

Congregational Values/Needs Discovery

Note to the facilitator or coordinator

*Give this tool to members of various groups within the congregation. If the groups numbers are large enough, it would be best to have at least 10 – 15 people from each group respond. For smaller groups try to have as many as possible respond. Instruct the people to do this activity immediately within their group meeting. If you mail them out, you will not get the return that is needed. For people who are not active in worship and/or ministries of the congregation, it would work best to do this over the phone. Members of the congregation can be trained to make the phone calls and lead the people through this important survey of values and needs. Use the following key (or one that you design) to note the connection of the person filling out the form to the ministry of the congregation: **CC** = Congregation Council; **Y** = Youth; **SG** = Small Group Ministry; **WG** = Women's Group; **MG** = Men's Group; **RET** = Retiree; **TEACH** = Teaches In The Church; **S** = Single; **M** = Married; **NA** = Not Active*

Name (optional) _____

Number of years connected to congregation _____

Connection code (above) _____

1. Pretend that the church was on fire and all the ministry activities were about to burn up. You have the next 67 seconds to write down all the ministries you would rescue.
Go!

2. Of the ministries you rescued which are the **TWO** most important to you?

3. Now list **TWO** that you did not rescue that also are important to you.

4. List five things for which this congregation stands.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.

5. If the congregation is in an urban or suburban or more populated area: If you were to interview people, who are not members or attend that congregation, living within a five-block radius from the congregation and ask them "What goes on in the ministries of that congregation?" How do you think they would respond?

If the congregation is in a rural or less populated area: Use a much larger radius of the community. If people who live in that community, who are not members of or attend that congregation, were asked, "What goes on in the ministry of that congregation, how do you think they would respond?"

6. List **SIX** ministries that happen in this congregation that energize you:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____
- f. _____

7. Note some activities at this congregation that drain you or concern you:

8. List **ONE** or **TWO** new ministries in which this congregation could become involved that would touch the lives of people of this community:

- a. _____
- b. _____

9. Note **one or more** special ministries that is needed for this congregation to grow even though the pastor might not or cannot develop them or lead them:

10. List **Three** things that people whom God had called us to serve need:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

Step Two

Congregation Values and Priorities Exercise

Prioritize your values of the ministry of the congregation. From the list of congregation values on the next page, marked A – P, choose the ones you feel are most important to this congregation at this time. Then rank the first six by writing the letter in the appropriate space on the page. Change the list of values to best fit the congregation. Keep the top 4 priorities in mind as the visioning group writes a vision statement for the next 3-4 years.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Name is optional _____

Congregation Values Exercise

- A. Build on our heritage of faith and history
- B. Rebuilding relationships through the Gospel
- C. Each person clearly knowing the Lutheran faith
- D. Developing and nurturing deep friendships
- E. Discipleship training/spiritual life development
- F. Focus on faith formation in home and congregation
- G. Active mission support (local and global)
- H. Exciting corporate worship
- I. Leadership training
- J. Strengthening families and individuals to live well in Christ
- K. Members know and have ownership in the vision and desired outcomes in the ministry.
- L. Open to new ideas and innovation to serve others with the Gospel
- M. Work with other denominations
- N. Training and equipping youth as leaders in the faith community/congregation.
- O. Other ministries _____
- P. _____

Step Three

Note to the facilitator/coordinator:

Steps one and two will take some time. During that time invite 5-12 people to become a visionary team. The task is to write a vision statement for the congregation that will guide the congregation for the next 3-5 years. All ministries will flow from the vision statement and desired outcomes that clarify the vision. This process will also take more than one meeting. It could be done well with a day retreat.

Instruct the members of the vision team to each write a vision statement for the congregation based on the data that has been gathered. Remind them that writing a vision statement is a “right-brained” activity and is a vision of something that is not already happening at the congregation. Often people try to protect ministries that they like that are already happening in the congregation. Those most likely will continue.

Later in this process the facilitator/coordinator will lead the vision group to establish one vision statement for the next 3-5 years and develop 3-5 desired outcomes of that vision. The facilitator/coordinator will remind the vision team members that the vision cast a visual picture of the ministry of the congregation. The desired outcomes clarify the vision with specific outcomes or goals to accomplish the vision.

