

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH CONSULTATION

October 3-5, 2014

Introduction: It has been a privilege to work with the Pastor, leaders and congregation of Zion Lutheran Church. Everyone has been helpful and provided us with all the information that was required for us to conduct this consultation. Our prayer is that God will use this report to motivate the congregation to do great things for God in this community.

Strengths

1. **Mission Potential:** There are tremendous opportunities for mission and ministry right here in this community. There is a large unchurched population here with many needs that are waiting to be met by the resources and people that God has already placed within Zion congregation. To that end, God promises, “For I know the plans I have for you; plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11
2. **Community Activities:** God has already blessed Zion congregation with the creativity, resolve and resources to reach out to the community, particularly in response to the Great Commandment: “Love Your Neighbor as Yourself.” Examples of this include Cherry Street, Grief Share, Recycle Center, a booth at Artist Alley, Christmas Dinner, Indigent Care, etc.
3. **SONshine Preschool:** God has also already blessed Zion with the vision to start a Christian Preschool, where not only member families, but also non-member and unchurched families send their children to learn in a Christian environment and hear about the love of Jesus on a daily basis. In addition, the Preschool Director is a caring, competent Christian leader who, as a member of Zion, understands the opportunities that this ministry affords to reach out to the community.
4. **Pastor Ramsey:** God has blessed Zion with a pastor who is compassionate and caring, has a zeal for mission, and is filled with joy in worship. He is recognized by the congregation as one who has been gifted for teaching children and ministering to the elderly and those in crisis. He also models what it means to be a loving father and husband.
5. **Physical Plant:** Zion Lutheran Church is blessed with facilities and location that afford the congregation tremendous opportunities for living out its mission potential in the community. The church is attractive from the outside and functional on the inside. It is visible and accessible to the community and provides excellent space and place for a wide variety of activities and events.

Concerns

1. **Vision:** “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18). Zion lacks a clear, compelling and unified vision for ministry. This lack of vision is preventing the congregation from reaching its full potential in fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19).

2. Community Outreach: The existing community outreach services and events occurring at Zion do not have as their defined focus and purpose the goal of reaching the lost and unreached, which Jesus identified as His primary mission target (Luke 19:10).
3. Worship: For unchurched guests and visitors who attend worship services at Zion, that service is often the church's only opportunity to make a good first impression. Therefore, when there is contentiousness within the congregation about service times, styles, and music, and when there is a lack of critical mass at many of those services, it is even more difficult for the congregation to attract and retain these unchurched guests. The result is reluctance for members to invite their unchurched and unreached friends, as well as a reduction of the potential joy and blessings God intends for his people in worship.
4. Confusion of Roles: According to Ephesians 4:11-12, it is the Pastor's primary responsibility to "empower God's people for works of service". This means that the members' primary role is to do the ministry and the Pastor's primary role is to lead (which means to provide Word and Sacrament ministry, as well as to equip and train the people to do ministry). Experience and best practices teach that it is also helpful to equip and train volunteer staff to manage and support the various ministries of the congregation. Finally, it is important to provide a system of accountability for both the Pastor and the Lay Leaders of the congregation. However, in many instances here at Zion, the members expect the Pastor to do ministry they have been called to do and/or they have not been properly equipped and trained to do ministry according to their particular passion and giftedness. Both Pastor and people have accepted this unbiblical model. This results in frustration, finger pointing, and ineffectiveness in both mission and ministry.
5. Pastor's Personal Leadership: An important Hinge Factor for opening doors for the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the community is the personal leadership skills exhibited by the Pastor. And yet, these important skills are not taught in seminary, nor are they inherent abilities wholly possessed by most individuals. Pastor Ramsey is blessed with some excellent personal leadership skills, such as the ability to lead his own family and manage his mental, physical, and spiritual well-being. However, he is not so richly blessed in some other areas of personal leadership, such as time-management, organization, and communication.

