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### The Strategic Ministry Planning Decision

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**THE STRATEGIC MINISTRY PLANNING DECISION**

**REV. MITCHELL E. OTTO**

**2005**

**Concordia Seminary**

**St. Louis, Missouri**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rev. Dr. David Peter

DATE

2/3/06

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DATE

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Director, Doctor of Ministry Program  
Rev. Dr. David Peter

DATE

2/3/06

This Work Is Dedicated To:

Mary Jean Dahl-Otto  
Allison Grace Otto  
Daniel Eugene Otto

My Core Group

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## CHAPTER ONE: THE PROJECT INTRODUCED

### The Need

At the age of twenty-five, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Coralville, Iowa is enjoying one of the best times of its life.<sup>1</sup> The congregation is growing, there are no perceptible divisions among its members, and the community in which it resides thrives despite fluctuations in the national economy.<sup>2</sup> In its quarter century history, the congregation has undertaken building projects in each of its three decades, sent one man off to the seminary, trained up leaders for other congregations, participated in the mission work of Christ's Church, and is now celebrating the 2005 opening of Prince of Peace Christian Preschool.

When circumstances are this positive, operations flowing smoothly, the congregation's enthusiasm to tackle future needs and potential problems is understandably low. With a high level of contentment and satisfaction among the church members, convincing the congregation that now is the ideal time for self-examination and possible restructuring for continued success in the future is a slow process. Even though it is becoming clearer to the leadership that the congregation's most pressing need may be one of restructure, the challenge for

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<sup>1</sup> Prince of Peace Lutheran Church is a member congregation of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS). "The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, with 2.5 million baptized members, ranks as the second largest Lutheran church body in North America and the 11th largest denomination in the USA" (<http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=73>). There are 6,160 congregations in the LCMS (<http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=2436>).

<sup>2</sup> The community of Coralville, adjacent to Iowa City, is a part of a metro complex that can be viewed as an island of advanced educational institutions, research facilities, and high tech enterprises among the prosperous farmland that represents Iowa to much of the nation. Fifty-nine percent of Iowa City's population, and 51% of Coralville's population have earned a bachelor's degree or higher. This compares with the national average of 24% and the state average of 21% (<http://www.icgov.org/documents/demoinfo.pdf>).

them is finding within themselves the motivation and willingness to take up the task. With no crisis to push it along, few members are in a hurry to address future needs.

Nevertheless, experience teaches that change will take place. The key is to perceive in the present that a congregation has the ability to prepare for change in the future, even to be able to guide that change along a well thought out path.

After twenty-five years, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church is operating under the same structure that it has relied upon since its birth.<sup>3</sup> On the surface, the structure appears to be working well. Behind the scene, though, it is focused on simply maintaining the congregation as it is, and struggling at that. Instead of preparing for the future of the congregation, the structure simply serves a *status quo* set down years ago. As a result, the weakest and most vulnerable links in the congregation's framework are under increasing stress.

This Major Applied Project seeks to support the congregation's desire to maintain the growth it enjoys and the peace it values. It does not seek to upset the semblance of functionality the congregation believes exists. On the other hand, this project does want to ask the members of the congregation to consider the benefits of placing a greater emphasis today on identifying the needs of the future. This project seeks to challenge the congregation to answer one simple question: Is this not now the opportune time to accomplish self-examination in order to evaluate the congregation's ability to sustain in the future that which it currently values and enjoys? If the answer is, "yes", then, logically, the sooner this process is begun the better.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 19 for a copy of the congregation's constitution.

<sup>4</sup> In his book *The Medici Effect* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2004, pages 168-169), Frans Johansson, in challenging commonly held beliefs, makes the case that there is no way to minimize risk to a person or an organization venturing into new territory. The chances of success can be improved, but risk management—employing such reasoning as waiting for a better time or collecting more resources—is a fallacy and will not decrease the chances of failure. The risk of failure is always present, should even be expected, but should not keep a person or organization from trying something new or something that may propel it forward.

The financial industry has a well-known saying, “People do not plan to fail; people fail to plan.” The saying works. It is a universal truth. Most people realize that they are not purposeful in their financial planning. Most people do almost nothing leaving them at the mercy of chance. They reason, “Since things seem to have worked themselves out in the past, things will hopefully work out by themselves in the future.” They know they could do better, but certain factors, especially their own entrenched behavior, keep them from changing how they conduct their financial planning.<sup>5</sup>

Congregations develop similar attitudes. They deal with crisis when it comes. Between battles and struggles, though, they are content to allow congregational life to settle into a comfortable routine. The choices of the past, often made under unique circumstances, become the future standard operating procedures. No thought is given to the congregation’s ever-changing environment and evolving needs. Under the burden of such a mindset, it becomes difficult for a congregation to meet new needs, think creatively, accept creative people, or become proactive. Even when the advantages to such preparation become clear, because the ruts are so deep, the decision for action during peaceable times stalls.

Yet, these were not the attitudes of the pioneers who founded most congregations. The pioneers had a vision and a long-term purpose in mind. They set down the cornerstones of churches where there were none. They built out of their own personal faith, time, and money a new foundation with the future in mind. Those who inherit a congregation from such pioneers often lose that forward thinking, becoming caretakers and stewards of what others have built.

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<sup>5</sup> Frans Johansson makes the point that people are more likely to hold their position in a certain area, financial or otherwise, the longer they have spent in that position. Within business, he cautions that past expenses and commitment have nothing to do with a decision concerning a future direction. If something is not working, despite any emotional attachment, it should not be held onto for sentimental or egocentric reasons (*The Medici Effect*, pages 176-177).

These later generations do not realize that the established congregation can still be a platform for pioneering, envisioning, planning, and looking out beyond the next yearly budget. Inheritors can become uncomfortable with setting goals and guidelines that push beyond merely maintaining the way things are. They assume that someone else will take care of tomorrow's needs for their role is to faithfully maintain what they were given.<sup>6</sup>

Though only twenty-five years old, the paths and patterns at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church are well established. It is no surprise that any desire for change is quickly tempered by the thought that the governing structure, which has seen the congregation through twenty-five years of times that were often hard, is sufficient. Why change when, after all, the current operational structure is mandated by the congregation's constitution? Add to that the evidence of the congregation's current golden age and, in most people's minds, the argument is made against tampering with the system that has brought them this far.

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church certainly does not stand alone in its aversion to evaluation and potential change. For even the newest members, because they often come from traditionally structured congregations, cannot envision a congregation structured or operating in any other fashion. Even those newer members who come from proactively structured congregations rarely know how their former congregations were organized or motivated.

With so many things going so well, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church is in a strong position to take stock and evaluate its situation. It has the opportunity to shift from a mindset that reacts to circumstances to a mindset that anticipates and sets goals. For behind the scenes, visible to just a few, the stresses are building and the old system is failing. The situation is

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<sup>6</sup> Martin Saarinen's book, *The Life Cycle of a Congregation*, (The Alban Institute: Bethesda, 1986), charts the specific actions and concerns of the members of a congregation through its life.

heading for a point where, if the weak links should let go, the congregation would suffer needlessly.<sup>7</sup>

On the other hand, the argument can be made that there is nothing wrong with the way things are progressing at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. There is truth in this. Prince of Peace Lutheran Church operates much like the great majority of congregations today. There is no reason why the congregation cannot comfortably maintain itself just as it is until the next crisis. If no substantial crisis comes, the congregation can maintain a routine that could last for another generation. Yet, with so many hardworking, faithful, and dedicated members, through purposeful planning, their efforts could be better focused, their stresses relieved, and their future as a congregation openly planned and engaged. Instead of simply enjoying the present smooth waters, content with modest progress, this congregation could choose to be proactive, set its own course, and take bold steps toward the future. For not only would a newly formed mindset and structure give a clearer sense of purpose to the congregation, build greater momentum, but it would also answer some of the hidden fears concerning the troubles of the past.

Therefore, this project seeks to lead the congregation to the point of making one specific decision about its future. The decision is whether to remain as is or to take the steps involved in evaluating itself to determine if it should restructure for the future. The congregation

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<sup>7</sup> Specific symptoms of the increasing stresses include: 1. The Pastor is working up to seven days a week simply to maintain, his schedule overly crowded with maintenance tasks. 2. The position of office secretary has not expanded from its part time status despite the vast increase in work and expectations. 3. The Church Council and Board of Elders have no structure or expectation to plan or look beyond the next budget. 4. The formerly successful Committee System that used to accomplish much of the work of the congregation when the congregation was smaller has fallen into disuse. 5. Ideas and programs which are generated and maintained by individuals succeed only as long as that individual remains interested. 6. Often programs fall into disuse before there is a reaction by the leadership, and even then, the leadership is hampered by perceived limitations. 7. There is no guiding plan or theme that allows the leadership of the congregation to judge if an idea or opportunity is fitted to the goals and talents of the members.



may not desire to take on this process, but if that is its choice, then this project will have assisted in making that decision one that was informed.

*Strategic ministry planning* is the tool that offers the most efficient means by which Prince of Peace Lutheran Church can determine if and how it should make the transition from a reactionary mindset to one that is proactive.<sup>8</sup> This project is to be the means by which the congregation will examine the benefits, options, and opportunities of strategic ministry planning and decide if it is a tool it wants to use.

### **The Purpose**

The specific purpose of this Major Applied Project is to document the congregation's decision process concerning the potential use of strategic ministry planning. It will begin by measuring the congregation's initial understanding of the function and purpose of strategic ministry planning.<sup>9</sup> From the data gathered, the project will then seek to educate the members, where needed, concerning strategic ministry planning as it applies to the congregation's current situation. Once the purpose of strategic ministry planning is understood, the congregation will then be presented with a selection of available specific strategic ministry planning programs. When the congregation makes its decision on whether it will or will not use strategic ministry planning, this project will seek to understand why the congregation made the decisions it did.

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<sup>8</sup> Aubrey Malphurs defines strategic ministry planning, "What is strategic planning? I define it simply as the process of thinking and acting. It involves thinking through and then doing the church's ministry." *Advanced Strategic Planning*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999, page 11.

