

Climb the Mount: Mt. Tabor's Vision for Ministry
November 2006

This year Mt. Tabor celebrates 120 years of "Serving for Jesus' sake". As we remember what we accomplished in the yesterday of past decades, we consider who we are today to plan our ministries for tomorrow's months and years. Using the opening words of our mission statement, first and foremost "*The People of Mt. Tabor Lutheran Church are called by God through Baptism to minister in our world today. We are joined together to celebrate and proclaim the Good News of God's love in Christ.*"

In January 2005, the Congregational Council charged the Long Range Planning Committee with the task of developing a ten-year plan for our congregation's ministries to be presented at the March 2006 Congregational Annual Meeting. During the interim period, the council and committee have discussed the strengths of our current ministries and perceived needs we strive to satisfy. At various points during this process, members of the congregation have been invited to participate by providing their assessments and ideas for future programs. The resulting document is this Long Range Plan, organized around seven broad goals:

1. *Every member.* We strive to develop a dynamic understanding of church membership and to have every confirmed member of our congregation involved in at least one ministry.
2. *Spiritual journey.* We provide opportunities for Christian education and growth in God's Spirit for all ages.
3. *Capacity for caring.* We serve our members and our community as we support each other in our daily needs as well as supporting others in their need. We desire to reshape and revitalize our capacity for caring.
4. *Word and deed.* We share the good news of Christ and witness to His concern for all people.
5. *Praise and thanksgiving.* We know God in praise and thanksgiving, in prayer and confession, and in the diversity of the community in which we serve.
6. *Brick and mortar.* We must maintain and expand our facilities to have the physical resources to offer current and new programs and ministries.
7. *Lead on.* We strive to make effective use of people's time, skills and talents to provide an overall coordinated ministry.

These goals have been prayerfully considered in the context of the vital ministries we have today. The recommendations presented below are intended to enhance our life as a congregation and to provide more opportunities for spiritual growth and sharing of God's love; they are not meant to replace the ongoing ministries that already nurture and serve so many. As any recommendation is endorsed, it will be assigned to either an existing committee or a new ad hoc committee for further development.

Every Member

We strive to develop a dynamic understanding of church membership and to have every confirmed member of our congregation involved in at least one ministry.

Do you have a job in this church and this community... or do you have a ministry?

There is a difference!

If you're doing it because no one else will, it's a job.

If you're doing it to serve the Lord, it's a ministry.

If you're doing it just well enough to get by, it's a job.

If you're doing it to the best of your ability, it's a ministry.

If you'll do it only so long as it doesn't interfere with other activities, it's a job.

If you're committed to staying with it even when it means letting go of other things, it's a ministry.

If you quit because no one praised you or thanked you, it's a job.

If you stay with it even though no one else seems to notice, it's a ministry.

If you do it because someone else said it needs to be done, it's a job.

If you're doing it because you are convinced it needs to be done, it's a ministry.

It's hard to get excited about a job.

It's impossible not to get excited about a ministry.

If your concern is success, it's a job.

If your concern is faithfulness, it's a ministry.

People may say "well done" when you do your job.

The Lord will say "well done" when you complete your ministry.

An average church is filled with people doing jobs.

A great church is filled with people doing ministry.

Anonymous

The first goal is an overarching goal for many of the recommendations in this vision. We want to motivate every individual to use his/her talents in some ministry, in some aspect of our congregational presence. Church membership is more than having one's name on a roster and occasionally writing a check. Membership is being a minister and sharing one's gifts with fellow members and with those in need around us. Each of us is called to minister in our world today. As we develop a dynamic understanding of membership and motivate every member to choose a ministry, we will develop a dynamic, comprehensive set of ministries to address the physical and spiritual needs of our members and our community.

Objectives:

1. To encourage continuous stewardship of money, time and talent
2. To have every member involved in some ministry of the congregation

Specific Action Plans:

- Complete a skills inventory of members (Target Winter 2007; coordinated by Stewardship Committee with input and support from staff and from committees utilizing volunteers with various skills)
- Utilize a spiritual gifts inventory to empower members for particular ministries (See also *Spiritual Journey*. Need to clarify goal of spiritual gifts inventory. Information for staff

and council or for personal growth – or both? Target Spring 2007; led by 2006-2007 seminary intern)

- Develop a Director of Volunteer Ministries position to facilitate identification of appropriate ministries for members based on their skills and members whose skills match a particular ministry need (Target 2008 as volunteer position, 2010 as staff position; resources could depend on decision about seminary intern program – *Lead On*)

See also:

- *Praise and Thanksgiving* objectives and action plans related to increased worship opportunities and participation.
- *Capacity for Caring* action plan to provide transportation to church events

Indicators:

- By Fall 2007, have a completed skills inventory and/or spiritual gifts inventory from at least 250 members.
- By completion of Fall 2007 stewardship campaign, have financial pledges from at least 220 family units
- By 2012, the average weekly worship attendance will be at least 40% of the baptized membership

Spiritual Journey

We provide opportunities for Christian education and growth in God's Spirit for all ages.

