



DISCERNING GOD'S CALL

INTRODUCTION:

Who are we as a faith community? What unique things does God call our ministry act upon? How can the Holy Spirit guide us in the coming years? These questions lay at the heart of this strategic planning process.

Strategic Planning. Those words can feel so corporate, so far away from the life of a faith community. At the heart, strategic planning is a discernment process of listening. In the coming months we will have the opportunity to:

- Listen to God through Scripture
- Listen to God through the Congregation
- Listen to God through the Community

We will engage in a very intentional process of discernment. Trusting that the Holy Spirit speaks through every person, listening to many voices will play a central role. There will be opportunities for group conversation and dreaming. You will be invited to take part in a survey looking at current ministry and dreaming about the future. A team will go out and listen to leaders in our community. In every step of the process we will ask, "What do we hear God saying to us?"

At several points in the process the Strategic Planning Team will gather us together and share what they have heard as a way of ensuring that they are on the right track. All this listening will lead to a final document, clarifying our identity and providing a clear path for the coming years.

As we begin this journey together, one of the voices we will listen to is the voice of God in the Bible. Through weekly readings we will encounter many people of faith who heard God's call. Some of these stories will resonate and make you say, "That sounds like our community of faith!" Other stories may feel foreign and distant. God speaks in many ways to many people. Experiencing a wide range of Biblical stories will aid our discernment process.

We invite you join us on this journey. Every week we will provide one story of a person or community who discerned God's call for them. After reading the background to each passage, we invite you to take some quiet time to read through the passage three times. After each reading, reflect on one of the following questions:

- How do the people in the story hear God's call to them?
- How open are they to God's call?
- What might this passage say to our community of faith?

We will provide bulletin boards (virtual and in the building) where you can share your reflections on the ways these passages relate to our community of faith.

Welcome to this journey of discernment. Together we will gain clarity about our ministry and boldly follow God into the future.