<sup>9</sup> Strategic ministry planning has been a topic within the congregation since mid 2003.

In a bigger picture, this project will seek to evaluate the process and attitudes involved in making a major congregational decision.

Regardless of the outcome, through this project the researcher and the congregation will gain a better understanding of their values and desires. In effect, this project is in itself a strategic ministry planning process.

### **The Objectives of This Project**

This project's objectives include assessing the congregation's current understanding of its condition, assessing the congregation's initial understanding of the concept of strategic ministry planning, and developing means to further teach the congregation how strategic ministry planning can benefit Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. This project will also seek out the various approaches to strategic planning programs available to the congregation and assess the advantages and disadvantages of each one. This project will then present to the congregation a menu of strategic ministry planning programs in a manner that will allow the congregation, if it desires, to make an informed selection.

When complete, this project will contribute to ministry an example of congregational decision making in choosing a strategic ministry planning program for use in a congregation similar to Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Coralville, Iowa.

### **The Process**

The process will begin with a presentation to the Church Council and the congregational Elders of the purpose and objectives of this project. Their questions will be addressed and their understanding and commitment to this project secured.

The process will continue with confidential interviews with congregational leaders and randomly selected members. The interview questions will assess the subjects' perception of the state of the congregation, their understanding of strategic ministry planning, and their potential willingness to participate and support strategic ministry planning in their church.

Interviews will also be conducted with key synodical personnel in order to assess their understanding of strategic ministry planning, to access any knowledge and insight that they might possess on the subject, and to solicit their recommendations for specific strategic ministry planning programs.

In order to benefit from similar work done in other congregations, several LCMS congregations will be consulted to learn of their experiences and recommendations regarding strategic ministry planning.

In preparation to educate the congregation concerning strategic ministry planning, this researcher will study the applicable strategic ministry planning literature.

Having collected the information on specific strategic ministry planning programs, the various plans and programs will then be compared and their merits analyzed. A presentation will then be developed for delivery to the congregation. It will consist of a selection of strategic ministry planning programs, their strengths and weaknesses, for congregational discussion. Ultimately, a decision will be made as to what program the congregation will use.

Once the congregation has made a decision concerning which program to employ—or has decided not to use any program at this time—the leadership of the congregation and a random selection from those members involved in the decision will be confidentially interviewed to assess what factors were relevant in their decisions.

Throughout this process, a journal will be kept, recording the researcher's experiences and thoughts.

### **The Parameters**

Although spiritual and numerical growth in a congregation is ultimately the work of God (I Corinthians 3:5-9), expanding the Kingdom of God to include others should be a primary goal of a Christian congregation. Though the growth of God's Kingdom is in the hands of the Holy Spirit, each Christian is called to witness their faith in Christ Jesus to others through word and deed. With this in mind:

- It is presupposed in this research project that the mission of the Church is to teach and baptize, thereby spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ in order that all people alienated from God by their sin may receive forgiveness and be reconciled to Him.
- It is presupposed in this research project that it is desirable to see an ever-increasing number of people attend worship, be catechized and nurtured in God's Word, and serve the Church's mission with their time, efforts, and material resources.
- It is presupposed in this research project that God directs the outcome of the sanctified efforts of faithful Christians.
- It is presupposed in this research project that pastors, church councils, and boards of elders are concerned with the spiritual welfare of the members of their congregation. In their concern, they will seek the best means by which to accomplish God's mission for His Church.

- It is presupposed in this research project that the pastor, the church council, the board of elders, and the members will agree before major changes are made to the congregation.
- It is presupposed in this research project that many tools, much of the knowledge, and certain methods developed outside of the church can provide meaningful assistance to a congregation.

## **CHAPTER TWO: THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS**

### **Introduction**

Strategic ministry planning is a formal process through which a congregation can intentionally identify its values, formulate and state the reasons for its existence, and generate plans and goals for the future. Such a process requires a significant commitment, one that needs forethought and guidance.

Strategic ministry planning is not one specific plan or program. It can be the work of a single person, such as a pastor, it can be the responsibility of a small group of people, such as a Church Board, or it can involve the entire parish. This project assumes that the entire parish should be involved both in the decision to enter into strategic ministry planning as well as its implementation. Yet the parish is often a busy place with a wide variety of daily demands upon its finite resources. As such, there must be sound reasoning for a congregation to make the effort to break from its short-term patterns in order to invest a portion of its limited resources in such a process. This reasoning should go beyond such thoughts as “it makes good sense,” or “it works well in business.” Therefore, Christian congregations look to Biblical and doctrinal foundations to gauge the appropriateness of such an undertaking and commitment. For in all things a congregation is to be a faithful steward of God’s gifts, examining its mo-

tives and intentions at all times.<sup>1</sup> In any project, doctrine is a congregation's guide, assisting it to determine if proposed actions, programs, and plans are God-pleasing and profitable to the strengthening of the saints and the growth of His kingdom.<sup>2</sup>

In the same way, this project also seeks to establish its foundations and motivations in the Bible and in doctrine.

Three primary doctrines of the Christian faith apply to this research project.<sup>3</sup> First, the Doctrine of Creation supports this project and a congregation's interest in examining the potential usefulness of strategic ministry planning. The appropriate use of such planning can be a First Article confession of faith in God as the Creator of all things.<sup>4</sup>

Second, the Doctrine of the Church, with a Third Article focus, elaborates on the congregation's potential need for using strategic ministry planning. This doctrine supports a congregation's desire to define a specific path it may follow within the purpose of God's greater

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<sup>1</sup> In 2 Corinthians 13:5, ESV, the Apostle Paul commends such self-examination, "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? —unless indeed you fail to meet the test!"

<sup>2</sup> Christians understand that a congregation's work is God's work and is not limited by human reason or strength. Paul wrote, 2 Corinthians 9:8, ESV, "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work." Christians receive their understanding of God, His Church, and the work of the Church from the Bible. Francis Pieper explains, "We take the position that Holy Scripture, in contradistinction to all other books in the world, is God's own infallible Word and therefore the only source and norm of Christian doctrine." *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), Vol. I, page 3.

<sup>3</sup> Within Lutheranism, and the scope of this project, it is understood that no doctrine can be valid unless it finds its validation in the Biblical Jesus Christ. As David Scare has written, "If the doctrine of justification by grace through faith is the center of Christian theology, than Christology is the foundation upon which rest justification and all the other articles of Faith." *Christology*, (Ft. Wayne: The International Foundation For Lutheran Confessional Research, Inc., 1989) page 1.

<sup>4</sup> The Apostles Creed is often divided into three distinct parts, or Articles, for teaching. The First Article pertains to Creation, the Second to Salvation, and the Third to Sanctification. *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*, (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1986) pages 13-15, 99-168.

kingdom. It shows that it is appropriate for a congregation to want to discover its gifts from the Holy Spirit and apply them to the activities of the Church.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, the Doctrine of Mission, a Second Article concern, grants both approval and, even more so, the focus for a Christian congregation engaged in strategic ministry planning. Without a focus on Christ, congregational activity, including strategic ministry planning, is easily misdirected.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Doctrine of Creation**

The Doctrine of Creation makes it clear that God has given to His Church the First Article<sup>7</sup> gifts needed to carry out its mission and ministry.

When a congregation considers the use of strategic ministry planning the question it must first answer is as follows: can insights and observations that are made in the “secular” realm, such as from sociology, management theory, organizational theory, etc., be applied to the work of the Church? “Secular” here refers to any insight that is received apart from the special revelation found in scripture. Furthermore, can the Church use such worldly tools as strategic ministry planning or should the Church limit itself to that which is propounded upon in Scripture and observed in the created order? Is there theological justification for incorporating into the operation of a congregation a tool like strategic ministry planning?

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<sup>5</sup> The Apostle Paul wrote to the Christian church in Corinth concerning the assurance of God’s gifts to them, but also reminded them of their gifts’ singular focus in the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:4, ESV, “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.”

<sup>6</sup> Just as the Apostle Paul found his motivation and identity in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, so should all Christians and congregations. In 1 Corinthians 2:2, ESV, the Apostle wrote, “For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.”

<sup>7</sup> The First Article of the Apostle’s Creed: “I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.”



Because human reason plays a key role in answering these and other important questions, Lutheran theology divides the use of human reason into the “ministerial” and “magisterial” realms. The magisterial use of reason occurs when human reason is allowed to, “arrogate to itself judgment in things about which it is ignorant and which exceed its comprehension.”<sup>8</sup> Examples of this include the dismissal of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity because it is incomprehensible to human reason, or the dismissal of the divine authorship of the Bible, or the questioning of biblically reported miracles, by the same process of deduction.

As opposed to the magisterial use of reason, the ministerial use of reason is the God-given use of the mind and intellect to navigate through life and creation. Francis Pieper wrote, “It means also the mental or rational nature of man, that is, the capacity of man to receive the thoughts of another into his mind, the ability to perceive and think.”<sup>9</sup> The ministerial use of reason includes the appropriation of the reasonable observations and useful insights of the social sciences. This, for example, is true for many pastoral functions. In doing exegesis, the pastor utilizes the insights of historians and linguists. In homiletics, he uses the insights of rhetoric (communication theory). In teaching, he might use the findings of education theory (such as Piaget’s observations about how children learn). In counseling, he is informed by the findings of psychology.

Keeping this distinction in mind, the Church can use the insights of organizational theorists and management to better organize itself to carry out the ministry and mission God has given it just as long as such insight does not take on a magisterial role. Just as when the printing press and television are properly used as tools through which the Church accom-

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<sup>8</sup> Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. I, page 199.

<sup>9</sup> Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. I. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House), page 197.

plishes its mission, secularly developed strategic ministry planning can also be used in an appropriate manner.

Granted, there is always the danger that such tools may take on a magisterial role in the life of a congregation, but does the danger lie in the tool itself or the way in which it is used? In answer, Gustaf Wingren explains, “It was characteristic of Luther that he conceived of created things as being wholly good and in part as being subject to either man’s use (*usus*) or abuse (*abusus*). In so doing he located sin in man and not in creation.”<sup>10</sup> Though there are secular concepts that have no use within the Church, not every secular tool can be dismissed out of hand.