Many of our current programs address the spiritual journey we each travel. Our children and youth programs have attracted many families into our membership. In a small group setting, the adult Sunday School classes offer fellowship and loving care that result in lasting friendships and support in times of personal need. Our Women of the ELCA organization provides both opportunities for spiritual growth and for service activities. However, every person grows differently, and additional ministries are needed to address the evolving needs of our membership.

Objectives:

1. To develop both social and spiritually enriching programs for young adults
2. To develop a variety of programs to address personal spiritual growth and needs, including short-term Bible studies in alternative formats or settings, longer-term intensive Bible study, spiritual growth inventory programming, and support groups addressing life events such as marriage, parenting, divorce and death
3. To pass on the faith by encouraging teachers, parents and other adults to share their faith stories with our children and to demonstrate the community of faith to which we commit at each child's baptism.
4. To develop an ongoing series of cluster events, which could include a defined program such as the stewardship cottage meetings or could focus on the fellowship.
5. To revitalize Lutheran Men in Mission

Action Plans:

- Planning meeting to develop core leadership group and strategy to develop activities for young adults (Target Spring 2007; coordinated by staff)
- Develop program leading to spiritual gifts inventory (Target Spring 2007)
- Sponsor regular Bible studies in a variety of formats and settings (e.g., short-term topical studies, longer-term intensive studies; target at least 2 short-term studies per year and an intensive study by Fall 2007)
- Develop and sponsor at least two life event workshops or activities per year (topics such as marriage enrichment, parenting, divorce and death)
- Sponsor at least 4 events per year targeting young adults (e.g., college students, young singles, newly married couples; possible social events include Da Vinci treasure hunt, whitewater rafting, progressive dinner)
- Identify area within Ministry Team concept for young adult ministries
- Explore interest in developing Lutheran Men in Mission group (Target Fall 2007; see also mission activities in *Word and Deed*)
- Explore how clusters used for 2004 and 2005 stewardship campaigns can be used to encourage continuing fellowship activities (Target Fall 2008)

Also see *Capacity for Caring* (Health and Wellness initiative, care teams)

Indicators:

- Number of events and participants for young adult activities
- Number of participants in Bible studies
- Number of participants in life events workshops and activities
- Development of cluster fellowship program
- Establishment of local Lutheran Men in Mission group

Capacity for Caring

*We serve our members and our community as we support each other
in our daily needs as well as supporting others in their need.
We desire to reshape and revitalize our capacity for caring.*

Many of the small groups within Mt. Tabor (e.g., Sunday School classes; WELCA, especially circles; Ladies Aid) actively reach out to our older members with special needs. However, there are few congregation-wide initiatives to respond to the practical and physical needs around us, both among our members and in the community at large.

Objectives:

1. To offer more support for our older members and other shut-ins by checking on them regularly, visiting, and providing transportation to church events
2. To conduct an ADA review of the facilities for modifications to the facilities to make our church more welcoming to those with physical limitations (e.g., exterior lighting, place for wheelchair, access to communion; implementation of recommended changes addressed in *Brick and Mortar*)

3. To develop the current health and wellness initiative, including a care team ministry, to determine what care giving ministries are needed in our community that we can provide
4. To explore the potential demand for and requirements of a preschool and/or after school program, with the understanding that any such program would start small (e.g., organized play groups or mother's morning out program) and grow as the demand increased.
5. To explore the potential demand for and requirements of a respite care program

Action Plans:

- Establish task force to inventory current activities for older members and shut-ins and assess need for additional services such as regular phone calls, visitation, and transportation
- Organize system to provide transportation to Sunday services (with potential expansion to other church activities depending on interest)
- ADA review of facility (complete by November 2007; responsibility of Health and Wellness Committee; contact Julie Ann Jones for referral?)
- Implement the care team ministry
- Apply to either Mt. Tabor Endowment Fund or to SC Synod Endowment Fund for funds to support a feasibility study to develop an on-site respite care program (Target 2008; note that any substantial activity might require renovations or new facilities; see *Brick and Mortar*)
- Apply to either Mt. Tabor Endowment Fund or to SC Synod Endowment Fund for funds to support a feasibility study to develop a preschool program (Target 2009; note that any substantial activity might require renovations or new facilities; see *Brick and Mortar*)

Indicators:

- Inventory of programs/activities for older adults; recommendations for expanded activities
- Average number of members for whom transportation is provided for Sunday worship services
- Number of volunteers participating in Care Teams; number of members served by Care Teams

Word and Deed

We share the good news of Christ and witness to His concern for all people.

