**St. Luke’s Episcopal Church / Anchorage / KY**

**OTM Profile**

**1. Describe a moment in your worshipping community's recent ministry which you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.**

The past twelve months have been a period of reawakening for St. Luke’s --the global pandemic and the interim period did not slow us down. We successfully opened a new 7,000-square-foot fellowship hall and classroom wing. We remained a strong and vibrant parish with renewed life and excitement in all our ministries. Our worship attendance has remained stable and participation in other parish events has been strong. We formed new relationships with “Monthly Mission Partners,” as we have learned about them, prayed for them, and supported them financially. We have greatly increased our commitment to supply our neighbors in our Eastern Area Community Ministry with groceries and essential items collected every third weekend through our “Big Red Bag” ministry.  Fellowship gatherings including Foyer Groups, coffee hour, Bible studies, Brotherhood of St. Andrew, and Daughters of the King, have grown. Finally, we adopted a new Vision, Mission Statement, and short-term Strategic Plan – all focused on the future we believe God desires for us.

2. **Describe your liturgical style and practice for all types of worship services provided by your community.**

St. Luke’s is a vibrant worshipping community, rooted in the Episcopal tradition. Sunday worship at 10:00 a.m. features a traditional Holy Eucharist Rite II liturgy with beautiful music and choir. A nursery is provided for families with young children. This worship is livestreamed via Facebook, with recordings available on our website. Saturday worship at 5:30 p.m. offers a more contemporary Holy Eucharistic Rite II liturgy with music provided by our Reflections band. Adults enjoy a lay-led Christian formation class with breakfast on Sundays at 9:00 a.m. Additional worship offerings include quarterly Evensong, Taizé, Centering Prayer, and seasonal celebrations. While St. Luke’s willingly explores new worship styles, we remain committed to exceptional, inspiring, and enriching worship. Our music ministry is one of the finest in the region.

**3. How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?**

We believe everyone has something to offer. Through our Commission organizational structure, we seek to call and enable all people to use their God-given gifts. In worship we serve through a wide variety of ministries. Through fellowship we plan and host special social events, take communion to the sick and shut-in, provide Lay Pastoral Care to those in need, and engage in a wide range of activities through our active chapters of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew and Daughters of the King. We host a lay-led Wednesday Bible study class and a Sunday morning Adult Formation program. We foster ministries for both Healing Prayer and Centering Prayer. St. Luke’s has recently undertaken a parish-wide program to help people discover their spiritual gifts using resources from Stephen Ministries. We offer periodic ministry fairs to help parishioners learn about and get involved in our many activities. Our vestry works proactively to identify leaders within the parish and to expand the participation of members in the life of the church. Opportunities for involvement are publicized in a weekly newsletter, emails, social media, and the parish website and weekly bulletin.

**4. As a worshipping community, how do you care for your spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being?**

St. Luke’s is a loving community where support is felt and shared. Our spiritual health has been bolstered by Sunday classes and weekly Bible study, in-home Lay Eucharistic visits, inclusion in prayer lists, and the Centering Prayer group. Our emotional well-being is supported by celebrating birthdays and anniversaries in our worship, building congregational relationships through small group dinners, participation in service groups like Daughters of the King and the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, the delivery of meals to those needing temporary support, flowers to the sick and shut-ins, plus anointing of those requesting healing. Our parish engagement process identified the desire to nurture friendships and create more opportunities for people to build meaningful relationships coming out of the recent pandemic.

**5. Describe your worshipping community’s involvement in either the wider Church or geographical region.**

As one of the largest parishes in the Diocese of Kentucky, we play an active role in leadership, with a parish member currently serving as Treasurer of the Diocese. We financially support theological education through our Episcopal Seminaries. We make our facilities available to many groups in our community, including Cub Scouts, a multi-county community band, and the Louisville Photographic Society. We offer musical instruction for neighborhood youth and adults though our Music Academy. We host concerts and recitals with guest musicians and Evensong events that draw many from our surrounding community. Seasonal events such as a Christmas Open House and Lenten Friday Fish Fries are popular within our parish and throughout the community.

