

### ***First Lutheran Church Visioning***

*“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.” Matthew 28:19-20a*

*“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Ephesians 2:10*

#### Process for Developing a Vision Statement for our Congregation:

In July 2008, members of the church council gathered for a weekend retreat at which we began the process of creating a vision for the ministries of our congregation. This process is intended to result in a *Vision Statement for First Lutheran Church*, to accompany our *Mission Statement*, which is “*Gather in Faith...Grow Through Grace...Share the Good News of Jesus Christ.*”

A Mission Statement tells us why we exist. Both Matthew 28:19-20 and Ephesians 2:10 are examples of “mission statements” from the bible. Mission statements remain true over time. A Vision Statement on the other hand, is intended to give guidance to specific ministries of a congregation. It is, or should be, an “action statement.” A vision statement guides a congregation over a shorter time period, in that it helps create specific goals for our ministries. Therefore, vision statements are reviewed periodically, and occasionally revised. A vision statement for us might be: “*connected to our Lutheran heritage, and God’s promised filled future, we strive to be a teaching, worshipping and serving congregation reflecting the mind and manner of Jesus in all we do.*” Or a vision statement might be: “*First Lutheran Church is a Christian congregation dedicated to informing, involving, and integrating all generations into God’s Word and world.*”

In our visioning retreat, we also talked about core values of our congregation. Core values are the things which members show a willingness to participate in and maintain through their time, talent and financial support.

#### Some of those Core Values we identified were:

- The Lutheran teaching of “Christ Alone, Faith Alone, Grace Alone”
- Christian education for all ages, feeding our mind with Christ
- Lutheran worship!
- Support of seminary education for our members
- The church as a meeting place for our members and community
- Fellowship of members exemplified by our Fair Stand and Hostfest activities
- Visible community involvement and leadership in civic activities
- Our facilities, making them among the best in the area

Those are activities or values that will always generate support, though perhaps in different ways over time. Eliminating or significantly altering any of these things would create anxiety in the congregation, even conflict. We would appear to “*be losing our moorings*” if we walked away from these.

The next step in our retreat was developing goals for our ministries. These are in the development stage, really the “brainstorming or dreaming” phase, but these goals would be “SMART” that is they would be Specific, Measurable, Accountable, Realistic, and contain a Time frame for accomplishment. These would be the objectives that our council, committees, auxiliary organizations, and ministry staff together would be involved in pursuing, along of course, with you.

By area of council responsibility, according to our constitution, we identified these prospective goals.

#### OUTREACHING COMMITTEES:

1. Worship Committee
  - Increase attendance in weekly worship by 10% per year for three years
  - Increase members participating as worship leaders by 10% over three years
  - Adopt a theology of worship that keeps to our Lutheran heritage but seeks new expressions of it

2. Education Committee
  - 150 adults involved in a small group study by 2010
  - Adopt a comprehensive approach of integrating primary, confirmation and post confirmation Christian education
  - Provide more members with a “daily moment with Christ” through various mediums, such as web based materials
3. Evangelism Committee
  - Equip members to share their faith in Jesus Christ in conversation and by invitation to worship
  - Create an intentional program of welcoming new and prospective members of our congregation that involves lay and pastoral contact
  - Make First Lutheran and our vision more visible in the community, through signage, TV and radio, print and web-based communications
4. Social Ministries
  - Establish a Social Ministry and Missions committee
  - Increase giving to church wide and affiliated ministries through budgeted giving and special congregational offerings with a goal of 10% of annual income dedicated to these ministries

#### STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEES

1. Giving Committee
  - Increase financial support by 10% by 2010, and maintain growth of between 2-3% thereafter
  - Conduct a three-year intensive stewardship education campaign to accomplish these goals
  - Plan and host an annual servant fair in conjunction with our traditional fall “Rally Sunday” to both invite and inform members of our ministries
2. Finance Committee
  - Maintain overview of budgeting process so that ministry funding is in line with congregational mission and vision
  - Develop a coordinated master plan for budgeting so that the goals of our ministries are not under-funded or over-funded
  - Continue to strengthen and simplify our financial reporting to the congregation
3. Property Committee
  - Develop a master plan for our facilities, including prioritization of capital improvements
  - Consult with finance and giving committees regularly so that property maintenance is adequately budgeted
4. Congregational Life Committee
  - Plan at least 3 congregational wide social events each year, Winter, Spring, and Summer
  - Develop and support a congregation wide ministry of compassion and care giving to sustain the work of the gospel for people in need
  - Develop an integrated youth ministry that involves our youth in every phase of our congregational life, and is grounded in Lutheran heritage of preparing them for their future vocations

These “goals” of the congregation, once prayed over, discussed, refined, and adopted, would then be communicated to all ministry staff as the guiding principles of their efforts. It would also be communicated to all committees, and the church council would review the work of the committees regularly to see if goals are being met, need further effort and resources, need to be modified, or have failed and need to be discarded. This is as far as we went with our process last summer. I look forward to taking this process up again with our new council over the coming year.

Because of a cross,  
Pastor Ken Nelson