brand Identity for the Diocese and Churches

- Create a branding strategy (knowing who we are, elevator pitch, answering questions consistently)
- Engage external consultant for professional guidance
- Develop key messaging that articulates unique strengths and resonates with target audiences
- Responsible: Communications Officer, Communications Committee, Diocesan Staff

4.2 Strengthen Internal Communications

- Establish new Communications Committee composed of diverse communications experts
- Regularly publish and update in real-time a public diocesan calendar
- Update diocesan website to be more user-friendly and resource-rich
- Manage calendar and Realm Resource Hub effectively
- Ensure new clergy and lay leaders are added to appropriate groups and directories
- Responsible: Communications Officer, Communications Committee, Diocesan Staff

4.3 Implement a Proactive Public Relations Strategy

- Create public relations campaign to increase brand recognition in South Georgia
- Develop media outreach plan to secure positive coverage in local and regional outlets
- Utilize advertisements, signage, and promotional items to increase community visibility
- Add resources to Diocesan Resource Hub for easy access
- Responsible: Communications Committee, Communications Officer, Diocesan Staff, external consultant, Diocesan Strategy Committee

4.4 Leverage Digital Media and Technology

- Enhance social media strategy to create engaging content and build online community
- Utilize email marketing and digital tools for effective communication
- Explore video, podcasts, and multimedia formats to share stories and messages
- Responsible: Diocesan Staff, Communications Committee

Strengthen one another - *Build up existing work to be more effective*

Goal 2: Empower More Leadership (6-12 months)

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:9; Ephesians 4:11-13

Overview: Equipping and empowering clergy and laity at all levels to exercise their leadership gifts effectively, fostering a culture of shared ministry and distributed leadership throughout the diocese.

Key Objectives:

2.1 Further Develop Lay Ministry Training Programs

- Develop comprehensive training and renewal programs for canonical licensed lay ministries
- Examples: pastoral leader, eucharistic minister, eucharistic visitor, preaching, evangelism, worship leader, catechist
- Responsible: Commission on Ministry, Canon of the Ordinary, Convocation Deans

2.2 Provide Leadership Skills Development Resources

- Develop training for children & youth ministry, church branding, church leadership skills, financial transparency and stewardship
- Implement using the Resource Hub
- Responsible: Convocation Deans and Diocesan Staff

2.3 Establish Convocational Support Systems

- Develop system of convocational support for parishes without priests
- Support for Administrators, Vestries, Senior Wardens, Treasurers, Junior Wardens, Buildings & Grounds, musicians—troubleshooting with subsidiarity (resolving issues at lowest level first)
- Implement Lay Convocation Leader (Lay Assistant to the Dean) program to connect laity without clergy to other parishes
- Ensure new lay leaders are added to convocational meetings and groups
- Responsible: Deans, Diocesan Staff, Bishop, parish leaders

2.4 Create Clearer Discernment & Formation Pathways

- Create clearer discernment, leadership, and ordination pathways for laity and young adults (vocational discernment for all the baptized) with special consideration for bi-vocational ministries
- Make Deacon's School processes clearer; possibly create annual "Here I Am" retreat for all vocations
- Revitalize Deacon's School (explore online programs or retool methods)
- Implement bi-vocational support using 2023 report recommendations

- Create resources for meeting canonical requirements (Safe Church, civil reporting requirements, Constitution and Canons including Title IV, teaching on racism)
- Responsible: Commission on Ministry, Diocesan Staff

2.5 Create Better Support for Wellness and Mental Health of Lay Leaders

- Partnerships with mental health professionals making therapy available to lay leaders
- Destigmatize mental health issues within church community
- Pastoral Care Workshops focused on trauma-informed ministry
- Regular required retreats & sabbaticals to encourage renewal and well-being
- Responsible: Diocesan staff

Goal 5: Cultivate Thriving Children & Youth Ministry (Ongoing)

Scripture: Matthew 19:14

Overview: Creating vibrant and engaging ministries for children and youth across the diocese, fostering spiritual growth, leadership development, and greater sense of belonging within the church.