**6. How do you engage in pastoral care for those beyond your worshipping community?**

We provide outreach and care for others in a variety of ways. We partner with thirty other churches in Eastern Area Community Ministries, supplying a food pantry and providing other essentials for families in our community through our “Big Red Bag” monthly offerings. We welcome and help resettle refugees through Kentucky Refugee Ministries, including in the last year families from Afghanistan, Syria, and Ukraine. We support Home of the Innocents, continuing decades-long fundraising for vulnerable children. Each month we learn about, pray for, and financially support a different local, national, or international organization through our Monthly Mission Partner giving, donating one loose plate offering a month to the organization. Recent examples include Virginia Theological Seminary, Food for the Poor, Eastern Kentucky Flood Relief, Wellspring (mental health services), Prodigal Ministries (transitional support for the previously incarcerated), Habitat for Humanity, and Blessings in a Backpack (addressing food insecurity for local school children).

**7. Tell about a ministry that your worshipping community has initiated in the past five years. Who can be contacted about this?**

A primary focus for St. Luke’s in the last five years has been the significant expansion of our gathering space. We now share our space with an increasing number of community groups. Our outreach ministry has expanded exponentially as we invite outside groups to host events at our parish. Our annual Lenten fish fries have seen the largest number of attendees ever. We host receptions after Evensong and music recitals with other local churches. We believe St. Luke’s serves as a “community center” for the local neighborhood and surrounding area.

**8. How are you preparing yourselves for the Church of the future?**

* Our Vestry has formed “Commissions” to organize ministry areas into Teaching, Stewardship, Mission, Evangelism, Fellowship, Worship, and Prayer. These Commissions will serve as centers that complement existing ministries to ensure their effectiveness and to gather common ministries together to better support their efforts.
* Through a new program designed to help members discern their spiritual gifts, everyone will be encouraged to claim and use their gifts of time and talent.
* Our Vestry has formulated a new Vision and Mission Statement.
* We are committed to advance technologically and tailor the way we communicate. We recognize that we will need to continue adapting to the ongoing changes occurring in society and format changes that will continue to welcome and attract new parishioners while meeting the continually changing needs of current parishioners.
* A major update to our website, as the primary conduit of information about St Luke’s, has just been completed.

**9. What is your Practice of stewardship and how does it shape the life of your worshipping community?**

We practice year-round stewardship of our property, our people, and our finances. Our property has been carefully enhanced and is now being lovingly cared for. Our people are encouraged to identify and share their spiritual gifts. Our finances are strong, with a substantial surplus recorded in 2022. While in the past we have focused our efforts in September and October on a “pledge campaign,” we are moving toward ongoing financial education. During the peak of the COVID pandemic, we relied more on email and traditional mail correspondence to communicate our stewardship principles and goals. Testimonials from parish members, small group meetings held at parishioners’ homes, and individual member visits to review the finances and to share information on the life of the church have proven to be effective ways to communicate our progress and to encourage parishioners to become involved in parish ministries. Through our

recent efforts, we yielded the most successful response ever from active members in terms of their financial commitments by encouraging parishioners to share their personal experiences as they prayerfully considered their financial commitment to St. Luke’s.

**10.** **What is your worshipping community’s experience of conflict? And how have you addressed it?**

St. Luke’s has experienced its share of conflict. Broader church issues including gay clergy and same-sex marriage surfaced fundamental differences in beliefs. Local issues like community opposition to our building expansion,theclosing the St. Luke’s preschool and addressing the realities of the former rector’s chronic health issues have been sources of conflict. These conflicts were resolved with love and acceptance. Several meetings over an extended period provided opportunities to listen to all viewpoints with love and understanding. This communication allowed us to share ideas and beliefs and brought opposing sides closer together. We were able find ways to work together that allowed all parties to love one another despite our differences. Our church remained committed to its mission, holding together, and growing in faith.

**11. What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well? When has it gone poorly? And what did you learn?**

We have experienced change several times over the last ten years. We lost a long-term, popular rector, expanded our parish hall and other meeting space, worshiped remotely during the pandemic, and now are searching for the next rector. We have experienced tremendous grace, having completed a very successful capital campaign with extraordinary support from the congregation. Our congregation embraced the live streaming of worship during the COVID and continued to support the church financially.

At the time, we may not have fully addressed the needs of those who suffered with the loss of our long-term rector. This may have caused some parishioners to find new church homes or to stop attending altogether. We have been successful with the completion of the expansion and found that there are many ministries we can create and expand with the new space. We have learned that we are a stable community that can weather the storms of change, but we can always be more sensitive to the impacts of change to others and to practice deeper compassion.

Whether we have experienced resounding success or fallen short, we have learned to seek God’s guidance and support in our major decisions.

**12.** **Please provide words describing the gifts and skills essential to the future leaders of your worshipping community.**

* Relationship Building Skills
* Energy and Humor
* Strategic Leadership
* Preaching/Worship