

Strategic Planning: The Strategic Plan

Strategic Planning: Introduction

The strategic plan provides a road map for fulfilling the congregation's vision for the future of the church. In this process if you have used the other tools you can take into account where the church is today, based on the data gathered from the Community and Congregational Profiles and the SWOT Analysis. It is recommended that the strategic plan reach out no more than three years into the future. Three years is recommended since we live in a fast-changing world and usually around the third year there are changes to be made. However the church may decide to plan out as many as five to ten years if it fits their needs. This would be the "long-range strategic plan".

The congregation is also encouraged to develop as "short-range strategic plan" to complement the "long-range strategic plan." The "short-range strategic plan" can be a little as three to six months or reach out for a year. In many cases the "short-range strategic plan" becomes or is the churches yearly calendar.

Who is to develop the strategic plan?

There are two schools of thought on how to and on who should develop the strategic plans: 1. The plans can be developed by an executive committee made up of council members or appointed congregational members. 2. The entire congregation, which brainstorms, and develops goals and objectives.

Each school of thought has its own merits and drawbacks. For example, if the entire plan is developed by an executive committee and handed to the members of the congregation there might be a lack of ownership and the strategic plan will fall flat. On the other hand if the entire congregation is involved they will have ownership in the plans. A blending of the two schools of thought might be considered. The congregation through brainstorming sessions develops the goals. The list of goals is then taken into executive committee, pared down to a manageable level and presented to the congregation for approval.

Goals

Goals are an end result that the congregation or ministry team is expected to achieve in 3 to 5 years.

In general, goals are defined as follows:

- They indicate what and where the congregation would like to achieve as the church moves forward.
- They tend to have a qualitative orientation (measurable).

- They cover major areas and activities important to the congregation in which positive change is desired.
- They are consistent with and support the mission and vision of the church.

Developing your Goals

In the development of goals, the congregation or planning committee should generate as many potential and relevant goals as possible to begin with. (The list of suggested goals below will be helpful in this process.)

Note: You will find that many of the goals on the initial list can often be merged into a single goal.

Start by distinguishing your long-term goals from your short-term ones. Your long term goals should have a timeline of about three to five years. Your short-term goal is basically your annual calendar.

Developing the Goals

Isolating the most important areas to focus on for the church is the key to good goal development. As the goal list develops begin separating the goals that need to be done short term, this will become the short range Strategic plan.

Goal suggestions:

Goals can focus on several different areas' including:

- Membership goals
 - Increasing the number of members
 - Assimilation of new members
 - Fellowship goals (Retention)
 - Youth
 - Adult
 - Senior
- Outreach and Evangelism goals (see ELS website, resources, evangelism resources for more ideas)
 - Outreach Methods
 - Canvassing
 - Come events
 - Go events
 - Community service projects
 - Social Media

Prospect Management
Management schedule

Management method
Management resources (Manpower)
Material development
Social Media
 Facebook
 Website
 Video
 Other
Printer Material
Signage
Service Folders (Bulletins)
Live Streaming

- Stewardship goals
 - Annual Budget
 - Increase
 - Decreases
 - Annual congregational stewardship goals
 - Capital Campaigns (when needed)
 - Congregational Stewardship awareness
 - Printer Material
 - Newsletter articles
 - Bible studies
 - Stewardship Sundays

- Christian Education goals
 - Sunday School
 - VBS/TBS goals
 - Bible Studies
 - Christian Day School
 - Youth Group

- Divine Service goals
 - Special Services (throughout the year)
 - Special Music
 - Choir (Congregation)
 - Choir (Outside)
 - Solo pieces (Congregation)
 - Solo pieces (Outside)
 - Other

- Physical plant goals
 - Remodel
 - New Construction
 - Maintenance

Objectives

Objectives support your goals. Objectives are specific to what must be achieved and when. They do not indicate how the goals will be accomplished necessarily. The "how" will come in the form of the action plan. In essence, objectives take the goals and make them more specific. There is a clear distinction between goals and objectives. It is important to remember that goals are usually broad, general aims for the church. The process of refining the focus begins with the development of objectives. Also, remember that as we move through the strategic planning process, each level supports the one before it.

