

Brainstorming Comments
From “Moving Forward Together”
April 26, 2009

Bible Study/ Education:

- Educate that peace and family time can be found here.
- Sunday/weekly Bible studies
- Place to learn how to reconnect with your kids, spouse, etc.
- Utilize the ELCA Book of Faith initiative for Bible study/classes
- More adult Bible study
- Get people to be more focused on God
- Teach people how to have the Sabbath (rest) time
- Small groups are lacking -> education involvement, create excitement

Building Relationships/ Small Groups:

- Can different things be offered that are meaningful to small groups?
- Opportunities to be part of small group—how to get this up and running? Groups around ministry interests.
- Build small group ministry teams around areas of common interest. For example a group of crafters, a group who likes to bake, and a group that enjoys coaching athletics and have each group on a monthly rotation to plan events for Youth Fellowship (after Praise!) or regular events for congregation and community.
- Small group activities
- Small groups developed from new member classes, Befrienders
- Work w/ smaller groups before enlisting everyone
- Direct/invite people to small groups
- Personal connection needs to happen
- Increase activity to bring people together; decrease or stop those leaving

Communication:

- Communication at all levels – staff, pastor. Council, congregation.
- More technology.
- Schedule regular opportunities for “Conversations with the Pastors” as an opportunity for congregation to ask questions and have dialog with the pastors
- Leaders have to communicate positive and healthy attitudes [could go in Vision/Climate]
- Find ways to be a more open Council to ideas, suggestions. More accountability
- Emphasis in newsletter on news that is happening in our congregation
- Do something with info already gathered
- Use info from cong. survey we did last year—nothing was implemented
- Action on Listening Session points → what happened? [*initiative by previous Council?*]

Community outreach/ Evangelism:

- Community outreach – Be visible
- McFarland Family Festival
- Target one area of McFarland to invite to our church.
- Invite community into church more
- Bring people in to church
- Increase membership

- Youth basketball league
- Fewer programs; doing them better.
- Connect CLM families to church
- Share faith – share what happened during the week
- Have Befrienders evangelize more
- Get others to come in
- Invite more people to come (2)
- People need to talk more about MLC – “Advertise in person”
- Use Family Life Center for non-members with members

Congregational Life:

- Welcoming new people
- Don't see new members
- Need to touch lives.
- More emphasis on including participation of current members.
- Make time for church activities -> designate one day: Wednesday
- Network the Befrienders
- Utilize trained Befreinder to visit the ill
- Utilize Befrienders - use volunteers *[more]* Council figure out what needs to be done
- Using volunteers
- Re-energizing volunteers.
- Write membership covenants—get everyone to think about how to use their individual gifts in intentional service
- Identify resource people within congregation for occasional ad hoc work in area of expertise (examples: financial experts, health professionals, educators, technology experts, etc.)
- Better space for fellowship *[on Sundays?]*
- Connections – fellowship –
- Breakfast for all *[on a]* regular basis
- Fellowship events and use our space better
- Fellowship activities – more variety of activities
- More fellowship (but not in the hall)
- Fellowship opportunities (5)
- Regular structured events
- Congregational fellowship gatherings (potlucks) (2)
- Women's circles
- Get people to commit to coming/ Increase attendance
- Sunshine committee

Demographics and Membership Roll Review:

- Are rolls accurate based on how many can attend?
- Clarify membership -> college kids, married kids who haven't joined elsewhere
- Demographic survey of each service and church
- 2002 attendance was high—what was special about 2002?
- Congregation needs to confirm membership *[list]*. Update membership to remove those who have moved away or have been inactive for more than two years.

Finances and Stewardship:

- Continue to reevaluate cash flow situation.
- Hole in financial understanding—more education for congregation as a whole.
- We request a running balance (amount ahead/behind) on the weekly “News you can Use.”
- Inquire about weekly vs annual giving?
- Invite Thrivent—budgeting money management for families
- Maximize awareness of time constraints [*of financial shortfall impact?*]
- Dream of a foundation [*endowment fund*] in the future for MLC.
- Breaking problem down into smaller parts, i.e. how much \$ per giving member is needed?
- Offer classes on family/personal budget and managing money as Lutheran believers.
- Share the church with another denomination (i.e., Risen Savior)
- Rental income from family life center & kitchen
- Fundraising with “simplified scrip” (www.simplifiedscrip.com/generalinformation.asp)
- Stewardship drive (2)
- Stewardship – knock on doors to pass out flower seeds
- Put advertisements on the bulletin
- Advertise. Utilize the facility more—share?
- Fundraiser dinners- social, speakers
- Is there a way to make money through the investment of some church funds?
- Need to ask members to increase giving to overcome budget deficit and be specific
- Stop focusing on the money

