

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

A Plan for Future Ministry

We recognize that the kingdom of God often causes us to look back at what God has wondrously accomplished in the past. However, throughout history the people of God have also lived in excited anticipation of God's next mighty act. We know the world/life is characterized by change. In an effort to confirm what the focus of the kingdom of God is and how God describes the mission of God's people/the church, our congregation council looked at eight pages of texts, basically immersing ourselves in the Word. Having that sense of what the kingdom is about, we took five descriptive terms:

1. **Gracious Hospitality**
2. **Meaningful Worship**
3. **Relevant Learning**
4. **Expansive Service**
5. **Overflowing Generosity**

...and compared those concepts to the Word of God. We agreed they embodied what we read and what we have experienced in or being children/servants of God.

Taking those five descriptions we prayed and met a number of times to offer ideas as to how we could put those concepts into practice. We made a concerted effort to not look back to past periods of ministry because we are certain God is trying to do new things through us. The basics of faith remain our foundation, but we are open; we trust; we believe God is seeking to act through us to bring about a ministry which is relevant for this period in history.

We present to you now the most immediate action steps for each of those five core elements of Our Savior's ministry:

Gracious Hospitality – This dimension of our ministry is the need to effectively communicate with one another – not only the good news of God's grace but to meet people where they are in their joys and in their sorrows – encouraging both personal and spiritual growth in whatever way necessary. We realize that new media is a way of communicating the ministry we do in a culture and at a time in which most people are utilizing various technology to access the bulk of their information. We want to make use of such means and opportunities. We want to show and tell people about our ministry. You may have noticed that the messages on our outdoor signs have been changing in terms of frequency and the depth of the messages conveyed. We will be intentional and consistent in our communication about the kingdom of God. We plan to use local media publicity to let others know about our ministry activities and worship services. We want to reach as many people as possible. Additionally we are considering holding some outdoor services to capitalize on the excitement that could generate while acknowledging the perception it will give to those driving by and may think 'Hey, I'd like to be a part of that!' Another opportunity that we have is with regard to the many groups that meet in our facility - we have already started to inform and invite them to participate in this ministry and will continue to reach out to the many people who come into our building every week.

1. **Robust use of all media platforms including (but not limited to)**
 - www.oursaviorschurch.org
 - Facebook
 - YouTube
 - Sanctuary screens
 - Creating an app
2. **Using our outdoor signs**
3. **Maximizing our exposure via publicity and advertisement**
4. **Holding outdoor services**
5. **Communication with all the groups that meet in our facility**

Meaningful Worship – Worship is our way of expressing our love for God, worshiping together also connects us to one another. In Matthew 15:8 Jesus described many of the people of his day – ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me’. We acknowledge the need to ensure that people understand what we do and why we do it. Many in society aren’t Christian. At colleges, many freshman are revealing they are not affiliated; they do not belong to any church. So, we must explain and teach. We cannot assume the people who walk through our doors and sit in the pews with us know what Christianity is. To that end, we will be developing a very clear description of our ministry – who we are and what we believe. Why do we have three readings in our services? Why do we have confession? We are pleased with the variety of ways we worship which reflect the diversity of God’s kingdom. We will work to continue to grow in that diversity in some specific ways: In our music ministry we choose hymns that are hundreds of years old as well as the latest Christian songs on the radio. We already use a variety of instruments and we’re very excited to begin using the two new baby grand pianos! We are always looking for new instruments and musicians, so if that is your gift, please consider serving in that capacity. We will encourage and make it possible for more people to help out by serving as greeters, lay assistants, readers and ushers. For those of you who have been serving in these roles, we thank you. Others will have an opportunity to sign up for these various worship tasks on clipboards that we will circulate during our worship services every few months. Lastly, we know that pictures and video can be a powerful tool to communicate important information much like the ELCA Malaria campaign video or a video about the retreats at Lutheran Outdoors Ministries Center. We will seek to use the screens to broaden people’s awareness of all we do.