Objectives should be:

1. Significant
2. Specific
3. Dated
4. Measurable
5. Reasonable
6. Consistent with each other
7. Focused on issues vital to the church moving forward according to God's good will.

Putting the Strategic Plan Into Action

The Goals and Objective are to be recorded on the goals and objectives sheets (see below). Each objective is tracked using the Strategic Planning Action Plan form (see below). The required action, including start date, who is responsible, target end date, actual end date, are placed on individual action plan forms and managed and reviewed on a regular basis by the facilitator.

The Facilitator

The facilitator is to appointed by the congregation to keep the strategic plan moving forward. Ideally the facilitator should be someone outside the congregation, a fellow pastor or layman from a neighboring congregation or the circuit visitor. Their work is to review the action plan form regularly and keep the responsible individual aware of the target end dates and advise the congregation of the progress or lack of progress. If someone outside the congregation is not available a member of the congregation can be appointed.

Strategic Plan Forms:

Strategic Planning Goals

| | GOALS |
|----|-----------------|
| 1 | list goals here |
| 2 | |
| 3 | |
| 4 | |
| 5 | |
| 6 | |
| 7 | |
| 8 | |
| 9 | |
| 10 | |
| 11 | |
| 12 | |
| 13 | |
| 14 | |
| 15 | |
| 16 | |

Strategic Planning Objectives

| GOAL | | OBJECTIVE |
|-----------------|---|------------------------------------|
| write goal here | 1 | list objectives here for this goal |
| | 2 | |
| | 3 | |
| | 4 | |
| | 5 | |
| GOAL | | OBJECTIVE |
| | 1 | |
| | 2 | |
| | 3 | |
| | 4 | |
| | 5 | |

Strategic Planning Action Plan

Goal: _____

Objective: _____

| ACTION | Start Date | Who is Responsible? | Target End Date | Actual End Date | Notes |
|--------|------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

Facilitator's Notes:

After Action Follow-Up (What worked, what didn't work...)

Strategic Planning: The Vision Statement

The Vision Statement

The purpose of the vision statement is to provide the church leaders and members with a common goal aimed at fulfilling the mission of the church according to God's will.

The vision statement will be the bull's-eye at which all of your strategic planning is aimed.

Recommended Steps to Producing the Vision Statement

The church leadership should begin the process by preparing a detailed step-by-step checklist of what is going to take place during this process. For example:

1. Promote and gather as many congregational members as you can. Have a congregational brainstorming session with focus on what the congregation wants to achieve, or where it would like to be in the next few years.

Note: It is important to include as many of the congregational members as possible as it gives them ownership and the drive to see it through.

2. To stay focused on the task at hand the brainstorming session will begin by answering the following questions:

Who are we?

Where does God want us to go?

What do we want this church to look like?

Where do we want to be in one year?

Where do we want to be in three years?

Using a white board or a flip chart record the ideas as they flow from the brainstorming session.

3. Once the ideas have stopped flowing combine like ideas and begin the narrowing down process by picking the best ideas and most consistent thoughts. Record them on the white board or flip chart.

Go around the room and allow each participant to express the list in sentence form. Record the sentences on the white board or flip chart. Once everyone has had a chance to speak again begin the narrowing process by combining like sentences and ideas. Continue the process until the entire list is narrowed down to two or three sentences.

To test the statement read the sentences aloud to the congregation. Discuss the statement, check to see if the entire congregation agrees that it captures the common direction and describes a picture of an idea future of the church.

Once this process is completed and the sentences are firm, you now have a **Vision Statement**.

Strategic Planning: The Mission Statement

To develop a mission statement use the same procedure used to develop the vision statement. The difference in developing the mission statement is that is a Bible study provided to serve as a guide.

The Mission Statement is a short description of “why” the church is there and serves as a corner stone in future decision making.

The following Bible study is provided to help the congregation stay focused on Christ and His mission.

Read these passages and note how **Christ’s mission** is defined. Underline key words and/or concepts.

