

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
Mission Planning Team Recommendations

MISSION – Trinity aspires to be a community of faith where people are invited to **Gather** joyfully into the presence of The Father, inspired to **Grow** into passionate Disciples of Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit to **Go** out and serve the world.

VISION – To be an inclusive, inter-generational, Spirit-filled worshipping community passionate about sharing the Gospel and inspiring faithful Disciples of Christ to serve and mend God’s creation.

CORE VALUES:

- Nurturing Community
- Building Biblical Fluency
- Engaging Worship
- Serving Others
- Living Our Faith

MISSION PRIORITIES ESTABLISHED TO SUPPORT CORE VALUES

NURTURING COMMUNITY – “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Lev. 19:18) “Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor, contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.” (Romans 12.9-13)

We seek to be a congregation that cares deeply for, nurtures, and serves one another. We commit to engender a community with a sense of Lutheran Christian identity, family, mutual encouragement, acceptance, and care. We seek to be a congregational family, living our hospitality and welcoming all into our church home, inclusive of all persons without regard to race, nationality, socio-economic status, age, political views, mental or physical ability, marital status, or sexual orientation. We welcome all who seek to grow in grace and faith through involvement with our Christian family. We will welcome all as full partners in all aspects of our congregational life – our worship, sacraments, mission, work, and service.

(MP-I) *Create a plan to address the issues associated with a pleasant, welcoming environment.*

Create a “Welcoming Center” in narthex (perhaps to replace the cabinets with literature on top) to receive visitors (offer free gift?), share important announcements, take personal changes, house a “suggestion box”, etc. Incorporate large screen monitor for congregational life photos/announcements in this space.

(MP-I) *Develop a small group strategy for the congregation. (Could we organize small groups around spiritual gifts?)*

(MP-I) *Develop a Communications Strategy*

Lift-up and highlight all that is going on 1) at Trinity and 2) with its members via website, email lists, auto-mass-calling services, membership database for mailings, newspaper ads/articles, print materials in house and out in the community, big screen monitor in narthex—information scroll, temple talks, etc.

(MP-III) *Establish ourselves as a model for youth ministry programming in our community, the Synod and the ELCA.*

(MP-III) *Establish Parish Administrator to assist staff and connect people with Congregational needs.*

(MP-III) *Create a culture of evangelical outreach.*

Invite-a-Friend-- Increase participation in congregational activity by encouraging all members to invite a friend to their next meeting, bible study, rehearsal or activity. Designate two months out of the year for this focused evangelism.

(MP-II) **Re-evaluate how new members are received** into our congregation. Ensure proper orientation (time with pastors, church tour, meet the staff, spiritual gifts inventory). Equip them with appropriate information (pictorial directory, education opportunities, service opportunities, fellowship opportunities “Look What Happens at Trinity” sheet, new member handbook). Plan a quarterly Check-In with new members and their mentors during the first year.

- A. Designate mentor individual/couple/family to serve as a **Shepherd for new members**.
- B. Create (or renew) **New Member Handbook**—an A to Z resource guide for every imaginable question a new member might have.

(MP-I) **Create opportunities for the congregational family to play, have fun, laugh.**

BUILDING BIBLICAL FLUENCY - “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.” (II Timothy 3.16-17) “And the word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)

We commit to be a congregation intensively teaching, preaching, and centered upon the Holy Scripture as the foundational language of faith, making the Scripture the center of our life together and striving to reach and teach all generations both the larger story of God’s covenant and the specifics of God’s covenant faithfulness in Jesus Christ. We strive to use tradition and creative methods to teach the Holy Scriptures in a manner consistent with the Lutheran tradition. We recognize that many no longer understand and/or are able to speak and to hear Christian language with an understanding of its meaning in our contemporary culture. We intend to provide every possible opportunity for God’s children here to learn, to love, and to live God’s Word.

(MP-II) **Develop a comprehensive education plan for the congregation that would include:**

- Recruit a congregational member to serve as the education coordinator.
- Establish biblical literacy and fluency goals for the pastors’ in planning worship, providing resources for congregational members, for planning curriculum of Christian education program, for activities and events in the youth program, and for the adult education program.

(MP-II) **Create Biblical Literacy and Fluency experience opportunities to spend time in the bible.** i.e. Beer and the bible, Trinity Reads (book by book of the bible), Making sense of scripture with Dr. David Lohse, online opportunities. Retreats, etc. Make it relevant and real.

(MP-III) **Examine the ELCA’s Book of Faith initiative for application in our congregation.**

ENGAGING WORSHIP – “Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy,” (Exodus 20.8) “Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name.” (Psalm 100.4) “So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.” (Romans 10.17) “And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him?” (Romans 10.14)

We believe that humans are created to praise our Creator and Redeemer and that weekly worship is the center from which our mission and service emanates. Because worship has the highest of priorities at Trinity, several expectations follow: Pastors preaching in vibrant and engaging ways; congregants participating regularly and fully in worship life; and worship services reflecting the needs and wants of various constituents, such as providing age-appropriate services. We commit to variety, utilizing contemporary tools and methods, and making full use of worship resources made available through the ELCA, our Synod and the seminaries of the ELCA.

