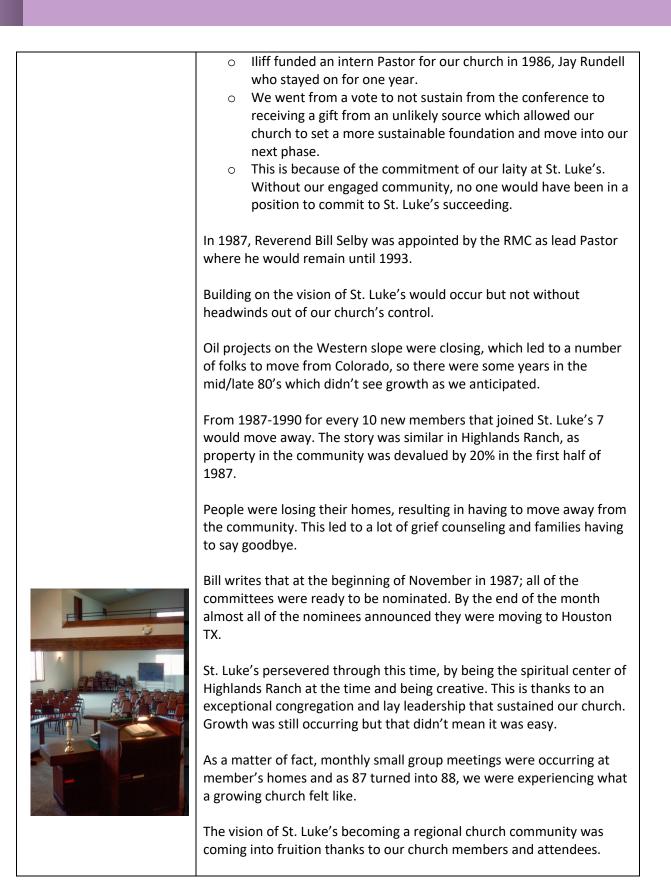
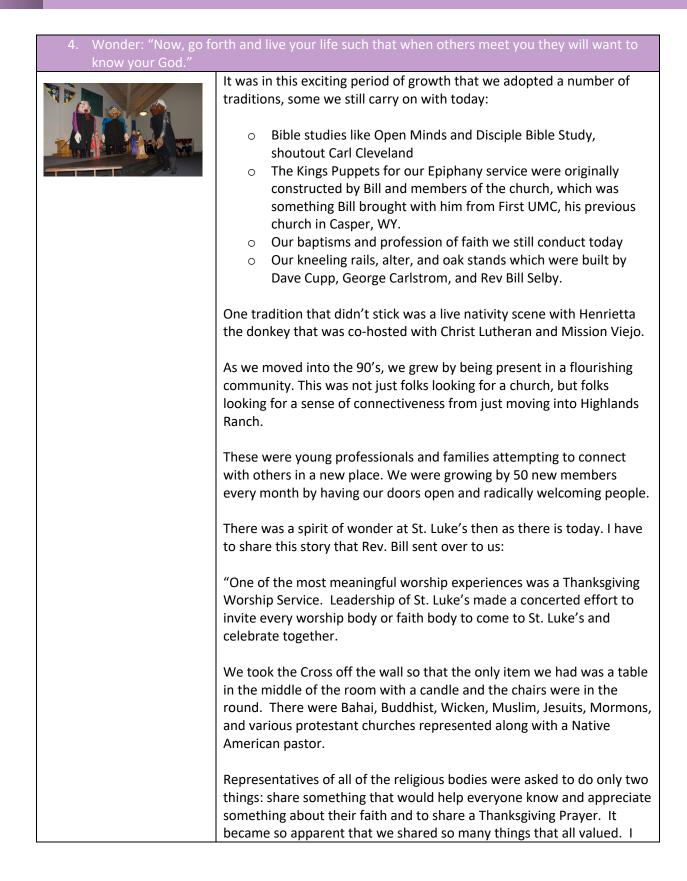
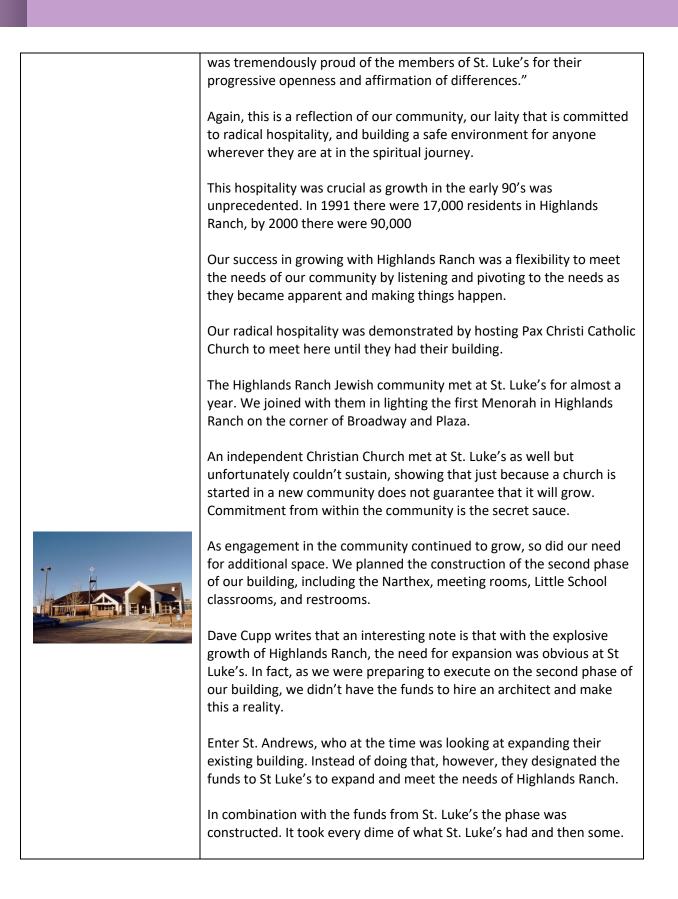
1. Welcome and context		
KIDENTSONS	Hello, I'm Paul Kirk and proud to be your chair of the Lay Leadership team. I'm honored to be here with you tonight to share a bit about the story of St. Luke's.	
	This has been a wonderful project to work on as it has led me to several conversations and uncovering of what really makes our church and community so special.	
	In our time here tonight, I'm going to walk with you in the reflection of our journey as a church. How has our community evolved, from meeting at Northridge Elementary, constructing our building amongst the fields south of Denver; how does our story intertwine with Albertson's, St. Andrew's UMC, and Siem Reap, Cambodia? Let's walk through our story.	
2. Courage: The origin		
	The land that would become Highlands Ranch was designated to be developed by Mission Veijo company which paved the way for the master planned community of Highlands Ranch. The board was set for St. Luke's to develop.	
	In 1979 Reverend Russ Brown, the lead minister of St Andrew's UMC, advocated for a new church plant on the southern edge of the Denver suburbs. Back then St. Andrew's was still north of County Line.	
	The community would begin meeting soon after, supported by a faithful laity, starting at Powell Middle School (go figure) and then moving south of County Line Rd.	
	This was the start of the evolution of St. Luke's, the heart of which has always been our laity.	
	Reverend Harold Raines, our first assigned pastor, began surveying the area and connecting with residents – making over 1300 calls and visits, to identify community needs and the viability of a church this far south.	
	St. Luke's was then chartered on 3/13/1983 and met in smaller rooms at North Ridge Elementary school with about a dozen people in attendance.	
	At this time Highlands Ranch consisted of the Northridge neighborhood. As we grew, the school would give St. Luke's a larger room to meet in.	