Isaiah 61:1-3 *The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.*

Luke 19:10 *The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.*

Mark 10:45 *The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

Matthew 4:23 *Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.*

Romans 4:25 *He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.*

John 17:24 *Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.*

John 3:14-16 *Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

Read these passages and note how the **Church's mission** is defined.
Underline key words and/or concepts.

Psalm 96:1-3 *Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.*

Matthew 28:18-20 *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age"*

John 20:19-23 *On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."*

Acts 1:8 *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

2 Peter 3:18 *but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.*

Luke 24:46-47 *He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

Ephesians 2:8-10 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

Romans 10:13-17 *"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news? . . . Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.*

Revelation 2:10b *Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

I Samuel 15:22 *Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice . . .*

Luke 10:16 *He who listens to you listens to me.*

I Corinthians 11:23-26 *For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me" In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

Read these passages and note how a **congregation's mission** is defined. Underline key words and/or concepts.

Isaiah 12:4-6 *In that day you will say: "Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing to the Lord, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you."*

Acts 2:42-47 *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

Acts 8:1,4 *On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.*

2 Corinthians 5:14-21 *For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against*

them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Ephesians 4:11-13 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

2 Peter 3:18 Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory and honor both now and forever. Amen.

I Corinthians 16:13 Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. Do everything in love.

Colossians 3:12-17 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

On the basis of the above, decide why your congregation exists. Identify two or three main points, and then write out a general Mission Statement (40 or fewer words!) for your congregation:

The Mission Statement, based on the study of God's Word, must be:

Studied and formulated

Approved and published

Publicized and emphasized

Preached and practiced

Reviewed and renewed (J. Radloff)

Sample Mission Statements

“_____ Evangelical Lutheran Church exists to give praise, honor, and glory to the Triune God and to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with people in our congregation, community, and the world.”

“Following Christ’s Great Commission, _____ Evangelical Lutheran Church will go, make disciples by baptizing, teaching and sharing God’s Word with our members, community and world.”

“We, the members of _____ Evangelical Lutheran Church, being forgiven through Christ's saving grace, come together to worship, teach and receive God's grace in Word and Sacrament. Out of thankful hearts, we live a life pleasing to God and spread the "Good News" of Jesus Christ to our community and the world.”

Strategic Planning: Congregational Profile Guidelines

It is recommended that one person be chosen to coordinate the entire profile process. Their responsibilities would include making certain each participant assisting to complete the profile has their work done in a timely manner. The coordinator will be required to organize and compile the information gathered for the completion of the profile. The coordinator should be reliable and able to show good judgment and discretion in handling the information gathered.

Begin by designating a five-week period for completing the profile (one week for each section of the survey). Make certain that all the people selected to participate in the process are aware of the deadlines for gathering information and are willing to abide by those deadlines. Timeliness and accuracy in gathering the information will be the two most important issues in completing the process.

Compiling the profile information requires a commitment from the congregation/parish. Each congregation will be asked to take an objective and honest look at itself. Upon completion of the profiling process the congregation will then be asked to consider the results of the study and to consider recommendations made by the EMC and the BHO.

The goal of this profile process is two-fold: 1. to help each congregation/parish serve the Lord to the best of their ability by motivating and implementing positive action toward outreach and evangelism, and 2. to encourage each congregation/parish to review regularly its goals, plans, and process for sharing the precious message of Jesus Christ as Savior.

The profile worksheets provided consist of the following sections:

1. Statistical Summary
2. Congregational Participation
3. Diagnostic Questions
4. Congregational Survey
5. Planning Questions

As you begin this process, open with prayer asking God to bless the congregational efforts and the individuals involved in compiling the profile.

Basic Information

Name of Congregation _____

Complete Address _____

Phone Number _____

Email Address _____

Web Site _____

Part One: Statistical Summary

PURPOSE: To discover where the congregation/parish has stood in the past and where is it at right now (providing a ten-year “snap-shot” of the congregation’s life).

PROCESS: This section may be filled out by the pastor, the church secretary, or the appropriate officers of the congregation (whomever has the best access to congregational statistics).

Please make certain all the questions are answered as accurately and completely as possible. Allow one week for the completion of this section.