Key Objectives:

5.1 Resource Development & Support

- Create centralized platforms for publishing and sharing resources, formation materials, success stories, and best practices for children & youth ministry
- Populate Resource Hub with current best practices, age-appropriate curricula, activity ideas, event planning guides, Safe Church support and compliance
- Develop operational guidelines and role-specific resources for Sunday School teachers, youth group leaders, nursery volunteers, and parents
- Responsible: Diocesan Staff (Communications Director), Children & Youth Ministry Coordinator, Children & Youth Leader Taskforce

5.2 Convocational Collaboration & Events

- Encourage convocational youth and children's ministries
- Support Deans and Lay Convocation Leaders in organizing joint activities and events
- Organize community-building events including Safe Church training, resource-sharing, services, family-centered gatherings
- Ensure all convocational events include age-appropriate activities for children and youth
- Responsible: Convocation Deans, Diocesan Staff, Parish Leaders, Children & Youth Ministry Leaders

5.3 Leadership Training & Discernment for Youth

- Develop training for children & youth ministry leaders (paid and volunteer)
- Offer workshops, webinars, and mentorship on child development, teaching methods, safety protocols, and effective youth ministry practices
- Create clearer discernment, leadership, and ordination pathways for youth and young adults
- Highlight opportunities for young people to explore calling through involvement in children & youth programs
- Responsible: Diocesan Staff, Commission on Ministry, Experienced Children & Youth Ministry Leaders

5.4 Inclusive & Engaging Ministries

- Help parishes create beacons of belonging, actively inviting, welcoming, and affirming children and youth of all backgrounds

- Ensure programs are inclusive regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or ability
- Provide training on creating safe and welcoming spaces for LGBTQIA+ youth and marginalized groups
- Actively reach out to families in surrounding communities, particularly those historically underserved
- Responsible: Parish Leaders, Children & Youth Ministry Leaders, Diocesan Staff, Missioner for Beloved Community, Committee for Beloved Community

Love one another - *Make tangible love for our neighbors*

Goal 3: Encourage Beloved Community & Evangelism of Belonging (12-18 months)

Scripture: Galatians 3:28; John 13:34-35

Overview: Cultivating a thriving and inclusive diocesan community where all individuals, particularly those historically underserved or underrepresented, experience a profound sense of belonging, are actively welcomed and affirmed, and are empowered to participate fully in the life of the Church.

Key Objectives:

3.1 Parish-Level Engagement

- Help parishes conduct trainings and use tools for assessing needs
- Help parishes become beacons of belonging, actively inviting, welcoming, and affirming all
- Engage people historically underserved and/or under-represented by the Church on their terms (people of color, immigrants, refugees, non-English speakers, youth, young adults, LGBTQIA+, gender non-conforming people, economically disadvantaged, people living in rural areas, people with disabilities)
- Implement mandated inclusion training for leadership positions or transitions
- Responsible: Parish leaders, Diocesan leadership training program (LWG)

3.2 Diocesan-Level Engagement

- Foster welcoming and affirming sense of belonging across the diocese
- Develop resources for congregations to remove barriers to entry (review cost of events, reveal unacknowledged "dress codes," use Invite, Welcome, Connect resources)
- Promote accessibility for individuals with disabilities, including ADA compliance and educational initiatives
- Use "secret shoppers" programs to evaluate and improve congregation's "welcome level"
- Provide community needs and ministry assessments and training
- Implement mandated inclusion training for leadership positions or transitions
- Responsible: Diocesan Missioner for Beloved Community, Committee on Beloved Community, Leading With Grace, Racial Justice Georgia

3.3 Individual Level

- Learn how to listen to marginalized communities on their terms through conducting community needs assessments
- Attend workshops on overcoming biases to build culture of inclusion (resource hub, website)
- Require training and workshops for leadership positions
- Support congregations to better listen to marginalized groups and respond to expressed needs

- Incorporate input from diverse populations into decision-making processes
 - Implement mandated inclusion training for leadership positions or transitions
 - Responsible: everyone!
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