Miscellaneous:

- Paper coffee cups
- We need to regain our control over church life

Our Church “Product” -> Organizational Planning:

- Marketing promotion
- Define our product
- Figure out how to sell our product
- Focused mission & vision statement
- Looking at the long term, not just the short term

Outreach to members:

- Every member visitation (6)
 - Visits to build friendships (1)
 - Visits to increase stewardship (1)
- Every Council [member] visits 3 families to gather info
- Ask folks what can we do to inspire you to come
- Reach out to people who have not attended recently by phoning them to inquire how they are doing and to let them know they are missed
- Contact members
- Contact inactive members – simple phone call and conversation
- More outreach to members & non-members about what they want
- Follow-up with those [*who have*] left
- Reach out to inactive members...why not coming (2)

- Address underlying reasons for low attendance
- Membership retention
- Bring members back (why did they leave?) (2)
- Talk to people who have left the church or are not attending
- Witness our own faith to each other
- Getting people here and keeping them here
- Anonymous suggestion box
- Expanding of care & creation
- Care of Creation Gardens PR → let more people know
- Awareness in community -> food pantry, unique things, etc...
- Celebrate (host) community events – fall celebration
- Raise funds for contemporary Christian music festival

Service/ Mission:

- Service projects (2)
- Evangelism – mission trip group, food pantry group, etc.
- Develop service project that impact nearby neighborhoods, especially those which may be less affluent or for those who are homebound and need help with yard or home maintenance (work teams could form as small groups for house-painting, light repairs)
- Create a ministry development incubator so members with ideas and willingness to implement these ideas can receive support and guidance

Pastoral and Leadership Staff:

- Restructure pastor role- Do we have appropriate number of pastors?
- Are people connected to personnel vs process?
- Dynamic leadership
- Personnel personalities
- Breath of fresh air in pastoral staff
- Leadership needs to take a key role in teaching
- Expand pastoral staff

Vision/ Climate:

- Need more positive energy.
- Need to “feed” our members
- End this time of mourning—shepherd to those who are/have been attending so we also keep those who are here and do not plan on going anywhere.
- Diversity is good, but it also divides.
- Revival
- Have the enthusiasm level of Puerto Rico visitors
- Bring joy back
- Spiritual enthusiasm
- Energize our church membership
- Increase excitement level

- Need spiritual uplifting
- Increase energy level
- Increase [*improve*] attitudes; more positive attitudes
- Rethink why we're here—start from scratch
- Mission and ministry
- Fear of inviting others to negative church
- Lack enthusiasm for the product – MLC
- Not getting what they need when they come here
- Is there dissention? What is it?
- Did people leave because of “homosexuality proclamation”?

Worship/ Music:

- Start Spanish worship service?
- Stop preaching to the choir.
- Three [Sunday services] 8:00 – traditional service
9:15 – contemporary
10:30 – blended
- Unified worship services
- Positive messages from the sermons.
- Good music.
- Music, music, music, starting with the very young through traditional.
- Remembering the Sabbath and taking time again to calm from day to day.
- Manufacture Joy in our worship services – re, Jerry's sermon on 4/26/09
- Increase church [*worship*] attendance—how can we do it?
- What is missing so people aren't here/ why are people not attending? (2)
- Paperless bulletins? Use Overhead projector/screen – cheaper than bulletins
- Worship services – need more direction of standing, sitting, & singing
- Worship
- Inspiring worship service
- Familiarity draw: Bring more traditional hymns, things we heard & learned

Youth:

- Future lies in the children - #1 thing to focus on
- Increase involvement in Sunday school
- Children – make them an integral part of the church – more ways for them to serve & to be involved
- Involving teenage youth
- Activities for younger children
- Youth activities on a frequent basis: movies, bowling, etc.
- Youth events