STATISTICS:

| YEAR | TOTAL MEMBERS | COMMUNICANT MEMBERS | AVERAGE SUNDAY ATTENDANCE | AVERAGE BIBLE CLASS ATTENDANCE | SUNDAY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT | CHRISTIAN DAY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT |
|--------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | | | | | | |
| This year | | | | | | |
| Last year | | | | | | |
| 2 years ago | | | | | | |
| 3 years ago | | | | | | |
| 4 years ago | | | | | | |
| 5 years ago | | | | | | |
| 6 years ago | | | | | | |
| 7 years ago | | | | | | |
| 8 years ago | | | | | | |
| 9 years ago | | | | | | |
| 10 years ago | | | | | | |

MEMBERSHIP INCREASE/DECREASE:

| YEAR | BAPTISMS | CONFIRMATION youth/adult | AFFIRMATION OF FAITH | TRANSFERS IN | TRANSFERS OUT | DEATH | RELEASE OTHER |
|-------------|----------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------|------------------|
| This year | | / | | | | | |
| Last year | | / | | | | | |
| 2 years ago | | / | | | | | |
| 3 years ago | | / | | | | | |
| 4 years ago | | / | | | | | |
| 5 years ago | | / | | | | | |

Over the past five years our congregation has had a net gain/loss (circle one) of _____ members.

Estimate the percentage of adult members in the following categories:

| | Life-long ELS or WELS | From other Lutheran bodies | From other Christian Denominations | Adult converts |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--|----------------|
| Religious background | % | % | % | % |

Part Two: Congregational Participation

PURPOSE: To discover how many people are involved in the activities of the congregation.

PROCESS: This section may be filled out by the pastor, the church secretary, or the appropriate officers of the congregation (whoever has the best access to congregational statistics).

Please make certain all the questions are answered as accurately and completely as possible. Allow one week for the completion of this section.

MEMBERSHIP:

| | TOTAL # | MALE | FEMALE |
|-------------------------------|---------|------|--------|
| Members | | | |
| Communicants | | | |
| Baptized Members Only | | | |
| Infants (0-5) | | | |
| Children (6-12) | | | |
| Youth (13-17) | | | |
| Inactive (delinquent) Members | | | |
| Shut-in Members | | | |

WORSHIP/COMMUNION:

What is the average Sunday worship attendance? _____

What is the average attendance at the Lord's Supper? _____

FELLOWSHIP/SERVICE/STEWARDSHIP:

What number of members are involved in some type of service role or task (choir, Sunday School teacher, committee or board member, officers, etc.)? Men _____

Women _____

Youth _____

What number of members are involved in some type of fellowship group or activity (men's club, women's circle or ladies aid, softball league, youth group, etc.)? Men _____

Women _____

Youth _____

What was the average annual offering per communicant member last year? _____

five years ago? _____

What was your annual church budget last year? _____

How much was designated for home congregation purposes? _____

How much was designated for synod or purposes other than home congregation support? _____

How much was designated for evangelism or outreach? _____

Part Three: Diagnostic Questions

PURPOSE: To discover the current status of the congregation's outreach/evangelism efforts.

PROCESS: The church officers, the Evangelism Committee (if one exists), and five volunteer families are to each complete this section of the survey. The information is to be kept confidential to each specific group or family. The information collected should be sealed in an appropriate envelope and delivered to the EMC or BHO chairman without review by any other party within the congregation. To maintain anonymity, please do not include any names.

Please be certain to answer all the questions as accurately as possible. If a question does not apply to your specific situation, mark it NA. Allow one week for this section of the survey to be completed.

DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONS:

1. Do we have a specific outreach/evangelism committee?

(If the answer to number one is "No" all future references to the committee should be considered as referring to the entire congregation or to any group within the congregation.)