The names of two of our Sunday School classes reflect our call to live our faith in word and deed, every day and in every place. We are each daily disciples of Jesus Christ, called to share his message on a daily basis. We are each Monday ministers, charged to serve on Monday after our worship on Sunday. As our membership expands geographically, we must be intentional about building and maintaining connections with our local neighborhood.

Objectives:

1. To develop recreational programs, perhaps in collaboration with another local congregation
2. To develop a "soup kitchen" program targeting day laborers and others in the community

3. To encourage more material and volunteer support for local community ministries such as God's Helping Hands.
4. To expand current mission programs to mission projects for all ages, ranging from a local work day to the weeklong summer programs that may be local, regional or international.
5. To continue support for the English as a Second Language program, including identifying strategies to increase participation, and to explore demand for Spanish as a Second Language.
6. To develop a comprehensive evangelism program from first visit to Mt. Tabor through the first year of membership
7. To have a positive growth trend in membership over the next ten years

Action Plans:

- Evangelism program for potential and new members (Target Spring 2007)
- Reactivate English as a second language program (Willie Wise, Pastor Jerry, Ray Conrad; target Spring 2007)
- Identify and publicize material and volunteer needs at specific local community agencies such as God's Helping Hands; coordinate collection drives and volunteer work days as needed (Target Fall 2007, coordinated by Service Committee)
- Sponsor or participate in two Saturday workdays in 2007, e.g., Brookland Blitz or Providence Presbyterian Habitat project. (May also be coordinated with development of Lutheran Men in Mission; see *Spiritual Journey*)
- Continue monthly lunch program; coordinate with other local churches. Expand frequency when kitchen facility renovated (see *Brick and Mortar*).
- Participate in regional mission program in 2008 (e.g., Habitat program on Gulf Coast)
- Explore development of Spanish as a second language program (Target Fall 2008)
- Explore options for sponsoring recreational teams or participating in teams sponsored by other community congregations (Target 2010 for Mt. Tabor teams; likely will require facilities – see *Brick and Mortar*).
- Explore participation in international mission work by 2010.

See also *Every Member* initiatives.

Indicators:

- Number of members volunteering at local agencies
- Money and materials donated through church to local agencies
- Average number of participants at monthly lunch
- Number of participants in local workdays
- Number of participants in ESL (volunteers and students)
- Number of new members (Target: positive growth trend through 2016)

Praise and Thanksgiving

*We know God in praise and thanksgiving, in prayer and confession,
and in the diversity of the community in which we serve.*

The worship services and music programs of Mt. Tabor attract members and visitors alike. Of the many areas of ministry we have explored, worship and music are probably the most highly praised by our members. As we consider the diversity of our membership, the diversity of our community and the diversity of resources available to us, there is potential to involve more individuals in our worship and music opportunities, both among our membership and among those in our community who are not blessed with a church home.

Objectives:

1. To develop alternative styles and/or settings for worship
2. To explore strategies to increase participation in our choirs
3. To plan a successful transition to a new book of worship, including thoughtful consideration of how to best utilize the worship bulletin with increasing electronic resources
4. To increase the number of members who assist in various aspects of the worship service (e.g., lector, acolyte, crucifer, greeter, usher, nursery)
5. To explore more non-musical opportunities for Music and the Arts and to consider establishing an endowment to support these activities

Specific Action Plans:

- Provide training sessions for worship assistants (Target Fall 2007)
- Develop opportunities for limited term commitment choir participation
- Explore physical arrangements for choirs (current chancel arrangement is self-limiting)
- Develop Praise Band with regular participation in worship opportunities (Target Fall 2007)
- Have at least one non-musical Music & Arts program by 2008-2009.

Indicators:

- Number of members assisting with worship
- Number of participants in choirs
- Use of electronic resources for worship bulletin
- Music and the Arts schedule
- Addition of alternative styles/settings for worship

Brick and Mortar

*We must maintain and expand our facilities to have the physical resources
to offer current and new programs and ministries.*

As we explore new opportunities for ministry, we often think of the new physical space we might need. Though the decades, God has blessed us with the resources and skills to construct the beautiful sanctuary and substantial other space of our current physical campus. Our good stewardship requires that these facilities must be strategically maintained in order to be utilized effectively in ministry.