Related to this discussion is the knowledge that the Christian congregation is not only a spiritual reality but that it is also a sociological reality. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession makes this clear when it states, “The church is not merely an association of outward ties and rites like other civic governments, however, but it is mainly an association of faith and of the Holy Spirit in men’s hearts.”<sup>11</sup> The Church is the living Body of Christ, sustained by Word and Sacrament, but it is also organization “like other civic organizations,” having a sociological manifestation. As an organization, the insights of organizational theory can be helpful. Such insights must remain secondary to the Church and its mission, but they can truly be GOOD for the church and serve the church’s mission, when used with discretion.

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<sup>10</sup> Gustaf Wingren, *Creation and Law*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers), pages 43-44.

<sup>11</sup> T. G. Tappert, T. G., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press), page 169.

## The Doctrine of the Church

The Doctrine of the Church indicates the appropriateness of a congregation to engage in strategic ministry planning.<sup>12</sup> This Doctrine affirms congregational planning and sets its boundaries.

The *Doctrine of the Church* brings together the Creator and His creation in a setting in which they can productively interact.<sup>13</sup> As the ark was to Noah so is the Church a protective haven to Christians today. The Church is a safe and saving place set aside by God within the storm of this world.<sup>14</sup> The Church is a reestablishment of creation as it was meant to be, participation within the physical universe between God and humanity. It is the visible restoration in Jesus Christ of what was broken. It is a tangible expression of what is yet to come as God prepares for the New Creation. Mark Jordan wrote, “The Church is rooted in the whole of the history of God with man; she grows out of the dynamics of the whole of salvation history.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> For clarity, the term “Church”, when capitalized, here signifies the one, universal, congregation of believers in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior not contained within congregational or denominational boundaries. For further information on the uses of the term “church”, see *Luther’s Small Catechism*, (St Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986, pages 153-160).

<sup>13</sup> Matthew 16:18 ESV, “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

<sup>14</sup> The ark is described in Genesis 7:23, ESV, “He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark.” 1 Peter 3:20, ESV, elaborates, “because they formerly did not obey, when God’s patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.”

<sup>15</sup> Mark Jordan, ed., *The Church’s Confession of Faith*, trans. Stephen Arndt, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press), page 214.

## Why Is There A Church?

Strategic ministry planning takes place within the greater Church. As the Church is fully located wherever the Word and Sacraments are properly in use, the local congregation is a selection of Christians acting within a setting established by God.<sup>16</sup> The local congregation has God's gifts to meet their own needs as well as the gifts they need to reach out to others with the Gospel. Therefore, God works through His Church and the local congregation. Mark Jordan wrote, "The gathering of the people of God is, so to speak, God's reaction to the chaos caused by sin."<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the Church, in its local congregations, is the one place on earth where holy planning can take place, where God's will is sought and acted upon and the world is challenged.

## Origins of the Church

The origins of the Christian Church extend back to Adam and Eve.<sup>18</sup> Through the promise of the coming Savior, God established a promise of salvation and life amidst death and destruction.<sup>19</sup> Though God's initial instructions concerning worship were not preserved in written text, in the Bible there exists a clear narrative of the earliest believers worshiping. God must have instructed them in their worship practices. It appears that the earliest worship was a

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<sup>16</sup> *Luther's Small Catechism*, page 156.

<sup>17</sup> Mark Jordan, ed., *The Church's Confession of Faith*, trans. Stephen Arndt, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press), Page 213.

<sup>18</sup> Mark Jordan, ed., *The Church's Confession of Faith* trans. Stephen Arndt, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press), page 212. "The origin of the Church reaches back into the beginnings of mankind's history."

<sup>19</sup> Genesis 3 describes the fall into sin and God's promise of a Savior.

function of the family, though the Bible shows individuals worshipping in the actions of their daily lives.<sup>20</sup>

The family in worship progressed to the nation in worship consisting of the believing descendents of Israel, a people born in slavery. Following their release from Egypt, God designed a central location of their worship in the Tabernacle and its liturgies. The Tabernacle progressed to the Temple in Jerusalem in the time of Solomon. Lost and rebuilt, the Temple was standing, bearing witness to the promise of the coming Savior, when Jesus first entered it. In the arms of Mary and Joseph, when He was 40 days old, Jesus' presence in the Temple signified the end of the promise and beginning of the fulfillment. The temple ceased to exist shortly after Jesus' ascension and the completion of His earthly ministry.

Because of the events of Good Friday, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost, the focus of the Church went from the *promise of the Christ yet to come* to the celebration of Jesus' fulfilling acts of redemption. With Easter, as Mark Jordan wrote, "The Church has her true foundation in the cross and Resurrection of Jesus Christ."<sup>21</sup> It was not a new Church. It was the same Church founded with Adam and Eve. Before Christ came, believers looked to the Savior to come and this faith saved them from damnation. Today Christians look to the Savior who came and are equally saved.

Because the Church is triumphant in Christ Jesus, even standing against the gates of hell itself, the planning that takes place within a congregation is not seen as an act of survival

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<sup>20</sup> Cain and Able built altars. Job sacrificed and prayed for the forgiveness of his family. Abraham set up altars. Isaac gave worship-related names to certain places.

<sup>21</sup> Mark Jordan, ed., *The Church's Confession of Faith* trans. Stephen Arndt, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press), page 213.

or one of modification to meet the times, but an on-going work in Christ that will not fail.<sup>22</sup>

Congregational strategic ministry planning seeks to be involved in what God has done, is doing, and will accomplish to gather His elect from every nation to Himself.<sup>23</sup>

### New Testament Church

In the Greek language, *Ecclesia* means an assembly of people called out or called together.<sup>24</sup> Though any gathering of people may call themselves “Church”, there are specific aspects of the Christian Church that clearly identify it in the world. Martin Chemnitz, quoting Philip Melancthon, wrote, “Now this should be the definition: The visible church is the assembly of those who hold the Gospel of Christ and rightly use the sacraments, in which God, through the ministry of the Gospel, is efficacious, and he regenerates many unto life eternal.”<sup>25</sup>

God performs specific acts among His people in the Church. Edward Koehler wrote, “The Kingdom of God indicates the actual exercise of the kingly rule of God in the hearts of people.”<sup>26</sup> There is a divine purpose carried out through the Church. Martin Chemnitz wrote, “For God wants to be invoked and known in no other way than as he has revealed Himself, and He has revealed Himself in no other place than in the visible church in which alone the

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<sup>22</sup> Matthew 16:18, ESV, “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

<sup>23</sup> Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici*, Vol. II, page 685, “Let us always keep this statement of Paul in mind: ‘Whom He chose them also called’ [Rom. 8:30].”

<sup>24</sup> Edward Koehler, *Christian Dogmatics*, page 236.

<sup>25</sup> Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici*, Vol. II, page 685.

<sup>26</sup> Edward Koehler, *Christian Dogmatics*, page 236.

voice of the Gospel is proclaimed.”<sup>27</sup> Congregational planning should be the participation of the subjects of the Kingdom of God in the fulfilling of His purpose and will.

### The Visible Church

God has made the Church to be visible within the world.<sup>28</sup> Congregational planning is successful when it accomplishes those things that cause the Church to be seen. Everything a congregation plans should seek to draw people to the Church in honesty and truth, presenting both the Church and God without deceit or trickery.<sup>29</sup> Edward Koelher wrote, “[E]very Christian will gladly become, and remain, a member of a local church.”<sup>30</sup>

For this to be possible there must be one identifiable Church. The Lutheran Confessions state:

Our churches also teach that one holy church is to continue forever. The church is the assembly of saints in which the Gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly. For the true unity of the church, it is enough to agree concerning the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments. It is not necessary that human traditions or rites and ceremonies, instituted by men, should be alike everywhere. It is as Paul says, “One faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all,” etc. (Eph. 4:5, 6).<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici*, Vol. II, page 685.

<sup>28</sup> Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici*, Vol. II, page 691. “The marks which point out the church are the pure Gospel and the proper use of the sacraments.”

<sup>29</sup> Marva Dawn, writing of popular trends, states, “Responding *merely to the symptoms and not to the illnesses*, many congregations have taken drastic turns in recent years without adequate thinking about the theological, ecclesiological, and missional implications of those changes” (*A Royal “Waste” of Time*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999, page 63).

<sup>30</sup> Edward Koelher, *Christian Dogmatics*, page 251.

<sup>31</sup> Theodore G. Tappert, *The Augsburg Confession*: Translated from the Latin (Philadelphia: Fortress Press) page 32.

Planning within a congregation will recognize that the Church is identified through its marks,

Word and Sacrament. The Lutheran Confessions clarify:

Properly speaking, the church is the assembly of saints and true believers. However, since in this life many hypocrites and evil persons are mingled with believers, it is allowable to use the sacraments even when they are administered by evil men, according to the saying of Christ, “The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat,” etc. (Matt. 23:2). Both the sacraments and the Word are effectual because of the institution and commandment of Christ even if they are administered by evil men. Our churches condemn the Donatists and others like them who have denied that the ministry of evil men may be used in the church and who have thought the ministry of evil men to be unprofitable and without effect.<sup>32</sup>

Congregational planning must then seek to achieve the means by which the congregation is made prominent and visible to those in the community around it.

### Membership

Within the work of the Church, strategic ministry planning does not shape the marks of the Church. It seeks to enhance the reach of the marks of the Church, the means by which people are drawn to Christ.<sup>33</sup> John Mueller wrote, “The local congregation is a visible organization. It is the natural outgrowth of following God’s command to assemble for the hearing of God’s Word and the administration of the Sacraments.”<sup>34</sup> The membership of the Church are those whose worship and talents combine to create a family of believers. Francis Pieper wrote,

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<sup>32</sup>Theodore G. Tappert, *The Augsburg Confession: Translated from the Latin*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press), page 33.