2. Do we have a layperson as the director of our outreach/evangelism efforts?

3. If no, is this work left entirely to the pastor?

4. Is the evangelism committee well organized with specific goals and plans for outreach work?

5. Does our congregation have a prospect list?

6. How many names are on that list?

7. Do we have a process in place for contacting those people on a regular basis?

8. Do we have a process in place for adding names to that list?

9. Have we defined a specific geographical area of responsibility within which we focus our outreach efforts?

10. Do we have a method for contacting new people who move into our defined area?

11. Do we have any laypeople trained to call on prospects?

12. Is that work left solely for the pastor?

13. Does the church council or voters receive regular reports about the outreach work of our congregation?

14. Do organizations within our congregation intentionally reach out to or welcome unchurched people of our area?

15. Is evangelism/outreach regularly discussed or mentioned in Bible class or in the sermons?

16. How many Bible information classes are offered each year?

17. Are members asked to submit names of people to be invited to the information classes?

18. Does our church have a well-designed brochure with information about our church?
19. How often is the congregation invited to learn more about outreach/evangelism, or receives brochures or bulletin inserts about the work of outreach/evangelism?
20. Have we conducted a community survey or canvass within the last year? last 5 years?
21. Are any plans in place to conduct a survey or canvass in the very near future?
22. Does our congregation have sufficient signage to clearly direct people to our location?
23. Do visitors receive a genuinely warm welcome in our church?
24. On average, how many people make the effort to go up to and greet a first-time visitor to our congregation?
25. What do we do to advertise and publicize our church, its ministry, or special events?
26. Do we have a meaningful and public reception of new members into our church?
27. Do we have anything in place to integrate new members into the life of our church?
28. Do we have anything in place to monitor the spiritual growth of people and prevent members from becoming delinquent or a "back-door" loss?
29. Does the evangelism committee develop a written annual plan with specific goals and process to achieve those goals?
30. Is there a definite budget amount for the work of evangelism? How much?
31. What percentage of seating in the sanctuary is full on an average Sunday?
32. What percentage of the parking lot is full on an average Sunday?
33. Do we have a mission statement? If so, what is it?
34. On the back of this sheet list all the outreach/evangelism programs and/or efforts the congregation has pursued in last few years. Results?
35. On the back of this sheet list the outreach/evangelism programs and/or efforts the congregation has planned for the near future.

Section Four: Congregational Survey

PURPOSE: To discover the impression and opinions the general membership has of its congregation, what its priorities are, and to discover how committed the membership is to sharing the Gospel with the unchurched.

PROCESS: The church officers, the Evangelism Committee (if one exists), and five volunteer families are to each complete this section of the survey. The information is to be kept confidential to each specific group or family. The information collected should be sealed in an appropriate envelope and delivered to the EMC or BHO chairman without review by any other party within the congregation. To maintain anonymity, please do not include any names.

Please be certain to answer all the questions as accurately as possible. If a question does not apply to your specific situation, mark it NA. Allow one week for this section of the survey to be completed.

ALTERNATE PROCESS: This section of the survey may also be presented to the entire congregation, in sufficient amount, so that each family or member might answer. A copy of this section could be sent home with the members following a worship service expecting it to be returned the following Sunday. Another option might be to have the congregation remain at the end of the service and have them complete it immediately. If this latter process is used, please provide a means to keep each survey confidential (sealed envelopes or deposit box).

CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY:

Please check only one answer for the following statements.

1. What potential does my congregation have for growth?

- poor
- limited
- average
- good
- excellent

2. I find the worship services at my church to be ...

- dull, uninteresting.
- routine.
- some good, some bad.
- usually helpful and informative.
- excellent and inspiring.

3. My church's program for Christian education of the children & youth is ...

- not meeting our needs.
- meeting most of our needs.
- average.
- above average.
- very effective.

4. My church's program for the Christian education of the adults is ...

- not meeting our needs.
- meeting most of our needs.
- average.
- above average.
- very effective.

5. Our church's efforts at reaching out to our community and unchurched neighbors are ...

- non-existent.
- poor.
- OK, but we could do a lot more.
- good and we are working hard to improve.
- excellent; we are doing as much as we can.

6. I feel my church's activities and organized programs are for me ...

- something to avoid.
- a necessary obligation.
- something I do not care about.
- of some interest to me and my family.
- a good way for me to be involved and serve my Lord.

7. I believe the following activities are where our congregation could place more emphasis:

- Bible study & Christian education
- Foreign mission work
- fun activities for the children & youth
- outreach & evangelism
- synod awareness

8. Do I feel like I "fit in" and am a vital part of my church family?

- no, not at all
- sometimes
- most of the time
- yes, I am an accepted part of this church family

9. I think my input is considered in the decision-making process of our church ...

- never.
- to a small degree.
- for the big issues.
- all the time.