Objectives:

1. To develop a long-term maintenance plan including major repairs/replacements that can be anticipated (e.g., replacing HVAC units and roofs) so we can be financially prepared for these major expenditures
2. To renovate the kitchen to satisfy relevant health and safety standards and to provide an adequate facility to prepare and serve food for any programs
3. To improve our technology resources to provide technology supported learning opportunities (e.g., projection system for PowerPoint presentations).
4. To address any change in the physical plant recommended by the ADA review of the facility (see *Capacity for Caring*), possibly including wheelchair access and system for the hearing impaired in sanctuary
5. To assess the current physical facilities, including two main buildings and three houses, for most efficient use for our needs in context of anticipated repairs and renovations
6. To construct a new building with location and type of space to reflect strategic decisions related to ministry growth. Possible types of space include gymnasium (see *Word and Deed*), space for civic groups, rooms for various size classes and adult learning opportunities (see *Spiritual Journey*), day care center and respite care (see *Word and Deed*). Even without substantial growth in programs there is need for a gymnasium or similar large, multipurpose space and varied size classroom-type spaces for classes and community groups

Specific Action Plans:

- Develop long-term maintenance plan (Target Spring 2007)
- Renovate kitchen (Target Fall 2007 for planning and design; Fall 2008 for completion)
- Assess current facilities for most efficient use (Target Fall 2007)
- Improve technology resources in additional spaces
- Address changes recommended by ADA review (Target Spring 2008)
- Construct new building (Target 2012?)

Indicators:

- Completion of or progress toward above action plans

Lead On

*We strive to make effective use of people's time, skills and talents
to provide an overall coordinated ministry.*

Mt. Tabor is gifted with an extremely talented and committed professional staff and with members willing to offer their time and talents to lead the mission and ministries of our congregation. As we explore how our ministries can evolve and grow, we must also consider how we can support our staff and leadership to enhance communication and coordination among all areas of ministry and to allow for future growth and change.

Objectives:

1. To develop a model for mutual ministries (outside of current personnel committee) to offer support and nurturing to our staff
2. To develop and publicize "job descriptions" for major volunteer roles and committee responsibilities

3. To commit to supporting the seminary intern program for the near future, and then to evaluate whether future resources should be dedicated to the intern program or to a new permanent staff position
4. To explore alternative structures for Congregational Council and committees to enable council to have better communication and coordination between areas of ministry, to provide flexibility for development of new programs, and to encourage more effective use of people's time and talents.

Specific Action Plans:

- Explore need for mutual ministry initiative (i.e., beyond current personnel committee) and models for this to effectively happen (Target Fall 2007)
- Explore alternative structures for Congregational Council and committees (e.g., ministry team approach – see preliminary thoughts below) (Target early Fall 2008 so change can be implemented with new council in January 2009)
- Job descriptions for major volunteer roles, committee responsibilities, etc. (Target Spring 2009 following possible implementation of new structure)
- Evaluate participation in seminary intern program (Target Spring 2008 for fall budget development)

Indicators:

- Completion of or progress toward above action plans

Preliminary Discussion of Congregational Council Structure

One structure that parallels the synod-level structure is organized around Ministry Teams. Each ministry team would include one pastor (or appropriate professional staff), two or three council members and the chairs of any committees or task forces under that team.

Organizations (e.g., WELCA) that currently do not relate to Congregational Council in any way could have a liaison to the appropriate Ministry Team. One possible Ministry Team structure has six teams (and thus two council members each). The groupings below indicate committees and programs that would logically fit with that team. Some task forces would be permanent; some would be short term ad hoc groups to address a specific issue.

Outreach and Communication

- Evangelism in neighborhood and community
- Service (e.g., blood drive, God's Helping Hands, Soup Kitchen)
- Publicity (sign, newspaper, web, etc.)
- Hospitality (visitors)
- Community activities

Word and Sacrament

- *Adult Bible study*
- Worship planning
- Worship support
- Music on the Mount
- Alternative worship

Inreach and Nurture

- Fellowship
- Small group activities
- Mutual ministries
- New members
- Lay ministry coordination
- Visitation
- WELCA
- Lutheran Men in Mission
- Ladies Aid
- Sunshine Club
- Young adults

Facilities and Maintenance

- Property
- Cemetery
- Bus
- Maintenance
- Custodial
- Equipment

Children and Youth

- Learning ministries
- Sing 'n' Celebrate
- Scouting
- Confirmation
- LCY
- Summer camps

Administration

- Personnel
- Financial Secretary
- Finance
- Endowment
- Stewardship
- Internship