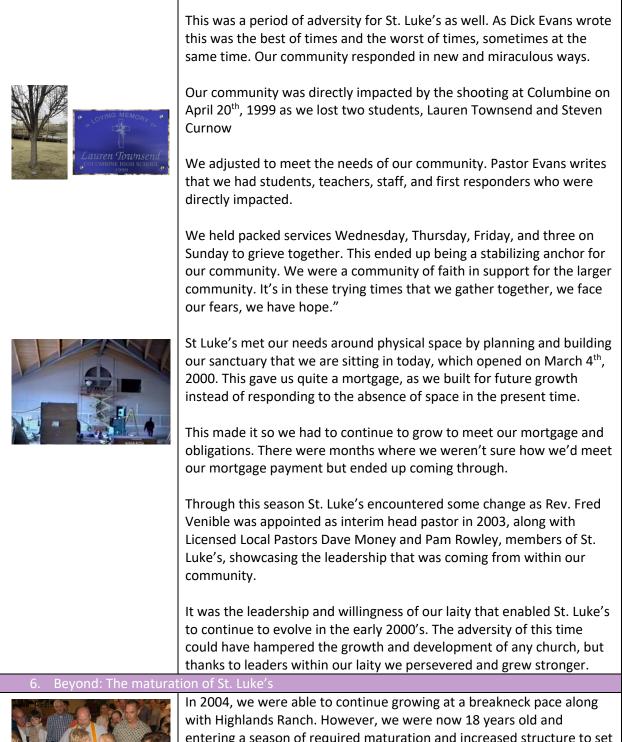
	There were additional ministries and small groups like United Methodist Women and our choir which met in Janet and Bill Fethke's		
	living room. Janet writes that there were 6-8 people present and the youth group at the time was typically 3-4 participants.		
	Through these combined efforts along with the bid prepared from the RMC and St. Andrews, St. Luke's won the bid among 29 other denominational entities for the land our church sits on to this day.		
3. Hope, grace, and the miracle of St. Luke's			
	It was not easy to start a church in the middle of open fields with one adjacent neighborhood off the bet that this area would develop into a community of 90,000 residents. Additionally, there would be obstacles in funding that could have sunk St. Luke's before we had a chance to realize our potential. This is where		
	the connections and grace of numerous institutions, organizations, and individuals would spur the continuation of St. Luke's.		
	<ul> <li>Shortly after we won the bid to our land, the conference was unable to provide the \$225K in promised funding. We needed \$300K to build the first phase of our building. As a result, St. Andrews and Park Hill UMCs underwrote an \$800K bond issue. They made their bet on us.</li> <li>We then constructed the first phase of our building starting on 9/14/1984 with a heavy debt burden.</li> <li>When we moved into the building, there were about 130 people attending each week.</li> </ul>		
	However, adversity was on the horizon. Reverend Harold Raines left St. Luke's which led to the drop of our active congregation to about ten participants. However, the laity that remained were stalwart in their faithfulness in the promise and vision of St. Luke's and were extraordinary in their efforts to sustain our church.		
	However, as a result of the unforeseen circumstances of our church, the Rocky Mountain conference voted not to financially sustain St. Luke's development, meaning our building and land would be sold. But many still saw the potential of what St. Luke's could become.		
	<ul> <li>The President of Iliff School of Theology, Don Messer, saw the potential along with the bishop of the RMC, Roy Sano. They took it on to identify alternative sources of funding to keep our church alive.</li> </ul>		
	<ul> <li>They were able to secure a \$500,000 donation from the CEO of American Stores (aka. Albertson's) over the course of a handful of years to sustain St. Luke's.</li> </ul>		







