

Vision Day 2026 – Gloria Dei (Old Swedes’)

On June 14, 2026, our congregation gathered on a Sunday afternoon for conversations to help develop a shared vision. Rev. Chris spoke about the vision statement currently on our website, which was part of what drew him to Gloria Dei. However, while there is a lot that is great about that statement, there are also some important aspects of who we are that it seems to miss. Moreover, Rev. Chris observed that we do not consistently use the language of that statement to talk about ourselves (either within our congregation or to newcomers).

So, the first step in forming a shared vision is to establish some consistent language for talking about ourselves and who God has called us to be. Being clear and consistent about this will make it easier for newcomers to understand who we are – and it will help to guide how we should use our time and energy and resources. Once this language is established, the next step will be to identify the challenges and opportunities that are currently facing us – and that will eventually lead to developing a multi-year strategic plan.

Even if you weren't able to participate in the June 14 conversations, we'd still love to have your input! On the following page is a draft vision and identity statement that we discussed, and after that are some feedback forms to guide your reflection on this draft statement. We'd be delighted to hear what you think! Responses can be given to Rev. Chris (rector@old-swedes.org), and he is always glad to sit down and talk further if that's of interest.

Draft Statement & Core Values:

We are a community seeking to know and to share the good news of God's unlimited love, especially as revealed in Jesus. In this pursuit, our particular identity is expressed through these core values:

- **Welcome**

AKA: Inclusive / Diverse / Hospitality / Communal Hub

We are a place where many different communities come together, but where all are welcome.

We build bridges and make space even for those we disagree with. We take seriously the promise in our baptismal covenant to "respect the dignity of every human being."

- **Beauty**

AKA: Music / Peaceful Place / Site of Transcendence

We are a community that values beauty and mystery, recognizing that these can also point us to God. Our church and grounds are places where you can sense that there is more going on than just what you can see and touch. We like to make a lot of joyful noise!

- **Preservation**

AKA: Stewardship / Tradition

We have been entrusted with treasures of history that we seek share with others and to preserve for future generations. We also have a host of different traditions that we carry on to honor those who have gone before us.

- **Eccentricity**

AKA: We are Quirky / Scrappy / Innovative / Independent / Contrarian

As much as we value tradition and the past, we are not bound by them. We tend to do things a little bit differently, and we take pride in that! We're not afraid to try new things, and to be creative about meeting the challenges of the day. We can be a bit weird, but that's okay.

- **Care**

AKA: Service / Outreach / The Church of the Broken Wing

We recognize that we have been blessed, and are called to be a blessing to others. We care for those in need around us, and especially for those who carry wounds from past experiences with the church. We seek to be a place of healing and redemption.

Note: At our June meeting, a number of folks suggested that Eccentricity is a description of who we are, but not necessarily who we are aiming to be – or of what we particularly value. It may be that the draft core values of Beauty and Eccentricity should be combined into one core value: Creativity. This speaks to both our love of beauty and our independent & innovative characteristics. Feel free to share your thoughts about this idea in the feedback form.

Feedback Form

1. Welcome

- a. How have you experience this to be one of our core values?

- b. Are there ways in which you question whether this actually is a core value?

- c. How would you describe this core value in 1-2 words?

2. Beauty

- a. How have you experience this to be one of our core values?

- b. Are there ways in which you question whether this actually is a core value?

- c. How would you describe this core value in 1-2 words?

3. Preservation

- a. How have you experience this to be one of our core values?

- b. Are there ways in which you question whether this actually is a core value?

- c. How would you describe this core value in 1-2 words?

Continued...

4. Eccentricity

- a. How have you experience this to be one of our core values?

- b. Are there ways in which you question whether this actually is a core value?

- c. How would you describe this core value in 1-2 words?

5. Care

- a. How have you experience this to be one of our core values?

- b. Are there ways in which you question whether this actually is a core value?

- c. How would you describe this core value in 1-2 words?

6. Is there anything missing from this list of core values? Should any of them be combined?

7. What is your reaction to the opening of the draft vision statement?

8. Are there other thoughts that you want to share?