Prescriptions

1. Vision: Under the leadership of the Pastor and President, Zion Lutheran Church will engage in a comprehensive Visioning Process, using guidelines (People of Passion) provided by TCN. This process will include, but not be limited to, interviews and surveys with people and leaders in the community, prayer walking in targeted areas, and an interpretation of the area demographics. Finally, an outward focused Vision Statement will be written by May 31, 2015 and adopted by the congregation no later than August 15, 2015. The new vision will then be the guiding beacon for all other prescriptions, as well as all existing ministries.
2. Community Outreach: The Pastor will coordinate with the Church Council in leading Zion to:

- Begin at least 3 new Interest Groups, preferably ones that reach out to the congregation's primary ministry target(s), identified through the Visioning Process;
- Conduct a Mission Audit in which each activity/program of the church is evaluated to determine if there is an intentional outreach component. If the answer is no, then such a component must be added.
- Conduct a minimum of 6 Net-Fishing Events. These could include current events and activities, such as VBS, Trunk or Treat, Christmas Dinner, Cherry Street, and Artist Alley and/or new activities, such as Service Project Sundays, Adopt a School, etc. All events must also include opportunities for forming new relationships with unchurched and unreached people and be focused on the identified target(s).

The Mission Audit will be completed by April 30, 2015. Interest Groups will be formed and functioning by September 1, 2015. The Net-Fishing Events will be conducted within 12 months of the adoption of the new outward focused Vision.

3. **Worship:** The Pastor will work with the Board of Elders to recruit a Worship Task Force intended to improve the winsomeness of Zion's worship services while also retaining its biblical and cultural values. The task force will be comprised of the Pastor, at least one Elder, at least one Organist, and at least three other members of the congregation. The activities of this task force will include, but not be limited to:
 - Observing 3 worship services of churches within driving distance that are known for providing inspiring and creative worship settings;
 - Creating a list of "Best Practices & Ideas" for Worship for experimentation by the congregation;
 - Providing a plan for removing some of the pews from the back of the sanctuary thereby creating a more intimate space for worship as well as a more visible space for fellowship.
 Concurrent with the 3 services, where the task force (and the Pastor) will be attending other churches, TCN will provide a worship leader who will introduce the congregation to some new ideas and teaching on worship that could potentially be adopted later by the congregation. The Worship Task Force will be formed no later than January 15, 2015, will complete its work by September 15, 2015, and present its "Best Ideas & Practices" for Worship to the congregation for adoption by October 31, 2015.
4. **Confusion of Roles:** The Pastor will immediately engage a Ministry Coach provided by TCN that will assist him in putting together an appropriate Empowerment Plan for himself and the congregation. In addition, the Pastor, Elders, and Church Council will work through the TCN Skill Builder on Empowerment, beginning no later than January 31, 2015 and finishing no later than May 31. Concurrently, the Pastor and Congregational Chairman will read the book "*Structure Your Church for Mission*" by Les Stroh. They will share their learning with the Church Council and Elders, and in consultation with the TCN Coach, develop an Accountability Plan for church leadership no later than August 31, 2015. Finally, the Church Council, in consultation with TCN, will develop a fair and comprehensive tool for evaluating the Pastor. This tool will be developed and shared with the pastor no later than August 31, 2015. Using this tool, the Pastor will be evaluated annually.
5. **Pastor's Personal Leadership:** Beginning immediately, the Pastor, in consultation with his Coach, will prioritize his ministry duties and delegate appropriate administrative tasks, such

as bulletin preparation, mass communication, scheduling activities and appointments, etc., to the Church Secretary. In addition, the Pastor will work through the TCN Skill Builder on Personal Leadership, finishing no later than March 31, 2015. As part of this process, and in conjunction with his Coach, he will fill out a Daily Time Log and work through the various components on time management and organization. Upon completion of the Skill Builder, the Pastor will write a Personal Leadership Plan, which he will share with the Chairman of the Congregation.

The congregation will vote on accepting or rejecting this report by November 30, 2014. If the report is accepted, TCN commits to “walk along side” Zion Lutheran Church for a minimum of two years to help with the implementation of this report.

Conclusion: We want to thank you for the opportunity to consult with you. We believe your best days as a congregation are ahead of you.

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