

Moving Forward Together in Faith

June 4, 2009 Meeting Summary

Theme Definitions and Priorities

The evening of June 4, nearly 60 members of MLC—including members of the staff and Council—gathered to continue the process of Moving Forward Together in Faith that was begun on April 26. Connie Kilmark, Vice President of our Synod, facilitated a deeper exploration of themes that had emerged from the April meeting (in response to the question, “*What are the three most important steps we need to take as a congregation to move forward?*”). As a reminder, those seven themes were:

- Pastor and Leadership Staff – Lead the Vision and Set the Climate of MLC
- Congregational Life
- Youth and Family
- Worship
- Our Greater Community: Service / Evangelism / Mission
- Finances and Stewardship
- Marketing and Demographics

At the June 4 follow up meeting, tables of participants were randomly assigned one of the seven themes and worked together to define what that theme means at MLC, including characteristics and indicators of success. The work of each table was then shared with the whole group, and each participant was asked to prioritize the themes by choosing their own top three priorities. When the results were tallied, four themes emerged as ones around which work groups will continue right away:

- Pastor and Leadership Staff
- Our Greater Community
- Youth and Family
- Congregational Life

It was found that many of the characteristics and indicators of success that were identified at the “Congregational Life” tables aligned with the work and direction of the existing Natural Church Development group. The recommendation was made that the Congregational Life notes be passed on to the NCD group for consideration and further action. The intention is that work groups will form around the other three priorities.

The next meeting for Moving Forward Together in Faith is scheduled for Sunday, June 28, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., in the Family Life Center. Everyone is invited. You do not need to have attended either of the first two meetings to attend and participate. We once again will have the blessing of Connie Kilmark as a facilitator, and she will take us to the next level of discussion with the three identified priorities. Work groups around the topics of Pastor and Leadership Staff, Our Greater Community and Youth and Family will begin the process of identifying specific issues that need to be addressed, with the ultimate outcome of creating a work plan. If you are interested in being actively engaged in how MLC is moving forward together in faith, please plan to attend. Light refreshments will be available. Childcare will be provided.

Moving Forward Together in Faith

This section of the summary contains the definitions written by each of the nine table groups of meeting participants. Participants used these definitions to prioritize the themes. All seven themes are important to the ministry of McFarland Lutheran Church. Prioritization simply gives us the means to begin working on several of the themes. The remaining themes will be revisited in the future.

THEME: Pastor and Leadership Staff – Lead the Vision and Set the Climate of McFarland Lutheran Church

Centering statement: Guide worship and increase understanding of scriptures. Keep congregation focused on mission statement of MLC and ELCA. Be witnesses to the love of God and joy and peace of knowing Jesus.

Characteristics:

- ◇ Knowledgeable and caring leaders
- ◇ Continuity in Council – regular council meetings, report to congregation and chance for discussion
- ◇ Vision and goals that are communicated
- ◇ Facilitate, not dictate, use suggestions of others
- ◇ Have enough time to get to know and support each other

Indicators:

- ◇ Increase in volunteer participation
- ◇ Increase in membership, worship attendance and communion
- ◇ Add chairs to sanctuary
- ◇ Increase in pledges and amount of pledges
- ◇ Increase committee work on mission statement

THEME: Congregational Life (two tables worked on this theme, so two definitions follow)

Definition A

Centering statement: To grow together as a community of faith, we believe that congregational life means building relationships between members to grow together in understanding Christ's teachings and how these teachings are calling us to relate to and support one another.

