

# Saint Matthew Strategic Plan

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# F O U N D A T I O N S

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2023-2026

A photograph of a person sitting in a blue wheelchair. The wheelchair has a white document resting on the seat. The person's long blonde hair is visible. The background is blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting. A teal text box is overlaid on the top half of the image.

“In 2015 Council studied a book called, “Pursuing God’s Will Together,” by Ruth Haley Barton. This study was meant to build a God-inspired plan for SMLC. Before each monthly meeting, one of the council members would present a chapter in the book and the council prayed for God’s guidance as we sought to discern and engage with new creation in Jesus Christ. What you presented in the Foundations Strategic Plan is clearly God’s response to council prayers years ago. I give thanks and praise for our Lord who is actively engaged in His community and steadfast in His plan.”

JERRY HANSON

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Saint Matthew 1

# → W E L C O M E

## SAINT MATTHEW

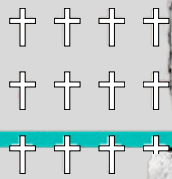


is a community of Jesus dreaming God-sized dreams and pursuing God's work in our neighborhood and beyond.

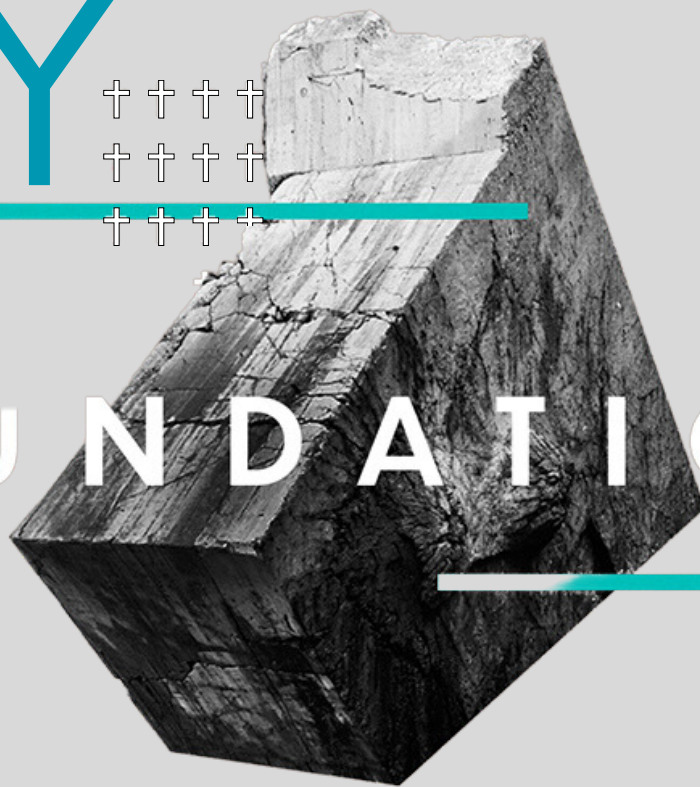
We seek to equip and empower a courageous community of deeply formed lives, to foster well-being, reduce stigma, and impact our neighborhood through allyship.



# WHY



# FOUNDATIONS



There has been so much happening in our world since 2019, to look back is almost staggering: changes at Saint Matthew, changes socially in our world, changes due to Covid, and even changes in our neighborhood.



30% of our neighborhood relocated and brought young professionals and families into our community.



Loneliness, social isolation, and mental health issues grew to epidemic levels during Covid-19 stay-at-home orders.



Churches and student ministries experienced a mass exodus across America.



Ideological divisions and separations grew, and we experienced significant social upheaval within our country.

All this change and disruption in our world and culture has shifted the soil of our neighborhood, community, and church. This seismic activity has made it clear that at Saint Matthew, we need to root ourselves in new and renewed strategic directions. Renewing our foundation will set us up to dream new God-sized dreams for the coming decade of ministry and kingdom building in our neighborhood and world.