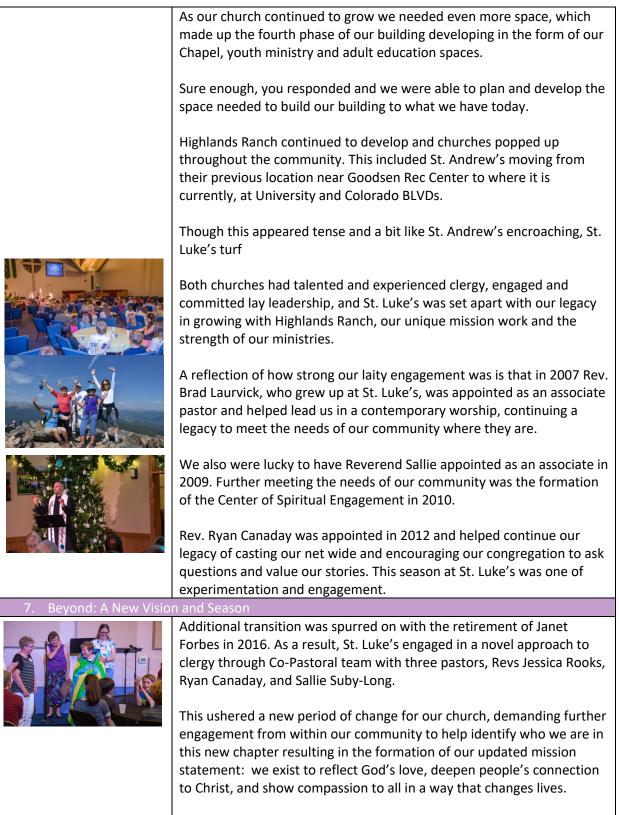
	As a result, phase two was completed in 1994 thanks to the leadership of many in our community, not least of which the chair for the project, Dave Rhodes.
	Prior to the dry wall and final flooring were laid, everyone was invited to come in and sign walls, draw around their bodies, write thoughts and poems, and remember the time with personal sharing's. They remain there to this day.
	We were still boot strapping our church through the commitment of the laity and clergy. Reverend Dick Evans was appointed here in 1993 and recalls that lay members would consistently maintain the building, clean bathrooms vacuum or whatever else was required, with great enthusiasm.
	During Reverend Dick Evans tenure St. Luke's had more infant baptisms than any other church in the Rocky Mountain conference and witnessed over 300% growth in membership.
5. Wonder: Building a R	legional Congregation
	It is in this time that we, as a congregation, identified Micah 6:8 as our
	defining scripture:
9579764	<i>"What does the Lord require of you? To do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."</i>
	It was also in this period that we developed a vision and foundation to live out – which was Invitational, Relational, and Missional.
Building Brick wall	We lived out this vision in a multitude of ways, especially in being missional. In this period there was a focus on seeing the world beyond Highlands Ranch.
	A trip was organized by members of our church to bring 20 people to Zimbabwe to build a grinding mill to support children orphaned by AIDS. We did this because of our relationship with the initial Missionary-in Residence who was from Zimbabwe
	Dalay Day was hired as a Missionary-in-residence, who is from Cambodia and was aware of the need to build a Community Training Center in Siem Reap, Cambodia.
Center Grounds: 2004	A tall task for any church, but in true St. Luke's fashion, our community met the call and raised \$125,000 to make this happen. This was the foundation of what would become a great effort in missions in our region and the world beyond.