<sup>33</sup> John T. Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics*, page 549, wrote, “All who desire to be saved must be members of Christ’s Church.” Mark Jordan, ed., *The Church’s Confession of Faith*, trans. Stephen Arndt, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press), page 212, adds, “No one can believe by himself and be a Christian by himself; no one can preach the gospel to himself.”

<sup>34</sup> Edward Koehler, *Christian Dogmatics*, page 250.



“The Christian Church is composed of all those, and only those, in whom the Holy Spirit has worked the faith that for the sake of Christ’s vicarious satisfaction their sins are forgiven.”<sup>35</sup>

Within the visible Church, there are those who do not believe in Christ’s gift of forgiveness, yet God may use their talents along with the gifts of the believers. John Mueller wrote, “The Christian Church accordingly consists of all those who truly believe the Gospel, that is, God’s gracious message that for the sake of Christ’s vicarious satisfaction they freely (χάριτι) have forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation...”<sup>36</sup> Francis Pieper elaborated, “Christ indeed equips some members of His Church with special gifts, also the special gift of teaching and ruling other Christians.”<sup>37</sup>

God has established but one Church in creation, centered on the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He has placed it on the foundation of the work of the Holy Spirit. Within this Body of Christ, the individual congregation has its place. Each congregation provides a location and an experience that highlights both the vertical relationship Christians have with God and the horizontal relationship they have with one another. Individuals join themselves to congregations where they celebrate the gifts of salvation and plan and support the congregation’s continual role in God’s Kingdom. Of the local congregation’s authority in such work, Edward Koehler wrote, “The local congregation is not subject to the jurisdiction of any other congregation, nor to any higher ecclesiastical body, such as a synod, a conference, a super-church, a pope, and the like.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. III, page 397.

<sup>36</sup> John T. Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics*, page 541.

<sup>37</sup> Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. III, page 412.

<sup>38</sup> Edward Koehler, *Christian Dogmatics*, page 253.

## The Two Types of Righteousness

Before leaving the doctrine of the Church, it is appropriate to describe a Christian's relationship with God and with others. Specifically, for the topic of this project, it is important to identify a congregation's motivations to be derived from these relationships.

Within Lutheran theology there exists the dual definitions of righteousness. These are often referred to as the "Two Kinds of Righteousness".<sup>39</sup> The first kind of righteousness is a function of the vertical relationship Christians have with God. Here Christians are made righteous by a distinct act of God. The movement and flow is from God to people. God grants this righteousness without any accomplishment by the Christian, worthiness of the Christian, or desire within the Christian.<sup>40</sup> All people are born in absolute rebellion against God. Since there is nothing within any person that would deserve the gift of God's forgiveness, the means by which forgiveness is granted to His enemies must be found somewhere other than with the sinner. As the Bible teaches, God's declaration of a person to be righteous is empowered sin-

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<sup>39</sup> Martin Luther spoke of the *Two Kinds of Righteousness* in a sermon by that name. He said, "There are two kinds of Christian righteousness, just as man's sin is of two kinds. The first is alien righteousness, which is the righteousness of another, instilled from without. This is the righteousness of Christ by which he justifies through faith.... The second kind of righteousness is our proper righteousness, not because we alone work it, but because we work with that first and alien righteousness. This is that manner of life spent profitably in good works, in the first place, in slaying the flesh and crucifying the desires with respect to the self..." *Luther's Works*, Vol. 31, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1957), pages 297-298.

<sup>40</sup> Martin Luther, in explanation of the Third Article of the Apostles Creed, wrote of the vertical relationship between God and a Christian, "I believe that by my own reason or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church he daily and abundantly forgives all my sins, and the sins of all believers, and on the last day he will raise me and all the dead and will grant eternal life to me and to all who believe in Christ. This is most certainly true." *The Book of Concord*, trans. ed. Theodore Tappert, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), page 345.

gularly by the obedience of God's Son, Jesus Christ, in life and death.<sup>41</sup> This is why Lutherans abhor the use of the Gospel as a law.<sup>42</sup> The Gospel is the Good News of what has been accomplished for humanity and given as a gift to those who cannot earn it.

Strategic ministry planning is therefore prohibited from doing anything that would interfere or divert from the proclamation of the Gospel of God's forgiveness through His Son, Jesus.

There is a second kind of righteousness, or, if preferred, a second applicable definition for righteousness found on a horizontal plane. It concerns a Christian's relationship with other people. This righteousness is visible in the behavior of Christians. These are the ethical and moral actions performed by a Christian in daily life. This righteousness is everything right and positive that a Christian does to help others that portray to them a holy image of God, the Church, and the Christian life.

To understand how these two definitions of righteousness differ, it is important to keep them in the proper order and relationship to one another. The righteousness that comes from God feeds the righteousness expressed in the acts of a Christian. Therefore, the kindly acts of a person who has refused the Gospel are understood to be worthless in achieving salvation. Such acts may be used by God to sustain this world but they will count for nothing in the face of the rejection of Jesus Christ. Salvation comes first, the outward righteous actions of a Christian come second. Too often, the order is reversed and eternal life is made subject to a

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<sup>41</sup> The Apostle Paul explains salvation in 2 Corinthians 5:21, ESV, "For our sake he [God] made him [Jesus] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

<sup>42</sup> Walther, CFW, writes in *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*, trans. W.H.T. Dau, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991), page 30, "Only he is an orthodox teacher who not only presents all articles of faith in accordance with Scripture, but also rightly distinguishes from each other the Law and the Gospel."

person's actions. This robs people of assurance, God's love, and knowledge of what it is that He has given them in Christ Jesus.<sup>43</sup>

Proper congregational planning will celebrate what God has given to His children (the vertical righteousness) and promote the sharing of the gospel (horizontal righteousness). In their proper understanding, the horizontal acts will proclaim the vertical gift of forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

### **The Doctrine of Missions**

The Doctrine of Missions provides both the approval and the reason for a Christian congregation to engage in strategic ministry planning.

Along with the doctrines of Creation and the Church, the *Doctrine of Missions* finds its core meaning in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. As Christ was not content to remain in heaven while His visible creation perished, so also the Church is not content to remain comfortable in its own reception of salvation.<sup>44</sup> It is the will of Christ that mission work is done by the Church in His name.<sup>45</sup> The CTCR states, "Mission begins in the heart of God."<sup>46</sup>

Congregational strategic ministry planning finds its mandate in all three doctrines of *Creation, Church, and Missions*, but in *Missions* it finds its purpose. C.F.W. Walther, the first

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<sup>43</sup> Harold Senkbeil, in *Sanctification: Christ in Action*, (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1992), page 97, wrote, "God's action does not hinge on ours. He cannot be manipulated into action in response to human obedience to his will. God's will is indeed sovereign...Our motivation is not in the future, but in the past. Our service to him is not based upon expectation of reward in this life, but on the experience of God's love in Christ."

<sup>44</sup> The Apostle Paul wrote of Christ's attitude in Philippians 2:6, ESV, "...who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped..."

<sup>45</sup> In John 20:21, ESV, "Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.'"

<sup>46</sup> Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, *A Theological Statement of Mission*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991), page 7.

president of the LCMS, stated, “This is why we are here...so that we might bring salvation to as many people as we possibly can, so that the sad situation in Christendom and the corruption of the poor, blind heathen might be remedied...”<sup>47</sup> A congregation can plan, build, prosper in many ways that seem positive in worldly terms, but if planning does not encourage the spread of the faith, it is done in vain.

### The Two-Fold Nature

Strategic ministry planning in a congregation has at its heart missions. Mission work is not conducted on a single plane. It is an activity in two dimensions, engaging the congregation with both people and with God.<sup>48</sup>

David Peter emphasized this two-fold understanding. He constructed a model that contains a vertical axis showing the connection between a congregation and God and a horizontal axis describing the congregation’s interaction with humanity:

The work of the Holy Spirit in the vertical dimension is primary. Our actions—our “willing and exerting”—which are performed in the horizontal dimension, are secondary. Yet human activity is necessary for bringing the Word of the Gospel into contexts in which unregenerate people will hear it and through which the Holy Spirit works faith.<sup>49</sup>

He contends that when conflicts arise among those carrying out mission work it is often because they are attempting to limit missions to one axis to the exclusion of the other.<sup>50</sup> Fol-

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<sup>47</sup> David Peter, “A Framework for the Practice of Evangelism and Congregational Outreach” *Concordia Journal*, Volume 30 (July 2004), 204.

<sup>48</sup> This discussion parallels the discussion in the previous section under the doctrine of the Church.

<sup>49</sup> David Peter, “A Framework for the Practice of Evangelism and Congregational Outreach”, page 215.

<sup>50</sup> David Peter, “A Framework for the Practice of Evangelism and Congregational Outreach”, page 207.

lowing his insights, strategic ministry planning also should have as much focus on the vertical relation with God as it has on the horizontal relationship between people.

This means that it is important to remember that the mission work of a congregation is not the congregation's work but God's work. It also means that wherever a Christian or a congregation finds itself, there God intends for it to accomplish mission. Further, this mission purpose of a congregation should not be undertaken as a demand of Law. Mission work is a function of the Gospel. The congregation is not required to reach out with the Gospel or face God's wrath. A Christian congregation is God's tool for reaching out. He will use it as He sees fit and in ways often unseen or unrecognized by the congregation itself. In the Bible, when God's displeasure falls upon His people it is not for a lack of missions. God is displeased with a person or a congregation when it rejects the Gospel. To lose the Gospel is to lose the means by which the saving work of Jesus Christ is brought to the world.

The two-dimensional model of missions emphasizes a top-down flow of authority and motivation that does not end with the congregation. "The mission God gives to the whole church he also gives to the individual member of the church."<sup>51</sup> Like congregations, individual Christians take their place in the kingdom of the world, engaging in the vocation God prepares for them.<sup>52</sup> "Our personal involvement in God's mission takes place wherever we are—wherever God has placed us."<sup>53</sup> As with congregations, Christians should be aware that they occupy a unique position in time and space, chosen by God for the fulfilling of His mission purpose.