# OUR PROCESS

OVER THE LAST YEAR AND A HALF, THE CHURCH COUNCIL AND STAFF HAVE BEEN COLLECTING AND ANALYZING DATA. WE INTERVIEWED MEMBERS, MISSION PARTNERS, LOCAL NON-PROFITS, AND COMMUNITY LEADERS.

One of the most compelling questions we asked is one I invite you to ponder:

**If SMLC embodied a community of Jesus – recognized as such by our broader neighborhood – what would that look like tangibly?**

This was a key question at the outset of this process – using verbs, not adjectives. So, what is strategic planning? It is not simply about budgeting and preparation. It is thinking about the impact God is calling us to and where to focus our efforts and resources to achieve that impact.

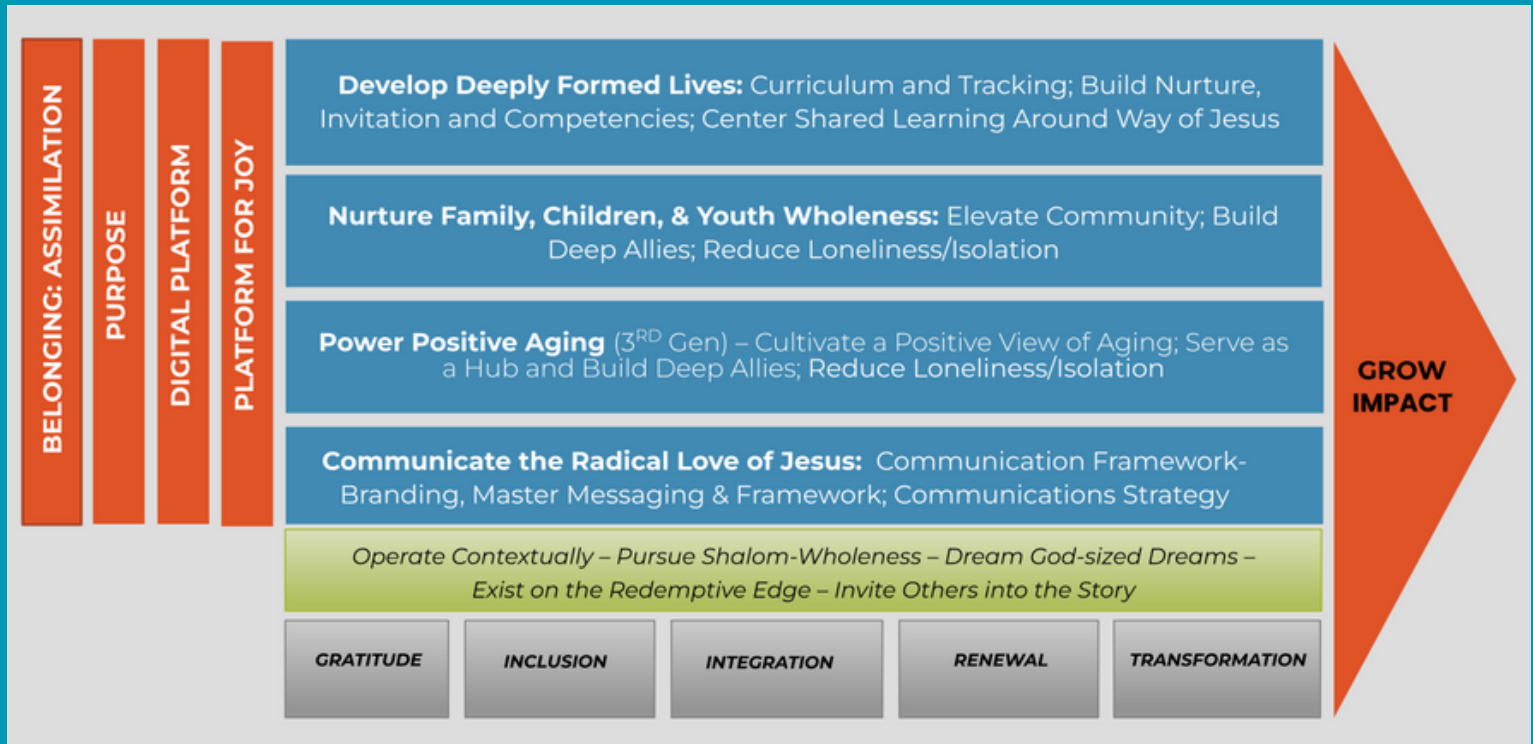
We think about it as a Venn diagram where God's calling is reflected in the intersection of our giftedness (talents, expertise, experience), our passion (what brings us joy and the change we want to see in the world), and the need (both within our internal Saint Matthew community and in the external neighborhood).