Characteristics:

- ◇ Reach out to others often and consistently
- ◇ Invite and involve people in small groups

Moving Forward Together in Faith

- ◇ Support One another

Indicators:

- ◇ Membership growth
- ◇ Increase in number of small groups
- ◇ More involvement of members in “church”
- ◇ Growth in giving of time, talent, treasure

Definition B

Centering statement: Congregational Life means:

- ◇ Acceptance
- ◇ Help one another to grow in faith
- ◇ Connecting in small(er) groups
- ◇ Get to more people
- ◇ Build relationships with other in congregation
- ◇ Reaching members—stewardship
- ◇ Enthusiasm

Characteristics:

- ◇ More opportunities to make connections with others
- ◇ Bible study classes
- ◇ More education classes—human interest, etc.
- ◇ Fellowship
- ◇ All member visits- minimum of 2 people go on visits
- ◇ Volunteerism

Indicators:

- ◇ Small groups grow
- ◇ Enthusiasm returns
- ◇ More dollars
- ◇ More of a family feeling

THEME: Youth and Family

Centering statement: not listed on large sheet.

Characteristics:

- ◇ Christian home atmosphere
- ◇ Wholesome youth activities
- ◇ Dedicating time as a family to renew, nurture and grow towards God’s will for our lives
- ◇ Intergenerational involvement

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- ◇ Spread the word/invite people to come
- ◇ Youth oriented Pastor
- ◇ Good family ministry to further the mission of MLC

Indicators: not listed on large sheet.

THEME: Worship/Music

Centering statement: Is the focal point of congregational life. It is: coming together, unites minds, hearts and voices in praise and devotion to god. It enriches personal practices.

Characteristics:

- ◇ Space conducive
- ◇ Worship leaders proclaim Gospel in inspiring ways
- ◇ Enthusiastic participants
- ◇ Worship Leaders support liturgy, music and worship
- ◇ Safe, nurturing, challenging environment where we hear Christ's teachings delivered in positive and powerful manner
- ◇ Variety of space, time, and format
- ◇ Opportunities for broader and deeper participation
- ◇ More children participating (singing)
- ◇ All parts of service of highest quality and reviewed regularly

Indicators:

- ◇ Leave service uplifted and ready to go out as Christ in the world
- ◇ Measurable attendance increase
- ◇ Full choirs – voices cover parts for special music
- ◇ Viable youth and kids choir – regular and leader
- ◇ Adult class increases participation
- ◇ New people involved in services
- ◇ Spiritually fed and enlivened
- ◇ Giving and benevolences increase – meet financial commitments

THEME: Our Greater Community: Service/ Evangelism/Mission (2 tables worked on theme)

Definition A

Centering statement: To grow -

- ◇ Recognize we are family of God, willing to help each other
- ◇ Need outreach to actives and inactives

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- ◇ Evangelism should be intentional
- ◇ Provide opportunities of visit for unchurched

Characteristics:

- ◇ Encourage participation in classes
- ◇ Means of making contacts one-on-one with inactive
- ◇ Training members to properly contact members
- ◇ Bibl study for evangelism
- ◇ Establish a "Spiritual 911"

Indicators:

- ◇ Frequently seeing new faces
- ◇ Increased membership
- ◇ Greater use of Family Life Center
- ◇ Have members thinking well of MLC
- ◇ Track service done by members

Definition B

Centering statement: Create a sense of community within our congregation that is multi-generational and inviting to outreach to non-members.

Characteristics:

- ◇ Multi-generational service projects
- ◇ Centered faith
- ◇ Fulltime staff to coordinate volunteers
- ◇ Leadership and member will to serve
- ◇ Community fundraisers and "faith raisers"

Indicators:

- ◇ Measurable increase in activities, attendance, stewardship/giving and a stable budget
- ◇ More members volunteering and actively participating

THEME: Finances and Stewardship

Centering statement: Means a long term commitment to learn and practice what the Bible teaches about finance and stewardship.

Characteristics:

- ◇ Fundraising through the crisis, then eventually expanding our support for outside ministry
- ◇ Inspiring ways of communicating about stewardship and personal finance

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- ◇ Personal finance classes for instance "Dave Ramsey"

Indicators: Not listed on large sheet.

THEME: Marketing, Demographics and Membership Roll

Centering statement: Marketing means how we define and identify who we are, and making that known to internal and external communities.

Characteristics:

- ◇ An every member visit (internal)
- ◇ Committed and trained steering committee and volunteers
- ◇ Market to the external community through events that invite people in and tell them who we are

Indicators: Not listed on large sheet.