

“To Create a New Parish...”

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were being cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

(Book of Common Prayer)

Dear Friends,

I write today to tell you of a significant moment in the life of our community of faith. At the March vestry meetings of St. Luke's (March 14) and Church of the Good Shepherd (March 21), both vestries approved the recommendation to move forward with a merger of the parishes. I have included the text of the resolution that each vestry approved below. I invite you to read it that you might precisely understand the nature of the exciting opportunity that lies before us.

Resolution to Combine the Parishes of Church of the Good Shepherd and Saint Luke's

*Whereas, the Vestry of Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, Town and Country, Missouri, and the Vestry of St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Manchester, Missouri, desire to combine with one another **to create a new parish**, as described hereunder.*

Be it resolved that worship services for the newly combined parish will take place at Church of the Good Shepherd at a time and date to be determined.

Be it resolved that the parishes of Church of the Good Shepherd and St. Luke's will continue in their shared ministry, current worship services and operations until such time and date that the move to the location of Church of the Good Shepherd can effectively take place.

*Be it resolved that upon approval of this resolution by both vestries, a **Transition Team** comprised of members nominated by the vestry of each church will manage details of combining the parishes.*

Be it resolved that the St. Luke's Preschool will continue to operate in its present location at St. Luke's Church through at least the 2023-24 school year.

We, the members of this Vestry, are authorized to perform the acts to carry out this resolution on behalf of this parish.

The opportunity God has given us to do a new thing is, in my estimation, nothing short of miraculous, one which, in time, may lead us to new expressions of missional engagement with the world around us. There are no limits to what we can do when we engage with one another and follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit to create new forms of ministry, worship, and outreach. Therefore, I invite each of you to prayerfully ask God how you can be of service to this new venture "to create a new parish."

I want to thank the lay leadership of both St. Luke's and Church of the Good Shepherd for having the courage to see and embrace a new way forward for our partnership. I especially want to thank the members of the Discernment Team that worked during 2021, along with myself and our shepherd, the Rev. Daniel Pearson, through the process of discernment and vision that led us to this moment. Finally, I want to thank our Bishop, The Rt. Rev. Deon Johnson, and his staff for their ongoing partnership and guidance in this process.

As you might imagine, and many of you have already heard me say on more than one occasion, **the real work is only just beginning**. The merger of two parishes into one and the consequent creation of a whole new parish will not happen overnight. There will be challenges. There will be bumps in the road. Yet, I am convinced that God has called us to this holy undertaking and having called us, will provide all that we need to succeed, starting with the people of St. Luke's and Good Shepherd, our greatest assets. You, each and every one of you, are invited by God to give yourself in service to this new venture. We need you and your gifts and abilities. I pray you will join me in accepting the invitation.

Faithfully Yours,

The Rev. C. Earl Mahan,
Rector