The process itself is relatively standard:

- Gather Input: Data such as congregation and community demographics, results of the congregational SHAPE assessment, research on specific issues (e.g., housing insecurity), and interviewing partners.
- Perform a SWOT Analysis: Strengths and Weaknesses (internal), Opportunities and Threats (external).
- Develop a Strategic Matrix: Begin to identify key focuses – strategies – that address the SWOT and start to answer the core of the Venn diagram where we feel God is calling us as a community of Jesus.
- Build metrics to measure impact.
- Create work plans to reach the desired impact goals.
- Establish a resource plan that includes: people, place, and possessions.



# Saint Matthew Strategic Plan



We long to make meaningful impact within our neighborhood

# A FEW DEFINITIONS

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## ALLY

One that is associated with another as a helper; a person or group that provides assistance and support in an ongoing effort, activity, or struggle, seeking to serve in ways directed by the one being assisted.



## HUB

The effective center of an activity, region, or network; in this case, working in an impact area to serve as a connector for otherwise siloed organizations in order to facilitate greater effectiveness. Some key roles the hub organization would play are convener, facilitator, enabler, and connector.

## ANCHOR CHURCH

Congregations with significant ministry capacity (resources of people and/or finances, vision, vitality), are finding opportunities to partner with surrounding congregations and organizations with fewer or different resources. Collaborations take various forms; from formal associations to looser partnerships, from new mission initiatives to congregational revitalization.



## MICRO-VOLUNTEERING

Short term volunteering or in other words, Try something once or twice to see if this is where God is prompting you to invest. Try a new thing with short term investment that may lead to long term connections.



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**1** **Develop Deeply Formed Lives**  
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**2** **Nurture Children, Youth, & Family Wholeness**  
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**3** **Power Positive Aging**  
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**4** **Communicate God's Radical Love Rooted in Saint Matthew**  
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**→ 4 STRATEGIES**



# DEVELOP DEEPLY FORMED LIVES

JOHN 8:31-32

We believe that over the next three years, we must rebuild our connection to love of God, love of neighbor, and love of self. Part of the reality of Covid was that it separated us and deepened the pandemic of loneliness in our land.



## **CREATE MULTIPLE ON-RAMPS FOR ALL FAITH TYPES**

Saint Matthew and our neighbors come from many different faith realities. From new to faith or faith adjacent, NONES/deconstructing/doubting, or even those who left the faith, to faithful regulars and mature disciples. A one-size-fits-all approach will not work. We need to create opportunities for as many people to access growth as possible. This will include digital, hybrid, small, medium, and large group opportunities, mentorship, retreats, and so much more.



## **NURTURE ALL FAITH TYPES INTO TAKING NEXT STEPS**

We must develop ways to help people be seen, feel received, become known, and invited to participate. (All parts of our discipleship journey will be expected to nurture others.)



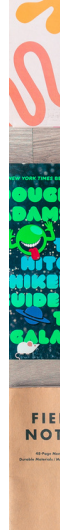
## **LEVERAGE MEANINGFUL MILESTONES**

People of all ages and stages have meaningful milestones that create opportunities for next steps in faith. We will intentionally use those milestones to connect all people to growth.