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<sup>51</sup> LCMS CTCR, *A Theological Statement of Mission*, 27.

<sup>52</sup> Edward Veith, *The Spirituality of the Cross*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), page 80, "--a vocation is not something we choose for ourselves. Rather, it is given by God, who 'calls' us to a particular work or station."

<sup>53</sup> LCMS CTCR, *A Theological Statement of Mission*, 27.

The congregation belongs to God and fulfils His purpose. By God's will the congregation strengthens its members even as the individual members contribute to the congregation. This is why the strategic ministry planning process often begins with an analysis of the congregation. It seeks to survey its member's gifts in order to assess and determine the unique possibilities for which God has prepared their specific congregation. Therefore, "Early Christians understood themselves to be the covenant people of God—charged with the task of witnessing to the nations."<sup>54</sup> The Church has continually defined itself as having a specific mandate from God. That is why Christians describe their Church as being Apostolic. As Robert Scudieri stresses, "*Apostolic church* refers to the nature of the church as continuously embodying the mission of the Savior of the world."<sup>55</sup> Though there are many causes and projects calling for the Church's attention, there is to be only one chief focus. As Arthur Graf wrote:

Surely, there are many worthwhile activities and purposes in the Christian life. However, the primary reason the world still exists and eternity waits is to give the Church the opportunity to carry out the Lord's great commission to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19).<sup>56</sup>

After all, this world will not end until all who believe have come to that faith through the preaching of the Church.

### A Theological Statement of Mission

In 1986, the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod in convention asked its Commission on Theological and Church Relations (CTCR) to prepare a document concerning missions within

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<sup>54</sup> Robert Scudieri, *The Apostolic Church*, (Chino. CA: Lutheran Society for Missions), page 1.

<sup>55</sup> Robert Scudieri, *The Apostolic Church*, page 73.

<sup>56</sup> Arthur E. Graf, *The Church in the Community*, (Ft. Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press), page 12.

the synod. The following is a description of some of the points composed by the CTCR and their relationship to strategic ministry planning at the congregational level.

The first point from the CTCR's work is "God's mission is necessary because of sin."<sup>57</sup> Strategic ministry planning in a congregation should support and strengthen the faith of the weak, the admonishment of the erring, and the proclamation of the Gospel to those who are lost. As with everything done by the congregation, such planning is done for the sake of others. As Edward Koehler wrote, "The Chief truth of the Gospel is that for Christ's sake God has forgiven all sins to all men. This is the truth that the Church is to proclaim to the world, assuring complete forgiveness to penitent sinners, but withholding it from impenitent sinners as long as they do not repent."<sup>58</sup>

A second point from the CTCR's work is that "God's mission centers on Jesus Christ."<sup>59</sup> The planning that supports the congregation is the planning that keeps Jesus Christ as its focus and means. Plans and goals of the congregation should keep the congregation constantly engaged in the Gospel. Gerhard Forde wrote, "The Christian church occurs where the quite specific activity known as speaking the gospel occurs and the sacraments are administered according to that gospel. Where that does not occur there is no such thing as the church of Jesus Christ."<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> CTCR, *A Theology of Mission*, page 9.

<sup>58</sup> Edward Koehler, *Christian Dogmatics*, page 257.

<sup>59</sup> CTCR, *A Theology of Mission*, page 13.

<sup>60</sup> Gerhard O. Forde, *Theology is for Proclamation*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), page 187.



A third point from the CTCR's work is "God's mission is empowered by the Holy Spirit."<sup>61</sup> Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit to come. They were not ready for missions or capable of doing anything on their own. They were to wait for the Holy Spirit. Congregational planning will succeed only if it is the will of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the will of God should be sought throughout any planning process.

A fourth point from the CTCR's work is that "God's mission is to and for everyone."<sup>62</sup> The mission work of the congregation should extend in all directions, prepared to speak to all people. A strategic ministry plan should have the same flexibility. Though a congregation should strive to be all things to all people, resources in the congregation require a focusing of talents and gifts in limited directions.

A fifth point from the CTCR's work is that "God's mission is our mission."<sup>63</sup> Mission work is the property of all who confess the name of Jesus. We are baptized into His death, resurrection, and missionary commission. With angels in heaven, all Christians rejoice over any success in missions on any front. Therefore, strategic ministry planning must not be the realm of a limited number in the congregation, but belong to all who will be involved or take pride in their congregation.

A sixth point from the CTCR's work is that "God's mission is my mission."<sup>64</sup> This personal responsibility for mission work is summed up in the Bible in Jesus' invitation to take up the cross and follow Him. Strategic ministry planning is not meant to make the world a

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<sup>61</sup> CTCR, *A Theology of Mission*, page 17.

<sup>62</sup> CTCR, *A Theology of Mission*, page 21.

<sup>63</sup> CTCR, *A Theology of Mission*, page 23.

<sup>64</sup> CTCR, *A Theology of Mission*, page 27.

more comfortable place for anyone outside of the comfort of a present knowledge of eternal life in Jesus Christ. Arthur Graf wrote, “Effective evangelism has always involved sacrifice, and only in the measure in which ministers and people are willing to deny themselves will Christ’s kingdom move forward in any age.”<sup>65</sup>

A seventh point from the CTCR’s work is that “God’s mission is urgent.”<sup>66</sup> A need for strategic ministry planning in a congregation can be the result of an urgent need or crisis. It may be financial in nature or concern the continued presence of a congregation in a certain location. Regardless of the specific need, the mission work of the congregation is the priority of the congregation and should be reflected in the plan’s goals and results.

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<sup>65</sup> Arthur Graf, *The Church in the Community*, page 14.

<sup>66</sup> CTCR, *A Theology of Mission*, page 29.



### CHAPTER THREE: THE PROJECT IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The events of the past twenty-five years have brought Prince of Peace Lutheran Church to a planning crossroad. What direction it will take will depend upon the desires of the members of the congregation. Much of what they believe and know about planning comes from their experiences. How past plans were made, who made those plans, and the impact of those plans upon the congregation play a role in determining whether Prince of Peace Lutheran Church will venture into formal strategic ministry planning at this time.

This chapter outlines the history of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, noting those events and themes that have shaped this congregation and continue to influence how it makes decisions.<sup>1</sup>



Figure 1. In 1978, the empty lots in Coralville, Iowa which would become the home of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. Facing East, across the athletic fields, stands Northwest Junior High School.

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix 1 briefly outlines the key dates in the history of this congregation.

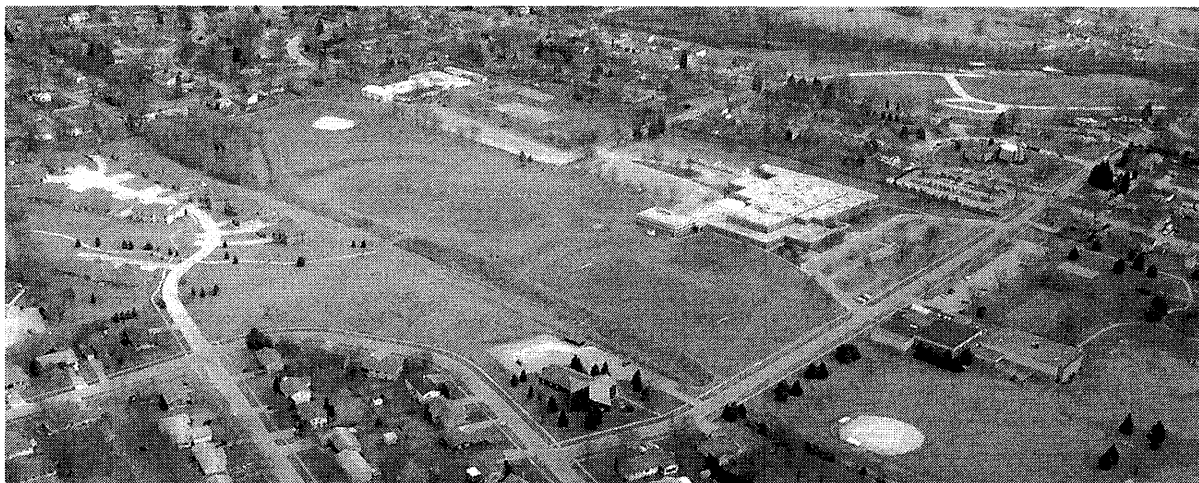


Figure 2. Looking northeast, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Coralville, Iowa is located in the lower center of the picture. The open land above and to the left of the church, following the curve of the street, belongs to the congregation. At the top center of the picture is a public elementary school. Above and to the right of the church is the junior high school. The city's Park and Recreation facilities are pictured on the lower right.

### **The Crucial Beginning**

In 1974, the Iowa District East (IDE) of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS) purchased land for a potential mission congregation in Coralville, Iowa (see Figure 1).<sup>2</sup> That the District was the prime mover in planting this congregation remains a significant factor in the life and the development of this congregation. Typically, it would have been a missionary, a pastor, a congregation, or even an area circuit<sup>3</sup> of congregations involved in planting a new church. This was not so with Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. This congregation was a project of the officers and committees of the District with only rudimentary consultation with area

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<sup>2</sup> Four lots were purchased in 1974, three more in 1975, for a total cost of \$69,550.

<sup>3</sup> A circuit is a union of LCMS congregations, approximately 6 to 10, in a geographical area.

pastors and congregations.<sup>4</sup> The effect of this has been long-standing. For the first 20 years of its existence, as an LCMS congregation, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church was unusually obligated to the officers of the District. This obligation came in the form of significant financial assistance for the congregation and the associated guidance and guidelines.<sup>5</sup> In other words, the congregation was born with a strong familial bond with the District's administrators and committees. Whereas other young congregations might have a "mother" congregation to credit with its inception, and a dependant connection with that congregation that diminishes as the new congregation matures, Prince of Peace Lutheran's dependence on the District remained uniformly high.<sup>6</sup> Like a grown child still living in the parental home, the relationship was not always healthy for the congregation.