10. I contribute financially to the work of my church ...

- seldom or never.
- irregularly, whenever I'm there.
- regularly, almost every Sunday.
- a planned amount each week/month.

11. The statement that best reflects how I would rate my attempts at sharing my faith with unchurched people or those who belong to other churches in name only is:

- I've never shared my faith with them.
- I sometimes try but often feel unprepared to do so.
- I like to share my faith but have so little time to do so.
- I look for and enjoy opportunities to share my faith.

12. I would say my personal Bible study and prayer life is ...

- almost non-existent.
- off and on.
- when I have the time.
- most of the time.
- regular.

13. If given the opportunity to learn more about outreach work and to participate in evangelism training I would ...

- run the other way.
- be cautiously interested.
- try it if someone twisted my arm.
- be available if asked.
- gladly sign up.

Please circle Yes or No to the following statements.

- | | | |
|-----|----|--|
| Yes | No | 1. I see the primary purpose of our church as responding to the Great Commission to make disciples by going, baptizing, and teaching. |
| Yes | No | 2. I have participated in a congregational evangelism outreach or training event in the past year. |
| Yes | No | 3. I have invited an unchurched friend or relative to one of our worship services in the last six months. |
| Yes | No | 4. I would support a resolution to designate at least 10% of our annual budget to congregational outreach & evangelism activities or training. |
| Yes | No | 5. I would prefer that our pastor call on nonmembers and prospects more than he calls on our members. |
| Yes | No | 6. I would be willing to learn how to call on prospects or to assist our pastor in doing outreach work for our congregation. |
| Yes | No | 7. I have intentionally introduced myself and tried to get to know a visitor to our worship service in the past 6 months. |
| Yes | No | 8. I have spoken with an unchurched person about religion and what I believe in the past 6 months. |
| Yes | No | 9. I have prayed for a specific unchurched person in the past month. |
| Yes | No | 10. I would be willing to increase my offerings if it would go to reaching with the Gospel the unchurched and lost people in our community. |

Part Five: Planning Questions

PURPOSE: To help determine the path to choosing goals and a plan to accomplish those goals.

PROCESS: The church officers, the Evangelism Committee (if one exists), and five volunteer families are to each complete this section of the survey. The information is to be kept confidential to each specific group or family. The information collected should be sealed in an appropriate envelope and delivered to the EMC or BHO chairman without review by any other party within the congregation. To maintain anonymity, please do not include any names.

Please realize that this is one of the most important sections of the self-study. If this section is not done well the information gathered in the previous four sections will be of little use. Please be honest and specific when you answer. Do not be afraid to be ambitious as you take a look at the future and the possibilities God can lay out for you – dream a little. Focus on the many positive ways to communicate your vision of sharing the Gospel.

PLANNING QUESTIONS:

Preliminary Question: Regarding questions 1-11, where on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 low, 10 high) is our membership in its understanding of and commitment to outreach and evangelism?

1. How can we increase the awareness and priority of outreach and evangelism in our congregation?
2. What are the strengths of our existing evangelism programs (i.e., good at locating prospects, good at welcoming visitors, excellent job of advertising, etc.)?
3. What are the weaknesses of our existing evangelism programs (i.e., not good at follow-up, lacking in integrating new members into the church family, etc.)?
4. What strengths or gifts does our congregation possess that could be used in reaching out to the unchurched in our community (i.e., youth or singles ministry, daycare program, school, etc.)?
5. What weaknesses of our congregation act as barriers to outreach (i.e., lacking in evangelism training, no assistance for the pastor, coldness to visitors, etc.)?
6. How might we better serve the community in which we exist?
7. What short-term (one to two years) goals should we be considering?
8. What long-term (five to ten years) goals should we be considering?
9. Would additional staff be necessary to help accomplish our goals of outreach and evangelism?

10. What volunteer help from the members could serve to help accomplish our evangelism goals?

11. What additional funding (i.e., cost for advertising, postage, training materials, or additional equipment or staff, etc.) would be necessary to accomplish our goals for outreach and evangelism?