## **CONGREGATIONALLY EMBRACE, EMPOWER, AND EQUIP PEOPLE IN CORE COMPETENCIES OF FOLLOWING THE WAY OF JESUS:**

Operate Contextually  
Pursue Shalom-Wholeness and Well-being  
Dream God-Sized Dreams  
Exist on the Redemptive Edge  
Invite Others into the Story



## FAMILY MATTERS

Covid rocked our family systems at home and in the church. Our children, youth, and families need deep support designed to help them grow in faith and grow together.

Our desire is to partner with our schools, families, and ally organizations to help families, youth, and children experience deeper wholeness. We want to help develop courageous resilience, build better mental, emotional, and spiritual health, reduce stigmas, and empower parents.

## KEY INITIATIVES

1. Create a welcoming and supportive community where families and youth feel valued, connected, and empowered to live fulfilling lives.
2. Develop a comprehensive family ministry program that includes activities and events for all age groups, focusing on building strong, healthy, and whole families empowering parents to take the lead.
3. Provide resources and support for parents and caregivers, including classes, workshops, support groups, and counseling services for the purpose of building whole, healthy families.
4. Develop a leadership pipeline of adults, students (youth), and children that empowers and equips them to grow in their faith and relationships, as well as provide access to resources and support to navigate challenges and build resilience.
5. Create opportunities for intergenerational connection and mentoring that encompasses all ages and stages.
6. Establish Saint Matthew as a hub for family and youth wholeness within our neighborhood by creating partnerships with like-minded organizations that support families and youth.

# Nurture Children, Youth, & Families TOWARD WHOLENESS



# POWER POSITIVE AGING



OUR COMMUNITY OF OLDER ADULTS HAVE MORE TIME, TALENT, PASSION, AND RESOURCES TO HELP CHANGE OUR WORLD THAN ANY OTHER GENERATION BEFORE IT. AT SAINT MATTHEW WE BELIEVE IF WE ARE NOT DEAD, WE ARE NOT DONE. POSITIVE AGING MATTERS.

We will root our 3rd Gen programming in connection and community. Social isolation and loneliness among older adults creates all kinds of other systemic issues. We will develop programming that fosters community, connection, and holistic wellness, reducing social isolation and fostering togetherness.

In our research, we found a vast and disconnected network of organizations and services that are meant to resource the 3rd Gen community. We will become a hub and ally to help unite those organizations in better serving our neighbors.

We will strive to be a connector and enabler to greater well-being and interconnectedness. This includes being an advocate for positive aging. We will create classes, training, programming, and resources to help 3rd Gen flourish in the spiritual, mental, social, emotional, and physical parts of life.

We will be an advocate for a radically intergenerational community and neighborhood that values all people of all ages and abilities.

# COMMUNICATE GOD'S RADICAL LOVE ROOTED IN SAINT MATTHEW

JOHN 13:34-35

We believe the good news we have to offer our neighborhood and world is unique. With over 80% of our neighbors not connected to local churches, we recognize that the message of the local church has often hurt our neighbors and told them they are not welcome in God's kingdom.

Part of the core of our Lutheran theology is that we are rooted and centered in the grace of Jesus Christ. Jesus meets all of us as we are, where we are. There is nothing that can separate us from the love of God, and all people are children of God, WITHOUT EXCEPTION.

We want our neighbors to know that the love of Jesus is radically inclusive and invites all people to be integrated into his kin-dom. God places value and a calling on each and every one of us at every age and stage - no matter how we are "abled."

When Covid began in 2020, Saint Matthew had a minimal digital footprint. We didn't even livestream our services. We have learned a lot, but we have so much more to learn in all areas of communication.

Over the next three years, we have to learn how to get his message across clearly to our neighbors and community so they know they have a place at Saint Matthew and a place in the kin-dom of Jesus.