1. **Clear and concise description of our ministry**
2. **Diversity in our worship services**
 - **Offering a variety of music**
 - **Utilizing a wide range of instruments**
 - **Encouraging greater participation**
 - **Expanded use of video**

Relevant Learning – Opportunities to mature in our faith is important and one way we’ve identified is to expand our education ministry by offering “Life Management” classes to underscore that we are interested in the whole person. We want to help everyone be better

managers of the resources God has entrusted with us. These classes will be open to anyone interested in learning! We remain committed to offering Sunday morning classes and confirmation instruction as well as other opportunities to teach the Word of God in ways which relate to our everyday lives. Twice yearly retreats to Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center will continue to be provided as a way to alter our usual routine of life and experience the beauty of God's world as we take advantage of opportunities for spiritual growth.

1. **Offer Life Management classes**
 - **Automotive**
 - **First Aid**
 - **Wills Awareness**
 - **Extended Care/Nursing Home Considerations**
 - **Financial Management**
 - **Food Possibilities**
2. **Adult bible studies**
3. **Christian Education**
4. **Confirmation instruction**
5. **Retreats**

Expansive Service – Another essential component of our ministry is the desire to share the good news of Jesus and serve our Lord in new ways. We will continue to offer opportunities to support our mission partners by taking trips to Feed My Starving Children, to help pack food for malnourished children or helping with the Hearts in Motion Resale Shop in Munster, Indiana to support their efforts to serve the needs of people in the United States and other countries. We plan to give more attention and support to our long standing mission groups: Yarn Over Missions who make prayer shawls and other knitted and crocheted items of need; Sewing Friends who make quilts for Lutheran World Relief and our food pantry through which we are committed to feeding those in our immediate community. We also believe it is important to continue offering mission trips to Living Waters Lutheran Church in Cherokee, NC as a wonderful way to share God's love while strengthening our understanding and appreciation of different cultures within God's vast kingdom. We would like to grow in our support of the overall mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America because of the vast ministries our Church carries out. All of these ministries are the ministry we do; an extension of who we are; God acting through us to meet the needs of others; ways in which we share God's love.

“The act of philanthropy is a spiritual act, an expression of caring for one's fellow human beings. It is a belief in the future and that the future can be good. It is investing in that future. It is helping to make the dream come true.” – Arthur C. Frantzreb

1. **Mission partnerships**
2. **Yarn Over Missions**
3. **Sewing Friends**
4. **Our Savior's food pantry**
5. **Mission trips**

Overflowing Generosity – Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God and he connected another commandment to this – we are also to love others. God places no boundaries or limitations on such love, but invites us to extend God’s love to the whole world. God is so gracious to us, so through who we are and our lifestyles, we are to point others to God. One thing the people of God have always done is to communicate God's successes; God’s loving and saving activity of our behalf! We can certainly list all of the property improvements of the recent past and those improvements can enhance and support our ministry, but more importantly we have specific examples of people's spiritual growth; the needs of people being met. Those stories are the true measure of our ministry and we will make a special and concerted effort to share those stories. Through media and on a personal level we will talk about our Living Lord; the power of the Holy Spirit; the mighty acts of God. We will communicate God’s successes through Our Savior’s:

1. **During worship**
2. **Through videos**
3. **Inclusion on the web and social media**
4. **In various publications**

Summation – All that you have just read – our plan – is built upon the foundation of our personal relationship with our Lord; our continual praying; our faithful worship; our growing in our understanding of God and our sharing life with one another. We are excited to continue to set these ideas into motion and it is our hope that we will each take some time to reflect and listen to God’s Spirit within us. To respond by being more active participants in this ministry. We are all a part of the eternal kingdom of God and now is our time to work; now is our time to let the Light shine through us; now is the time for us to make a difference; now is the time for us to go out into the world and gather the harvest of people who long for the salvation of God – to experience the abundant life which comes through Jesus, just as we have received and are living it. We have already embarked upon this plan. Things are already moving in a forward direction. We believe God is leading us and we are following. We are already seeing the fruit produced by our ministry. There is much more for us to do and we, as the leadership, are committed to doing it. We invite you to join us!

As Martin Luther often asked ‘*What does this mean for us?*’

1. **Be involved, don’t stay on the sidelines**
2. **Commit to God’s kingdom/something bigger than all of us**
3. **Like Jesus our Lord, serve rather than being served**
4. **Find a way and a place to serve God**
5. **Remember to let God’s light shine through you as a way of enlightening and guiding others**

May we prayerfully consider our commitments as individuals, households and as a congregation!