How did such a situation come about? Looking back, one founding member of the congregation speculates that it was the synodical crisis of the mid 1970s that caused this dependent relationship between the congregation and the District. The Synod-wide problems

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<sup>4</sup> One founding member of the congregation, then a member and an Elder of a local LCMS congregation, was greatly surprised one day when a Missionary-at-Large, Rev. Daniel Bohlken, recently called by the District, knocked on his door to introduce himself. This leader, who had been involved in early meetings with the District concerning a potential mission plant, had no idea that the District had gone ahead and called a pastor for this work. This action pushes the boundary between congregation and Synod/District where the Synod is to be an advisor to the congregations.

<sup>5</sup> As a Mission Congregation, for 20 years the pastor and leaders of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church were required to submit quarterly status reports to the District, make yearly application for subsidy financing, and constantly be concerned with fulfilling the changing requirements the District placed upon them. Since the congregations founding, there have been four District Presidents, changes in the staffing of the District committees, and significant decreases in the District's budget.

<sup>6</sup> Here are two representative examples of what this relationship with the District meant. Both of these examples have to do with the difficulties faced by the congregation in the mid 1990s. First, in 1999, when visited by this researcher, a member who had recently been the congregational chairman, and who was now not attending worship services any longer, expressed his anger at the District for not stepping in and helping the congregation with its struggles. He had expected the District, when asked, to exert authority to take control of the situation. Similarly, while visiting with a former member who had returned for the congregation's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in June of 2005, another former congregational leader shared with this researcher that he believed that it was his leaving that prompted ("woke up") the District and caused it to step in and take action in the same crisis. Both of these former members saw the District as having much greater power and authority than it actually has in such situations. Significantly, both of these men were angry because they believed that the District failed the congregation in a parental role.

often resulted in high levels of mistrust between LCMS congregations and their Synod leaders. As the District functions as the local representative of the Synod, these feelings of mistrust may have been what prompted the Iowa East District to bypass local congregations and go it alone in planting a new mission church in Coralville.

No matter how the planting of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church was prompted, thirty years ago Coralville, Iowa was seen as a prime location for a new church (see figure 2). Just as it remains to this day, Coralville was one of the fastest growing communities in the state of Iowa.<sup>7</sup> The community must have seemed an appropriate and promising location for a new congregation. With this in mind, among the retreating cornfields, on the advancing western edge of the Iowa City/University of Iowa metro complex,<sup>8</sup> with no specific plans in mind, the Iowa District East purchased land in hope of establishing a mission there one day.<sup>9</sup>

The location chosen for the mission was promising. It was ten minutes from the University of Iowa and the University Hospitals, two of the institutions that dominate the Iowa City/Coralville metro area. The lots on which the District would build were across a small stream from the athletic fields of both a public Junior High School and an elementary school.<sup>10</sup> The location was also within sight of the city's main Park and Recreation facilities. These fa-

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<sup>7</sup> "We are the envy of much of the state. Iowa City, Coralville, and North Liberty are booming towns, each growing in its own way and at its own pace. But still growing. From 1990 to 2002, Johnson County's population jumped more than 15 percent... Each community is a vibrant economic center." *Press Citizen*, February 23, 2005, page 1C.

<sup>8</sup> The immediate area had approximately 100,000 residents plus college students.

<sup>9</sup> Prince of Peace's beginning reminds this researcher of the Iowa based film *Field of Dreams* and its signature line, "If you build it, they will come." Prince of Peace was a District project from the beginning. Having no "mother" congregation to provide support and an initial population, Prince of Peace was, in many ways, a building project before it was a congregation of people. Today, due to projects like Prince of Peace, most mission models emphasize the need to gather a sufficient number of key people before building a church building.

<sup>10</sup> The stream played an important part in the 1993 building of the Fellowship Hall. It was the year of the great flood in Iowa, causing the stream to overflow and fill the hole recently dug for the new basement. The water began to undermine the sanctuary and the ensuing rescue operation remains one of the most dramatic memories of the members.

cilities provide a constant flow of traffic past the church property though the site is well off from the main city roadways.<sup>11</sup>

In 1978, four years after buying the land, the District called Rev. Daniel Bohlken as a missionary-at-large. He was to establish a congregation in the area and build a church on the lots.<sup>12</sup> Rev.

Bohlken quickly organized Saturday night services, held at a Methodist church four blocks from the District owned land.<sup>13</sup> Through his

efforts, and the work of several significant members from the

LCMS congregation across town in Iowa City, a year later a new congregation was formed.<sup>14</sup>

In 1980, the members of the new congregation chose the name “Prince of Peace”.

They hired an architect, with District approval, and they broke ground for a new building that

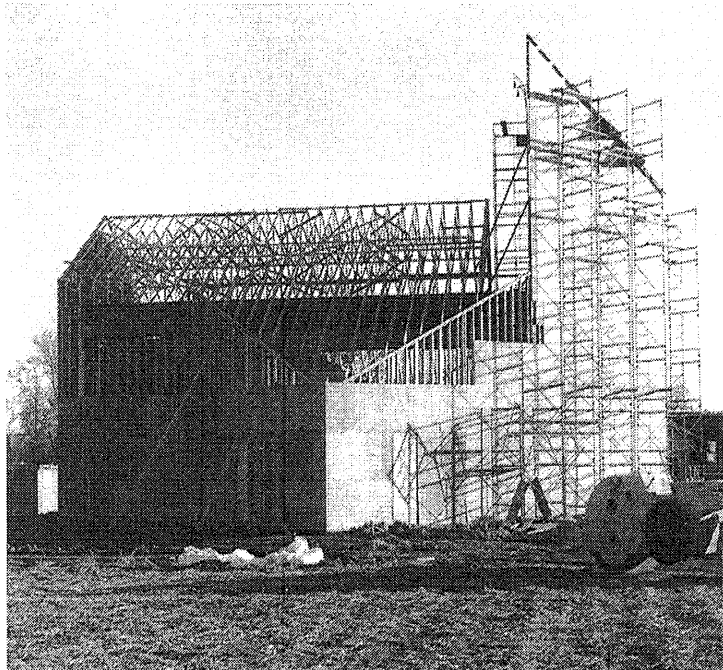


Figure 3. Prince of Peace Lutheran Church as it was being constructed in 1980. The view is to the south, showing the tower over the chancel to the right.

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<sup>11</sup> The area is also host to many of the city’s activities, concerts, and parades. This is especially true during the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

<sup>12</sup> Within the LCMS, a pastor must be “called” by a congregation or, in this case, by the collected congregations of the Iowa District East.

<sup>13</sup> In a May 17, 2005 email from the missionary-at-large to this researcher, Rev Bohlken wrote, “Our first service was a huge success. It was the week after my installation – July 15. We had 55 in attendance.”

<sup>14</sup> For reasons that are not exactly clear, there remains, after 25 years, a degree of uneasiness between Prince of Peace and her sister congregation in Iowa City. Some say that the District snubbed the other congregation in the process of planting Prince of Peace, going ahead with plans that were not mutually agreed upon.



March.<sup>15</sup> Soon afterward, the congregation was legally incorporated, the District in convention welcomed it as a new LCMS congregation, and Rev. Bohlken was called to become the congregation's first pastor. He accepted. Seven years after purchase of the land and three years after the arrival of the missionary-at-large, the first worship service in the congregation's new building was held on a Wednesday, during Lent, in April of 1981 (see figure 3).

The original membership of the congregation, as one founding member explained, was a "loose" group. She commented how, twenty-five years later, so many of those who were there in the beginning, attracted to the pioneering spirit of the mission plant, still live in the community but have long since severed their ties with this or any congregation.<sup>16</sup>

### **The Building**

Along with the unique ties the congregation had with the District, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church has experienced a second formational theme running through its history.

The building itself has always been a challenge to the congregation.<sup>17</sup> There are other themes, but the challenges of the building stand out as the one vulnerable aspect of the con-

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<sup>15</sup> In a May 17, 2005 email from the missionary-at-large to this researcher, he wrote, "When [the architect] asked what size the sanctuary should be, I knew exactly what size – the dimensions of a volleyball court."

<sup>16</sup> Other members have commented in recent years how little was often required of people to become members of the congregation in the beginning. In 1999, when the membership roster was being "cleaned up" shortly after this researcher became the pastor of the congregation, there was a significant portion of the congregation that believed a high number of members on the roster was important, for appearance sake, to the District. The District, after twenty years, was still subsidizing the congregation. This researcher explained that the District was also aware, through quarterly reports, of the weekly worship attendance figures, and how the District would not be surprised to see the roster better reflect those numbers.

<sup>17</sup> This is not to ignore the many faithful members and what they accomplished over the years. In looking through the records and pictures of the congregation, the names and faces of the people who have come and gone over the past 25 years are inspiring. However, it is a source of strength that of the seven Chairmen of the congregation, in what is labeled a transient area, all but one remains an active member.

gregation that hindered it for years. To be fair, though, the building also provided an important healing opportunity in 2002-3.

The church building was placed upon the southernmost of the eleven District owned lots, well situated on a busy street corner (refer again to figure 2). The balance of the congregation's land, strung northward along a curving street, remains limited in its use as it is partially over-lapped by an interstate gas pipeline easement. After twenty-five years, the seven open lots remain mostly undeveloped except for their weekly mowing in the summer and the occasional kickball game on Rally Day in the fall.<sup>18</sup>

It is not exactly clear whose idea the building was. No doubt the architect was mainly responsible, but the concept that resulted in such a uniquely shaped building certainly came from the thoughts of Rev. Bohlken and/or the District. Different sources remember it in different ways. As many of the District officials involved in the start-up of the congregation are no longer available, their exact intentions and contributions can only be surmised.<sup>19</sup> The stories passed down tell of a peculiar vision to build a multi-use, expandable, structure specifically aimed at appealing to younger, physically active members of the community (see figure 4).