## KEY INITIATIVES

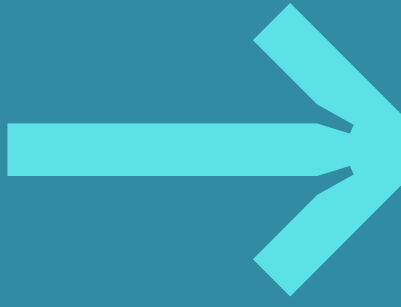
1. Establish a strong identity.
2. Target communication channels internally and externally.
3. Engage with the neighborhood and community.
4. Build deep storytelling and testimonials.
5. Create content for the desired community.
6. Enhance online presence and engagement.



# WHAT ABOUT YOU?



# NEXT STEPS



## 01 ENGAGE THE 4 STRATEGIES

As a leadership team, we have been working on these strategies for over a year, praying, dreaming, adjusting, listening, and planning. For every strategy to take root in our church and come to life, we each need to do our own wrestling, thinking, praying, and participating. We invite you to share your thoughts and prayers on our talk-back displays or schedule an appointment with a staff member (or a Foundation Friend) to engage in deeper conversation about the next steps.



## 02 GET INVOLVED

Micro-volunteer: try a new experience, take a new step in faith, join a group, take the SHAPE assessment, lead a group, participate in a mission project, join a leadership team, help our children and students grow, mentor, and be mentored. Help us discern new mission partners, and invite your family, neighbors, and friends to Saint Matthew. Help us build the FOUNDATIONS of our shared future.

## 03 FISCAL PLEDGE

The balanced budget we built will fund the first year of our strategic plan. We are currently working on resource plans to live more deeply into Foundations.

As we partner with other local organizations and churches, we are dreaming of new ways to fund additional ministries, including shared spaces, shared services, and new collaborations.

You will notice we are asking everyone who is able to take a 7% step this year to increase funding the strategic plan. On top of that, we are encouraging people to make a one-time gift in support of the strategies that most inspire you. Your financial giving to this community is what allows us to grow our meaningful kin-dom building work in our neighborhood and world.

# ↓ STILL TO COME



As we have shared along the way, the next three years are going to teach us a lot. We will have to adapt and change plans as we learn new things about our neighborhood and community. Learning to be flexible will be an essential piece of our Foundations strategy.

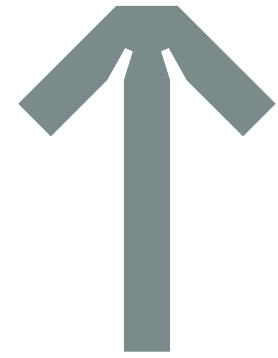
## BUILD TEAMS

To accomplish our strategies, we will need to build new teams over the coming months. We need to create strategy teams for Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, 3rd Gen, Discipleship, and Communications. If you want to learn more and partner with staff in these areas, consider setting an appointment to share your interest.

