

Rooted, Reaching, and Leading with Love: A Vision and Map for the Evolution of the Episcopal Church in Jackson Hole, 2025–2030

“We do not inherit our church from our ancestors, rather we borrow it from our children.” –adapted from Native American Proverbial Wisdom

Dear Church,

Our church is a healthy, two-campus parish blessed by strong lay, staff, and clergy leadership. We are well positioned for flourishing in the present future, despite upheaval and renewal facing religious institutions across the global west.

And yet, these are curious and sometimes chaotic days for the church as a whole. Of course, it is not the first time churches have found themselves in eras of creative destruction, reform, and uncertainty about the way forward. Don't agree? Take a look at the chaos in the Book of Acts. The issues we face relate to the life of the church as an institution, rather than the theology that the church embodies. God is still God, doing God's lovingly creative work in the cosmos, including in Jackson Hole. And, we are blessed with the opportunity to join in and sometimes lead this work. What a challenge! What a gift!

The cycle of church renewal and reform can make those of us who love the church feel anxious, scared, confused, or even angry. To this, I suggest three deep breaths and a loosening of our grip on what may be passing away, while expecting the Spirit to plant something fresh and invigorating for us and for the generations that come after us. As Jesus says, “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good will to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32).

Beginning in 2024, vestry, staff, and clergy leadership began a visioning process together, so that we might, as a whole church, continue to address the real and relevant needs of our members, the community of Jackson Hole, the Episcopal Church in Wyoming, and the Christian faith in the broader Intermountain West. The pace of our vision work is slow, and the work, itself, is thoughtful, humble, imaginative, and discerning. While none of us can predict the future, we feel encouraged by the collaborative vision emerging. You (yep! You!) are both invited and encouraged to be a part of this loving work. The next few pages gives you some insight into our vision work and what's ahead for our church in the next few years.

How the Work is Organized

To help organize and understand our mission and ministry priorities, we divided our work into three categories: *Rooted, Reaching, and Leading with Love*.

Think of a tree:

- **Rooted** represents our anchoring ministries—the long-standing foundations that ground and support us.
- **Reaching** symbolizes the branches—new expressions of faith, outreach, and innovation reaching toward the light of possibility.
- **Leading with Love** is the trunk—the strong, central structure of partnerships and ministries that lift and carry our loving efforts.

Measuring Our Success

EXCELLENCE, CREATIVITY, DEPTH

Because each area differs in nature, we will assess them with different criteria:

- **Rooted:** Our goal is *EXCELLENCE*. These ministries have stood the test of time, and now we will evaluate them in light of best practices, even benchmarking against larger, better-resourced churches.
- **Reaching:** This is our most experimental space, centered around *CREATIVITY*. Here, we will try new things, knowing we will fail as often as we succeed—and trusting that God is present in both.
- **Leading with Love:** Our focus is on *DEPTH*. We aim to strengthen relationships with long-standing community partners. Success will be measured by meaningful engagement, mutual feedback, and tangible improvements in collaboration.

Vision Targets

Beginning June 2025

Rooted

- Fully fund and build a new, outward-facing, community-serving building on the southern end of our campus to:
 - Expand Browse 'n Buy's mission and revenue
 - Establish expanded and accessible space for Jackson Hole's Recovery Community
 - Add two units of housing
 - Establish a retail-like space for the Jackson Cupboard

- Create staff, vestry, and lay leadership structures aligned with the vision, including clear goals, evaluations, and job descriptions.
- Build a Leadership Team to support excellent worship across our liturgical life—Sundays, holidays, and special services.
- Develop a team and strategy for delivering excellent pastoral care.
- Revitalize children, youth, and family ministry with a focus on relationship, formation, service, and outdoor connection.
- Determine the future of the original rectory building.
- Renew the work of the Endowment Committee with clear goals for growth and transparency.

Reaching

- Form a Leadership Team to expand our Campfire ministry and develop weekly programming, small groups, and special events.
- Complete our basement studio for audio and video production; create six short-format videos annually.
- Build a structure to support a Storytelling Initiative that brings sacred stories to life.
- Experiment with reimagined Christian modes of teaching, understanding, and practice tailored to the Intermountain West through:
 - Weekly formation
 - Mini-retreats
 - Digital content
 - Curriculum creation
 - Production of written publications

Leading with Love

- Deepen the relationship with One22 and the Jackson Cupboard through increased volunteerism, financial support, and possibly expanded programming.
- Build a cross-community Leadership Team with the Episcopal Church on the Wind River Indian Reservation.
- Strengthen partnerships with and learn from organizations serving our LatinX and Hispanic neighbors.
- Create a team to support aging, elderly, and disabled community members through collaboration with Senior Center, Hospice, Sage Living, and others.
- Re-establish our relationship with The Episcopal Church in Cuba through shared planning and two in-person visits.

- Deepen our partnership with AMOS Health and Hope through increased parishioner involvement and mission trips.
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An Invitation to the Whole Parish

Through 2024 and early 2025, vestry and staff have prayerfully built this vision document. We hope it will guide St. John's and The Chapel of the Transfiguration into its second century of mission and ministry with purpose and direction.

Bringing this vision to life will require all of us. We will succeed and fail, AND we are blessed with a strong foundation and a clear call: to serve God and neighbor with love, care, and courage.

If this vision inspires you, we invite you to be part of it. Reach out to any vestry member or clergy leader with your interest, ideas, or dreams. Let's build something beautiful—together.

Love,

The Vestry, Staff, and Clergy of St. John's Episcopal Church in Jackson Hole

Opportunities to Learn More about Our Vision

Sunday Mornings | Beginning July 13, the priests of St. John's will lead 4 consecutive Sunday sessions digging more deeply into the work. Join us Sunday mornings in the Underground 9:05 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.

- July 13: We will give an overview of the process to creating the vision, and the vision document itself.
- July 20: We will share a deeper look into the "Rooted" section of our new vision.
- July 27: We will take a look at the "Reaching" section of our new vision.
- August 3: We will take a look at the "Leading with Love" section of our new vision.

Wednesday Evening, July 16, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

"The Whole Enchilada" Join the priests from St. John's for a 90-minute look into our new vision in one session, while eating an enchilada dinner.