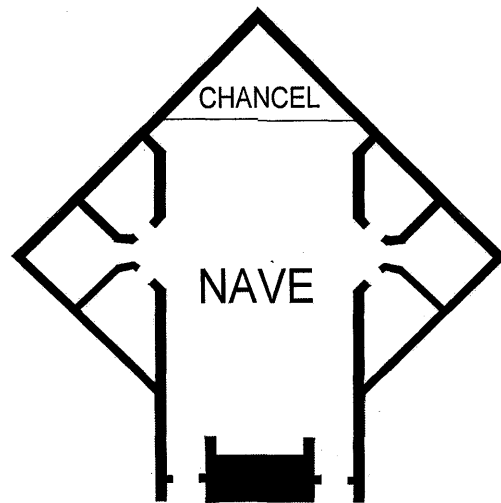


Figure 4. The church building as it was in 1980.

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<sup>18</sup> In the summer of 2005, plans were carried out to construct a playground for the congregation's new preschool on the first north lot beyond the parking lot.

<sup>19</sup> The Rev. Dr. Alvin Barry, who held the office of Synodical President until his passing, was the Iowa District East Mission Executive during the time of Prince of Peace's founding. It is said that he picked the architect for the project. Other sources say it was the missionary-at-large.

The most unusual aspect of the plan was that the sanctuary was designed to serve as a gymnasium where volleyball could be played. Not quite built to the standards of a gymnasium, according to the stories, the few times that volleyball nets were stretched across the bare concrete floor the resulting damage to the facility was so great that the volleyball emphasis was quickly dropped.<sup>20</sup>

The congregation found itself with a church building comprised of one large, gym-like room and not much more. There was an open kitchen along the back, two small bathrooms, and six small odd shaped rooms whose doors were clumped together in sets of threes on either side of the sanctuary.

Because of its shape, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church remains to this day a visual challenge. The exterior walls break in unusual angles with their corners pointing to the streets

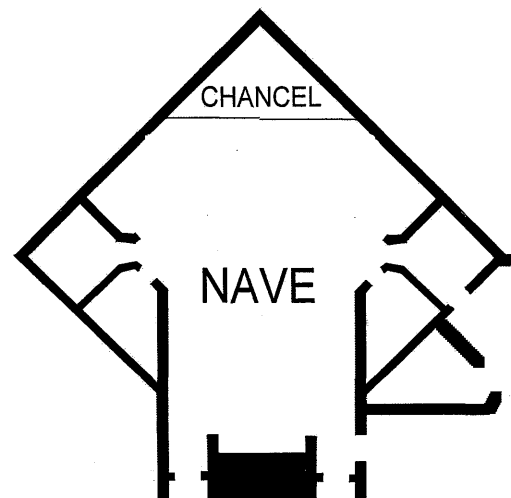


Figure 5. The church building since 2003 (only a portion of the Fellowship Hall is shown).

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<sup>20</sup> In a May 17, 2005 email from Rev. Bohlken to this researcher, he wrote, "I had a vision of a multiuse facility in my head. Moveable chairs would allow us to use it as a fellowship area for dinners and meetings, a play area for VBS, and as a volleyball court for college students and young couples.... I invited the congregation to take a tour of the uncompleted building. I was so excited. My excitement was tempered when some of the members expressed disappointment. It was a modern design and cleverly constructed to allow for expansion. It did not look all that much like a church." In an email on May 18, answering some of the researcher's questions, he wrote, "Yes, we played volleyball. Mostly young families and college couples. We averaged between 15-30 on a Sunday evening. We would play for an hour or so and then have a short devotion and sometimes refreshments... The volleyball came to an end when some of the members felt that volleyball detracted from the sacredness of the sanctuary."

instead of running parallel with them. The roof is high, steeply pitched, and made of metal. To understand the building, it is best to look down upon the floor plan (see again figure 4). The structure is shaped as a diamond set on top of a box. The doors are located at the base.

Upon entering the one-room facility, visitors and worshippers were immediately thrust into the Sanctuary. The Narthex, or entryway, was but a strip of linoleum across the back of the Nave. Once inside the building, the outside angles disappeared as the three-story high sanctuary was on the inside shaped like a rectangular gym. A 2003 renovation has since altered the sanctuary floor plan (see figure 5).<sup>21</sup>

The small Chancel, at the far end of the building, is pointed like the bow of a great ship (an ark?). It sits under a high tower whose ceiling cannot be seen, giving the impression that it soars ever upward. From the high tower windows, natural light, especially in the morning, floods the chancel.<sup>22</sup> In the beginning, the sanctuary walls were painted dark, but soon were changed to an unusual pale pink that remained until 2002. Today the walls are white.

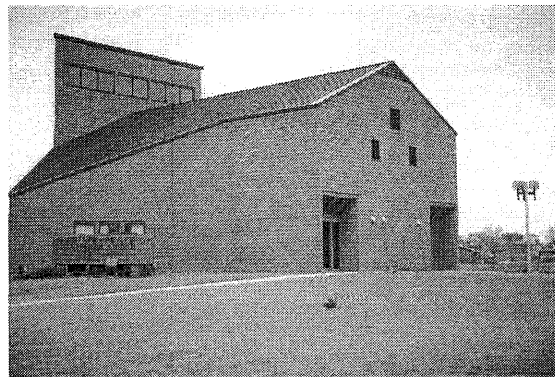


Figure 6. The exterior of the church in 1981.

The most curious aspects of the design were the two mysterious sets of doors centered, but recessed, along the sanctuary walls. Their

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<sup>21</sup> As the six side classrooms were designed to be temporary, in a 2003 sanctuary expansion the front classrooms on either side of the sanctuary were removed. When these classrooms were eliminated, the front of the sanctuary opened dramatically. Windows, which had been hidden in the two smaller rooms, were opened to the worship area. The inside of the church, from above, now has the shape of an arrow.

<sup>22</sup> The sunlight flooding the chancel as those high windows catch the first light on Easter morning is a stunning effect.

function could not be guessed. The mind could not account for six normally shaped rooms based upon what was observed from the exterior of the building. In fact, the doors led to six small, oddly shaped rooms set in two of the points of the diamond floor plan.<sup>23</sup> These rooms were designed to be temporary; their walls were non-supporting and made to be easily removed when the congregation was ready to expand the sanctuary in the future. Though unusual, the building design was forward thinking, appreciated by some of the members but only tolerated by others.

The exterior of the church is also unique with its unexpected reversal of textures (see figure 6). The roof is painted metal and the walls covered with wood shingles. Though interesting to look at, the outside of the structure is not perceived by everyone as inviting. The recessed front doors only add to this effect.<sup>24</sup>

As unique as the building appeared in the 1980s, it was meant to be the core of greater complex and expansion. The original plans called for increasing the size of the building, the addition of a connected education facility, and even the raising of a bell tower.<sup>25</sup> Though the original plans were not followed when the facility was expanded in 1993, the legacy of the decisions involved in the design of the church building impact the congregation to this day.

With an emphasis on constructing the building, there was evidently little immediate money available for amenities. In 1982, carpeting covered only a portion of the concrete floor,

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<sup>23</sup> These impressions are the researcher's own, as he attended a worship service there as part of a District Pastor's Conference not long after receiving his first Call to another congregation in Iowa District East. His next visit would come after receiving the Call to Prince of Peace, and his impressions were strengthened on that occasion.

<sup>24</sup> One of the first things this researcher did after becoming pastor was make large inviting signs to set by the parking lot to welcome guests and point the way to the doors.

<sup>25</sup> In 1993, the leaders of the congregation decided that the original plans for expansion provided insufficient space for the cost and abandoned them (see photograph in Appendix 2). The proposed bell tower could not now be constructed on existing city codes which prohibit even the placing of a cross on top of the existing building.

padded chairs only replaced metal folding chairs in 1989, and there was no Communion Rail or paraments until 2000.<sup>26</sup>

The layout of the building was a problem. It was not functional. Already in 1986, with the congregation's first pastor having taken a call elsewhere, and with the second pastor just newly installed, the Church Council identified the facility as the "biggest restriction" to the congregation's growth. Yet due to meager finances, nothing could be done. Already a year earlier, in order to ease the congregation's financial burden, the District, in addition to the yearly subsidy funding, had stepped in and purchased back seven of the congregation's unused lots.<sup>27</sup>

The financial struggles, as Rev. Roger Abatie (1985-1990) explained in July of 2005, were exasperated by a high congregational membership turnover. Rev. Abatie remembered that the District began to call Prince of Peace the "revolving church". During this time fully one third of the congregation changed every year, two-thirds every other year. It was a frustrating period.

After the congregation's first ten years and two pastors, the 1980s ended with a two-year pastoral vacancy. Financially and statistically, it was a difficult time. As described by one member, to be an officer, with all of the congregation's problems and needs, was like having a second full time job. The congregation became restless and the records from the early 1990s contain many resignations and transfers to other congregations.

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<sup>26</sup> The older members remember the sound of the metal folding chairs, especially in winter. When worshipers stood up during the service, the chairs scratched across the concrete floor and, as the metal cooled and contracted, there were popping noises all around them.

<sup>27</sup> The agreement was that the congregation would repurchase the land within five years. That agreement was all but forgotten until the District approached the congregation in 2003, asking what its intentions were for the land. After consideration, the land was repurchased by the congregation in early 2005.

Between May of 1990 and September of 1991, 12 pastors declined the call to come to Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. The facility was, as recalled by one member, cited by many of those pastors as the significant reason for their turning down the call. The ten-year anniversary of the congregation was celebrated on June 24, 1990 without a pastor present to lead the service.

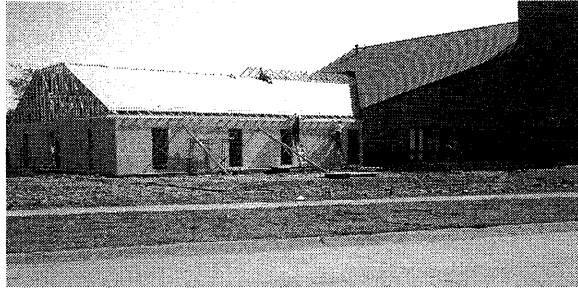


Figure 7. With the addition of the Fellowship Hall in 1993, the congregation added much needed social, education, and office facilities.