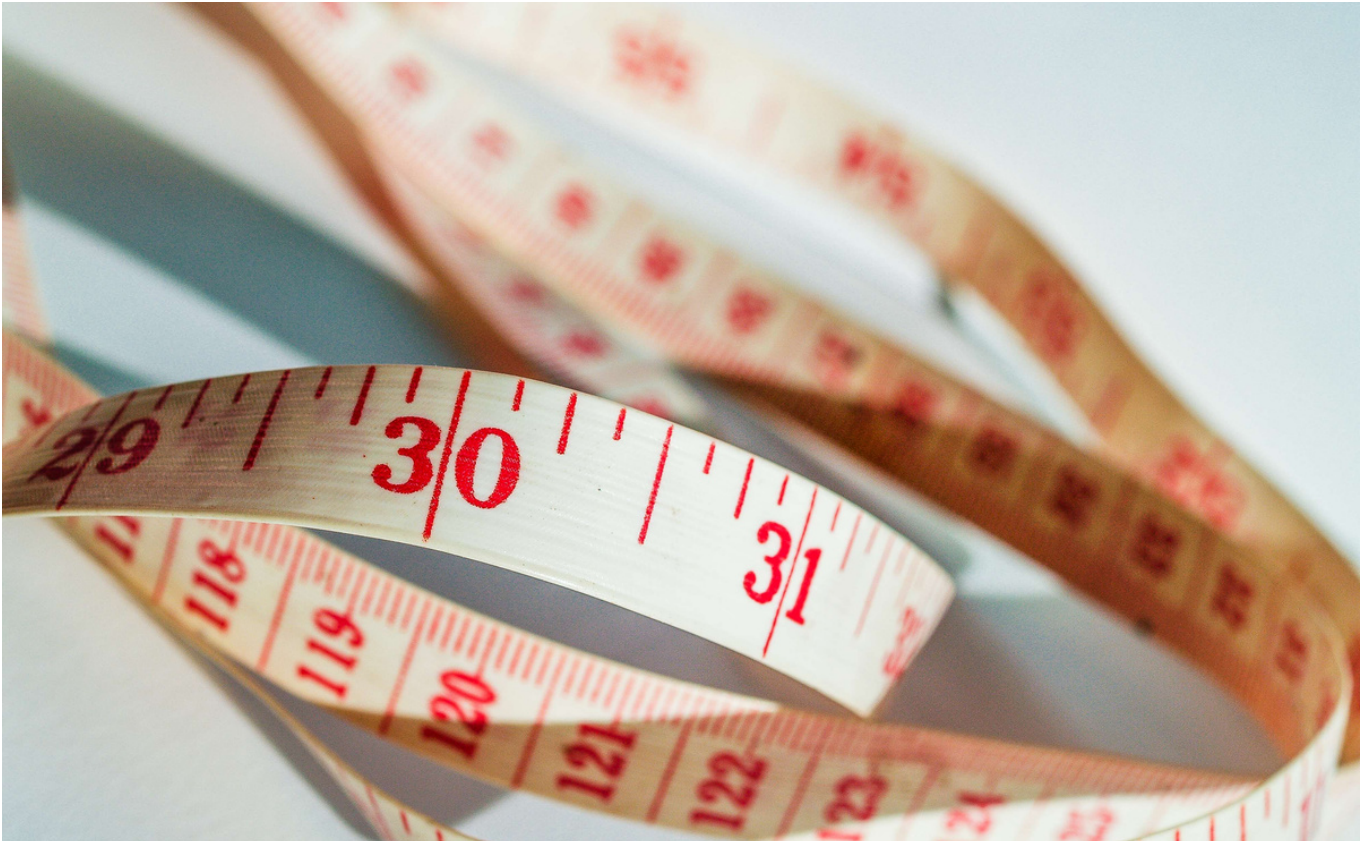
## NEW PARTNERSHIPS

Over the coming months, we will begin listening sessions with the congregation to hear where we want to be engaged missionally within the strategic initiatives. There are 1,956 non-profits within 5 miles of our campus. Discerning the next steps and best partners will be a part of the journey ahead.

# METRICS & MEASURES



We plan the way we want to live, but only God makes us able to live it. Proverbs 16:9