Examples of Personal Vision Statements (state year and begin with “I see; I sense; I hear;):

It is the year _____ and at _____ Church:

1. I see youth and their families who have grown closer to Jesus and practicing their faith in their daily lives. I see their families modeling what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ so that their children grow as spiritual leaders to others.
2. I sense energy in young and old to give witness to God’s gift of salvation in Jesus Christ. I can see the results of a passion for Christ in the variety of worship, Bible studies, counseling, retreats, and other joint ministries with neighboring congregations.
3. I see _____ Church with a great focus on the power of prayer. I see people trained and practicing contemplative prayer, meditation, breathing prayers, and centering prayers. I see people gathering regularly for healing prayer services and practicing spiritual disciplines in their homes and in this community.
4. I see _____ Church being a spiritual beacon in the community because the members are rooted in the Word. I see new ministries which offer different services to the needy, the elderly, and young families. I can hear the joy of parents who reflect on the wonderful training they received in Christian parenting for their children (toddlers to teens). Youth share how fun it is to do intergenerational service to others and to also grow in their faith together.

Example of Steps Toward a Final Vision Statement and Desired Outcomes

The facilitator/coordinator led a prioritizing design for the members of the Vision Team to select the individual vision statement that they would use as their base for

developing the actual vision statement. This is very difficult work but so important for the growth of the congregation.

The results of the prioritizing process were that personal vision statement # 10 was selected as the foundational base. The facilitator/coordinator explained that because something did not receive a priority dot from the members does not mean that it is not important. The Vision Team might change sentences, phrases, and words in the base to reflect other important aspects of the vision for the congregation. The Vision Team members were encouraged to also carefully look at the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. Working for a final vision the beginning is changed from "I" to "We."

It is the Year _____ and We:

see _____ Church being a spiritual beacon in the community because the members are rooted in the Word. ~~We see new ministries which offer different services to the needy, the elderly, and young families (counseling center, pastoral care ministries, evangelism, Christian parenting, etc). We can hear the joy of parents who reflect on the wonderful training they received in Christian parenting for their children (toddlers to teens children of all ages). Youth share how fun it is to do intergenerational service to others and to also grow in their faith together.~~ Everyone is invited to invest themselves and use their gifts to help others grow in Christ and take ownership of this community of faith.

After much discussion from all the members of the Vision Team they wrote a Corrected Vision

It is the year _____ and we see:

_____ Church being a spiritual beacon in the community because the members are rooted in the Word. Everyone is invited to invest themselves and use their gifts to help others grow in Christ and take ownership of this community of faith.

Desired outcomes (to move from Vision to Action)

- Youth are deeply rooted in Christ and equipped to be spiritual leaders
- Evangelism, Stewardship, Memorial Fund, and Mission Teams are developed, trained, and active in ministry
- Keep strengthening the relationship with a neighboring congregation as partners in ministry and mission.
- Develop and train a strong pastoral care team
- Develop strong, intergenerational Bible study

At the conclusion of our vision process meeting a member of the Vision Team noted to the facilitator/coordinator that he was still uncomfortable with the word "ownership" toward the end of the last sentence of the vision. The team reflected on it theologically. Christ is the head of every Christian congregation. The faith community is God's. So the facilitator/coordinator suggested, with the approval of the members of the Vision Team to change the last phrase to read: **and know they belong to the Body of Christ and take responsibility for the witness and ministries of this faith community.**

Final Version of Vision & Desired Outcomes

It is the year _____ and we see:

Church being a spiritual beacon in the community because the members are rooted in the Word. Everyone is invited to invest themselves and use their gifts to help others grow in Christ and know they belong to the Body of Christ and take responsibility for the witness and ministries of this faith community.

Establishing Desired Outcomes that Clarify the Vision

After the final vision statement is written the facilitator next leads the Vision Team members in writing the desired outcomes to clarify the focus for the next 3-5 years in accomplishing the vision. Desired outcomes are the “so that what” of the vision. All the ministries of the congregation will flow from the vision and desired outcomes for the next 3-5 years as determined by the Vision Team and approved by the Congregation Council.

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