entering a season of required maturation and increased structure to set our church up for sustained growth.





And identification of our core values:

	<ul> <li>Grace</li> <li>Courage</li> <li>Wonder</li> <li>Beyond</li> </ul>
	Grace leads us to Courage. Courage moves us to Wonder. Wonder leads us to go Beyond. Beyond moves us to Grace for all.
	Tell me our story doesn't represent this!
	So let's talk about how we continue to build on our story and go beyond.
	Outside our doors, the greater Highlands Ranch community matured and is no longer experiencing monthly growth.
	When St Luke's opened there were 3 churches south of County Line Road, now there are at least 35. We had to pivot and will continue to have to pivot in the future to meet the diverse needs of the families in our larger community.
	There are examples of our we have all engaged in the evolution of St. Luke's to meet the needs of our community at-large.
	Even in this season, great work was occurring in and through St. Luke's. Jessica and Ryan were able to engage in hard questions from the pulpit.
	These questions and sermons reflect our desire as a congregation not to avoid hard conversations but to embrace them.
	We have also leaned into going beyond our comfort zones and out into the world. A partnership was forged with Abundant Life Christian School in Honduras.
	With the support and assistance of St Luke's, Reverend Ryan was able to follow his call and, start FREE, a community for addicts, loved one of addicts and spiritual refugees.
	I see this sprouting from the ethos of what St. Luke's is. That ethos is to be a community that is radically welcoming, to all folks, wherever they are on their spiritual journey.
	This is evident today and occurs in how we engage with one another and take action in our community.

## Grace, Courage, Wonder, and Beyond: St. Luke's Today As a result, leadership withing our community decided to adopt a more traditional clergy model, which led to the assignments of Reverend Michele as lead pastor and Rev. Liza as Associate Pastor, along with a renewed focus for Sallie Suby-Long becoming our Minister for Healing and Wellbeing. Just as we made a big and strategic decision on the direction of our church we would have to respond to unprecedented circumstances. This time with the onset of the Covid Pandemic. Luckily, resiliency is in our DNA and as a community we were able to make the shift to remote church. The circumstances of 2020 guided us deeper into our season of introspection and discernment, to truly reflect on our community and how we can serve one another in an unprecedented time, while evolving our church in a sustainable matter, not just within the community but also financially. Through the commitment of leaders in our community, like Ken Fong, Jim Ramsey, Marty Davidson, Julie Gustafson, and so many others, we were able to respond to these challenges stronger than we were before. We continue to grow and stretch ourselves to meet the evolving needs of our community because of the great work we put in behind the scenes. It became clear during the pandemic that to foster St Luke's beyond our 40<sup>th</sup> year it is going to take all hands-on deck to realize the mission and vision of St. Luke's. This is already happening. The Brave Spaces team has been created to involve one another in antiracism action and partnerships, which speaks to loving justice and becoming radically welcoming of diversity. Community Raisers was spun up to connect each other and raise funds to become a more financially sustainable church year-round. This is loving kindness.



And finally, we walk humbly with God, with an energy of hope and a renewed embrace of God with Us theology that creates forward thinking momentum. That refreshes our Excitement and inspires a deeper desire to connect with our broader community so the circle of God's love can be expanded wider through our love and actions.

We are blessed to be here and are at the precipice of evolving our church to meet the needs of families within our ever-changing community.

We belong to a living church and I am so excited for what the next 40 years and beyond have to offer at St. Luke's I believe we are just getting started.