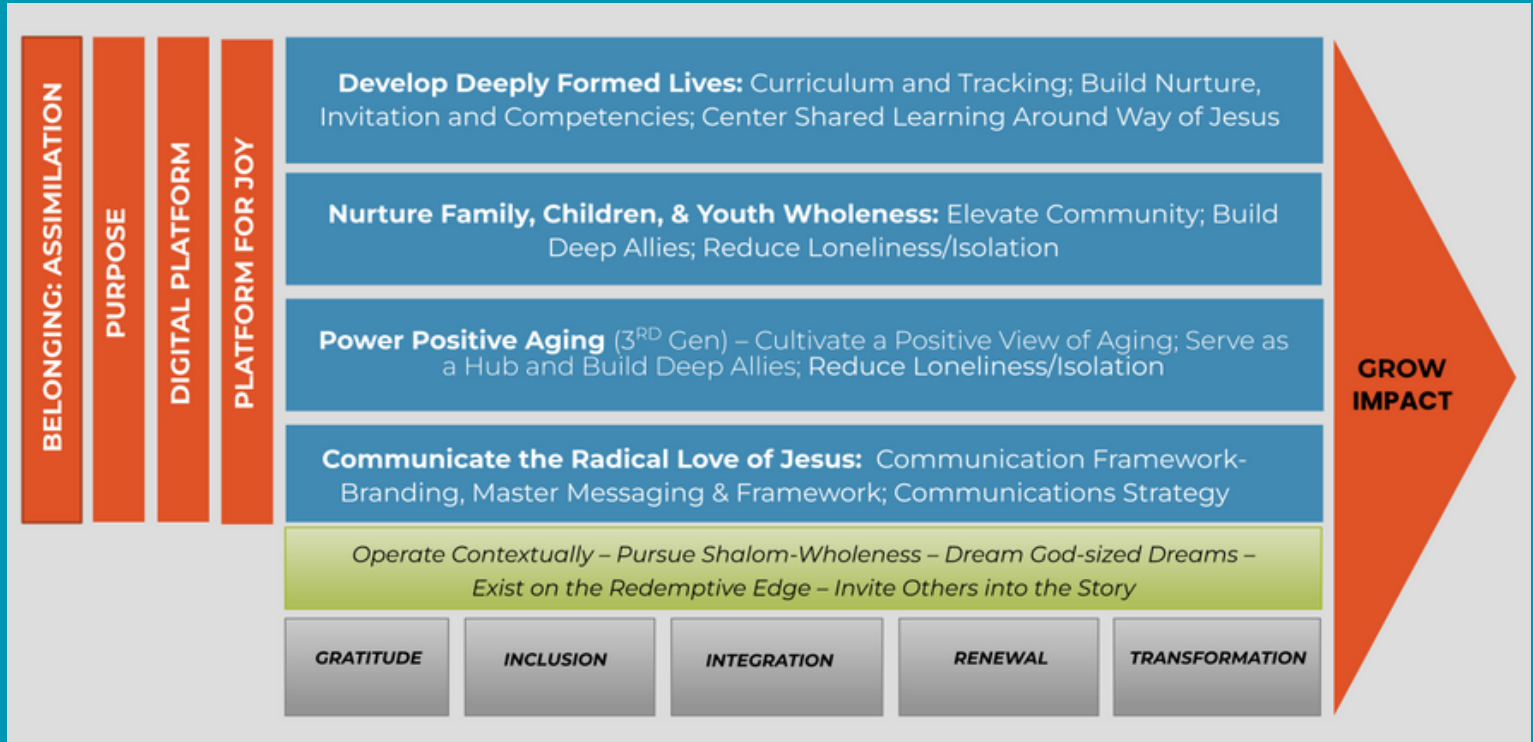


We will be moving from using only Process measures (like attendance and giving) to Impact measures (like engagement, well-being, next-step analytics, milestones, and discipleship). These evidence-based measures will be developed over the first two years and implemented. This transition will include community surveys and intentional engagement with the congregation to learn our current state.

Each of the four strategies will be measured for impact. Our hope in doing this is to be clear about where we are making an impact. This will also help us create clarity of mission as we journey toward building our shared foundation.



# Saint Matthew Strategic Plan



## What is God Calling you to do?

## Take a next step today.



Saint Matthew  
399 Wiget Ln.  
Walnut Creek  
CA 94598

[SAINTMATTHEW.ORG](http://SAINTMATTHEW.ORG)