(MP-I) **Offer an intentional education piece every Sunday** in worship. Share why we have the liturgy we have, the different seasons of the church calendar, what it means to be Lutheran, etc.

(MP-I) **Develop SEASONAL WORSHIP TEAMS to work together with pastors to plan worship experiences.**

(MP-III) **Consider Early Christian Family Education model** during “traditional” Sunday school hour for families with children 0 to 6th grade. Includes an educational component for parents to discern and grow in their own faith while learning ways to share it at home with their children.

(MP-III) **Begin Sunday School hour with families in the sanctuary**, participating in worship up through Children’s church—then departing with their teachers.

(MP-II) **Bring sanctuary into the 21st century by updating and adding technology and lighting.**

(MP-I) **Work with Luther Seminary to find ways to engage or become more interactive in worship in singing the congregation’s story.**

(MP-I) **Model the practice of looking to the Synod or ELCA offices first** for resources and guidance in carrying out our Mission Priorities.

SERVING OTHERS – “...whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and give his life a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20.26-27). “He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6.8)

We will seek to inspire the people of Trinity to sacrificially serve one another and to continue to reach beyond ourselves and the walls of our church in service to others and to mend and care for God’s creation. We will reach within to identify the needy and underserved within our own congregation. We will continue to reach out in the long tradition at Trinity of sacrificially serving our local community and will re-double efforts to identify and respond to the needs of the greater community including those new to our community regardless of ethnicity. We will work hand-in-hand with other community members, congregations, and organizations committed to justice, peace-making, feeding the hungry, and serving the needy among us. We will do so conscious of our Lord’s call and in His name recognizing that in serving others we serve Jesus in disguise.

(MP-III) **Consider the appointment of a “Seniors” Minister** called to serve this growing sector of our congregation in all facets of their spiritual, social and personal lives.

(MP-I) **Devise a schedule for ministering to our “shut-ins”.** Be specific in monthly goal numbers for pastoral visits, lay visits, rides to church, etc. Train volunteers to assist in visiting, should that need be determined. Restore home bound communion by lay people from our table.

(MP-II) **Institute a Spiritual Gifts Inventory** to help members use their gifts with the appropriate needs of the congregation. Begin a regular process of assessing, promoting, advertising ongoing ministry needs.

(MP-II) **Recruit a volunteer service coordinator** to match gifts with needs in the congregation.

(MP-I) **Constantly monitor the needs in our congregation, community, nation and world and respond as we are able.** Trinity has a strong history in being involved with the needs of those near and far. To aid in this, stay closely connected to St. Peter’s City Administrator, SW Minnesota Synod and the ELCA Synod as starting points.

(MP-I) **Support the on-going mission work of Trinity Lutheran Church.** That support can include, but does not need to be limited to, the ELCA hunger program, Malaria eradication, Kitchen program, Centro Campesino, mission fields of the ELCA, quilting program for LWR and other ongoing efforts such as disaster relief efforts both domestic and world-wide.

LIVING OUR FAITH – “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5.3-11) “Not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.” (Matthew 7:21)

We commit to all possible means of assisting the people of Trinity to learn more deeply what it means to follow our Lord Jesus Christ in our daily living and vocations – to put our beliefs into actions. We will assist them to be the eyes, ears, mouth, hands, and feet of Christ in their daily living, encourage and assist them to take Sunday words into Monday living, and help them exemplify a faith which is vibrant, active, engaged, and dynamic. We will expect that all who affiliate with Trinity be not simply “members” but disciples – actively engaged in following Jesus as the ones whom He has called, empowered, gifted, and redeemed. We will teach and expect that all be stewards of God’s grace, gospel, gifts, and creation. We will expect that all pray daily, live daily in God’s Word, know and share the gospel, become growing givers and give generously of themselves and their means to build the kingdom and work for righteousness and peace. We will help all to know and understand that this is empowered and possible not by their own efforts but by and through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to each in Holy Baptism.

(MP-I) **Actively model, communicate and encourage fellow members to:**

Pray – Develop a prayer discipline (# on the prayer chain)

Worship – Make weekly worship a priority (# of worshippers each week)

Connect – Grow into a faith of friendship. Commit to a small group and build community. (# of small groups established w/in one year)

Serve – Find a need and fill it. Connect your passions & gifts with God’s call. (# who have taken spiritual gifts inventory)

Give – Start small and grow, but commit. It is an important part of discipleship. (# of people who increased their giving)

Set annual goals for each of these, to measure progress (see parentheses).

(MP-I) **Connect with ELCA scholar on this topic** to better understand its meaning.

(MP-II) **Provide educational opportunities for congregation** to engage in these discussions.

(MP-II) **Create opportunities for parishioners of all ages to give relevant examples of Ministry in Daily Life.**

(MP-III) **Establish an online venue for meaningful discussions** on what it means to live as a Christian (Facebook page, blog on TLC website, etc.).

(MP-III) **Encourage Congregational Ministries Developed by Spiritual Gifts**--Dental Ministry, Car Care Ministry, Theatre Ministry, Spiritual Care Team, Transportation for those persons in need.

(MP-III) **Examine the Vibrant Faith Ministries model for potential applications in our congregation.**