12. Please explain the difference between outreach and evangelism:

Strategic Planning: Community Profile Guidelines

The purpose of this survey is to help the congregation to get to know their community, to evaluate your congregation's place in the community, and to help the congregation better determine goals and objectives that need to be incorporated in the strategic plan for your congregation.

Please try to gather all the information requested. Where information is unobtainable, or does not apply to your specific congregation, please note why under those specific sections. Remember, your comments and analysis for each section are very important!

Sources for gathering the information requested typically include local and regional planning commissions. They should be able to provide current information and data projections for the future of your community. Other valuable sources of information are civic and business groups, such as the Chamber of Commerce and the village or town boards for your area. Your public library may also be a good source for the information requested. The Percept MAP study is also an excellent source for completing this survey. (Percept MAP studies are available through the BHO.)

As you begin this process, open with prayer asking God to bless the congregational efforts and the individuals involved in compiling the profile.

BASIC INFORMATION – CONGREGATION

Name of Congregation _____

Complete Address _____

Phone Number _____

Email Address _____

Web Site _____

Location of Congregation Rural or Urban _____

Easily Accessible/ Highly Visible? _____

Parish Area

Define/describe the parish area this congregation serves. Please provide a map which outlines the parish area and identify on that map the area churches (of all denominations). If possible, indicate on the map where there are new neighborhoods (growth sectors), where the commercial and business areas are (commercial sectors), and major traffic routes through your parish area.

Comments on Parish Area _____

What percentage of members live within the parish area? _____

Comments _____

Population Trends

| | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 | Projected 2020 |
|-----------------|------|------|------|----------------|
| Parish Area | | | | |
| City / Township | | | | |
| County | | | | |

How many households are currently located in the parish area? _____

How does this current number compare with the last census figures (i.e., Are you located in a growing area or a declining area – percentage of growth or decline)? _____

What is the turnover rate for your parish area/how many new households move in each month? _____

How many people own their own homes in the parish area? _____

How many people rent in the parish area? _____

What pattern or trend do you see in the population of your parish area? _____

What is percentage of ethnicities in the parish area?

| | |
|----------|---------|
| White | _____ % |
| Black | _____ % |
| Hispanic | _____ % |
| Asian | _____ % |
| Other | _____ % |

What pattern or trend do you see in the population ethnicity of your parish area? _____

What is the definition of the population of your parish area? Families with children _____%

Comments: _____

Strategic Planning: Strengths – Weaknesses – Opportunities – Threats (SWOT Analysis)

In addition to the Community and Congregational Profile the SWOT Analysis gives the congregation *a real time assessment of their current situation*. The SWOT Analysis can be done in a congregational forum. However if the congregation is large and there are many planning to participate it is advised that the group be broken down into sub-groups. This affords the opportunity for more people to have input. Once the sub-groups have completed the analysis the data collected from each group can be compiled and the large forum can continue.

Question for the congregation to consider:

Strengths

- What is the church doing well?
- Where do we see growth?
- Are we meeting the needs of the community? What are those needs being met?
- What resources do we have within our church?
- What resources do we have within our community?
- List other strengths.

Weaknesses

- What is the church not doing so well?
- Do we have areas of decline? List them.
- What community needs are not being addressed by the congregation?
- What needs in the church are not being addressed?
- Are there groups or areas within the church that are being overworked?
- Are there groups or areas within the church that are being underutilized?
- List other weaknesses.

“Build upon your strengths and your weakness will gradually go away.” J. Locke

Opportunities

- What strengths does the church have that can be improved?
- What gifts and talents of the congregation can be utilized?
- Are there entities within the community that we can work with?
- List other opportunities.

Threats

- What changes in society are affecting the church?
- What changes in the community pose a threat?
- Is the lack of resources a threat to our future?
- Which weaknesses listed above are a threat?
- As we look at church life, does anything cause us to be afraid?
- List other threats.

Use of the SWOT Analysis

As the strategic planning process moves forward keep the results of the SWOT Analysis in mind as they can be reworded into goals and objectives.