During the vacancy, in 1992, as a requirement by the District in order to receive subsidy, a committee of congregational members produced the following Mission Statement for Prince of Peace Lutheran Church:

Being empowered by the Holy Spirit through love, faith, and rebirth in Jesus Christ, we of Prince of Peace are dedicated to reaching out to those for whom the Lord died, sharing the good news of salvation, and embracing them in our Father's loving family.<sup>28</sup>

The purpose and use of this Mission Statement is unclear. It came into existence by command, and it was not ever viewed as functional. In February of 2005, in anticipation of a future effort, the Church Council formally decommissioned this mission statement, recognizing that it had long ceased to function as a guide to the daily work and future planning of the congregation.

In 1993, the limitations of the facility compelled the leadership to action. The congregation launched the effort that quickly resulted in the building of the Fellowship Hall addition (see figure 7). Through sheer determination, wasting no time, a building expansion committee

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<sup>28</sup> Attached to this Mission Statement is the "Logo Version: Growing in Christ's Love," and the goals which have been carried over from year to year, "Improve spiritual message and leadership. Increase membership and member involvement. Improve communication at all levels."

was formed and the completed Fellowship Hall was dedicated in 1994. Complete with a full kitchen, two small offices, restrooms, a nursery, and an unfinished basement, the Fellowship Hall provided the space and flexibility that was missing in the original design. The debt incurred was substantial. As it is now recalled, the project was a calculated leap of faith. The addition completed, the congregation believed that it was well positioned for growth in the mid 1990s.

The growth the members had hoped for after 1994 simply did not happen. With the improved facilities in place, as many of the members describe it, the congregation's problems switched from a deficit in facilities to a deficit in pastoral care and Gospel preaching.<sup>29</sup> As the pastoral crisis increased, membership and support declined. Certain aspects of the facilities had to go without needed repairs and maintenance.<sup>30</sup>

The problem of pastoral care came to the forefront during a strategic planning meeting led by a District executive in 1996 or 1997. Some of those involved recall how they brainstormed ideas and wrote them on large pieces of paper tacked to the walls. Each person present was then asked to consider all of the ideas and vote for those they thought were the most important. As one member explained, it was a watershed moment when member after member

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<sup>29</sup> A very painful time for many of the members, it is summed up in the statement of one of the leaders of the congregation who, when asked about his grown children's membership in other denominations simply replied, "When our children were younger and asked, 'Why should we go to church at Prince of Peace,' we had no answer for them."

<sup>30</sup> For example, by 1999 the windows and the roof leaked. A persistent draught helped cover these problems until one Sunday morning, while it was raining outside, the children seated on the floor by the communion rail for a children's sermon begin to get heavily dripped upon. Soon after that, action was taken to fix the leaks.



added their tally mark behind “Improve Pastoral Leadership”. In the summer of 1998, under pressure, the pastor accepted a call to another congregation and semi-retired.<sup>31</sup>

### **The Turn Around Which Has Led To the Congregation’s 2005 Decision**

In January of 1999, this researcher accepted the call to become the fourth Pastor of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. On paper, the challenges of the congregation appeared almost insurmountable. With declining attendance and a quarter of a million dollars of debt, there were two significant reasons why the call was ultimately accepted. First, the members of the congregation showed that though they were bruised by the events of the past they were not broken. This was important to know. The researcher had to determine if the congregation had caused its problems or if other factors were involved. For there had to be some reason why a congregation, in the midst of the fastest growing community in Iowa, was in such sharp decline.<sup>32</sup> As was shown, the causes were not the members of the congregation.<sup>33</sup>

The second reason why this researcher accepted the call to Prince of Peace Lutheran Church was the shared observation among the District staff and local LCMS pastors that all that this congregation needed was solid pastoral care.

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<sup>31</sup> So painful of a time for the congregation, almost ten years later the memories can still bring those who were in leadership at the time to reflective silence and the verge of tears.

<sup>32</sup> How bad was the situation? It was only after accepting the call and taking office that the Elders shared with this researcher how close they had come to “closing the doors” of their church.

<sup>33</sup> The most important event was a meeting held in December of 1998. Thinking this was only going to be a meeting with the Council, while still considering the call, this researcher and family arrived on a snowy December Sunday afternoon to find many of the members of the congregation waiting. Everyone sat in a big circle and talked for hours. Some members cried as they shared their pain over the past and their heartfelt hopes for the future of their congregation.

Shortly after this researcher's installation as pastor in February of 1999, things began to turn around for the congregation. Through participation in a District fundraising program called *Catch The Vision*, a program that the congregation had dedicated itself to before this researcher arrived, much of the congregation's debt to the District was forgiven. It was a vital, freeing act that came just in time. For not long afterward, the District, for financial reasons and because of important lessons learned in church planting, ended twenty-one years of financial subsidy to the congregation. Though many in the congregation were nervous about this, the congregation went on to experience its first fiscal success in 2001.<sup>34</sup>

Two tasks took priority in 1999. First, the pastor needed to visit every member and, second, the true roster of the congregation had to be identified. This process took about a year and involved 62 home visits. In time, the congregation's membership was defined and many inactive, uninterested, or unidentifiable names were removed from the membership list.<sup>35</sup>

It was also clear that the congregation needed a project that would lift it above thoughts of simple survival. The unfinished basement in the Fellowship Hall, built seven years earlier, provided the opportunity. Finishing the basement to provide needed Sunday School classrooms and room for a possible preschool was the obvious choice for a congregational project.

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<sup>34</sup> 2000 was the end of an era in the Iowa District East. Subsidy was withdrawn from a number of longtime dependant congregations and aging mission starts. Many failed or were closed. Yet, officers and members of the District Mission Committee continue to comment on the turn-around and present prosperity of Prince of Peace in Coralville.

<sup>35</sup> The congregation's constitution states that to remain a member one has to attend Communion at least once a year. This detail had been ignored. The reluctance of the congregation to remove names from the roster was summed up in the statement, "But what will the District think?" As a subsidized congregation, the pastor explained that the District already knew the attendance figures reported spoke more clearly of the congregation's size than mythical numbers on the roster. In some ways, it might have been unfair to release many of the people. They joined a congregation which made no requirements upon them to maintain their membership. Some, the pastor learned, even got so mad after we removed their names, they started going to church elsewhere—which is more than they were doing before they were released.

At the time, this researcher coined an unofficial Mission Statement for himself and the congregation. Repeated many times, it said, “Prince of Peace Lutheran Church is in the right place, at the right time, with the right Gospel”. It fit well with this researcher’s desire to bring the congregation out of the memories of the past even as new members, people unacquainted with those memories, were joining and causing the congregation to grow. These new members brought with them additional healing in the form of young families and many little children.<sup>36</sup>

At one time, there were so many new members, with fresh ideas and experiences from elsewhere, that there were fears they might go head-to-head with the older members who were looking at change cautiously, having experienced the difficult 1980s and 1990s.<sup>37</sup> Thanks to the character of people in both groups this never occurred.<sup>38</sup>

The growth in membership, the stability of finances, and the challenge to engage in a new building project raised the congregation to a new level of hope and confidence in the future.<sup>39</sup> This set the stage for discussing the use of strategic ministry planning.

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<sup>36</sup> One of the first new members became the new church secretary. With a decade of experience working as a customer representative for a large appliance manufacturer, her skills and abilities have helped this congregation immensely. The height of the inflow of new families with children came during Advent of 2003 when the noise level in the sanctuary became so loud that this researcher had to pause in the middle of a sermon and, with good humor, wait for the noise level to abate.

<sup>37</sup> It would be inappropriate to leave the impression that very little positive happened during the congregation’s first two decades. This is not true, of course, yet this researcher is reflecting upon those things which remain foremost in the minds of the members and continue to shape the congregation to this day.

<sup>38</sup> Some of the most significant members in the congregation have been graduate students at the University of Iowa. They came, joined, contributed, and, following graduation after two or three years, moved on or returned back home.

<sup>39</sup> Among the immediate challenges of the past six years was the maintenance of the now aging original building. Due to a lack of funds, not neglect, many repairs had been put-off. After 1999, a portion of the congregation’s growing resources went to catching up on repairs.

## **The Need for Strategic Planning Grows**

This researcher's initial assessment, more than six years ago, was that the congregation was not operating well. It had accomplished mighty things over the years to survive, it was composed of good and faithful Christians, but ministry and growth had been pushed aside by other needs. The congregation was proud of a system of committees it had developed, but it was not working well. The system may have served the congregation in hard times, yet, as this researcher tried to work with the system, it was clear that it could not be maintained as the congregation grew. There was an unstoppable pattern developing, as one committee functioned well another committee was always falling apart. To this day, insisting on operating under this system remains the key challenge of the congregation, and the one best reason for encouraging the use of strategic ministry planning.

The breakdown of the committee system is a symptom of a foundational clash of cultures within the congregation. The clash is not between people, but between the members of the congregation and their operating system. As this project will conclude, the members of Prince of Peace operate as a small church though the needs are larger. Under such a system, members rely upon a casual, less formal operating structure. The members are comfortable in knowing that when there is a problem the person who traditionally takes care of such things will deal with it. In a larger church, which Prince of Peace Lutheran Church has become, the members do not know and interact with one another as they did in the pioneering and survival days. The informal structure has slowly ceased to exist. The result has been a break down in operations as many of the projects and needs of the congregation have gone unaddressed.<sup>40</sup>

“Vision Sunday” was one of the first attempts to bring to the congregation’s attention the operational challenges. The idea grew out of this researcher’s early discussions with the Elders of the congregation. Having had some limited exposure to strategic ministry planning through participation in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod’s *Church Planting Institute* a few years earlier, this researcher began to shape and share a vision of a future in which the congregation routinely set a priority on planning and goal setting. This researcher was speaking to people who had for ten and twenty years simply had enough on their hands in reacting to the day-to-day challenges of the congregation. They had experienced long periods when the bills could not be met and the future had been very much in doubt. Strategic ministry planning was a challenging concept for them. It did not help that this researcher only had a basic understanding of the concept himself.

It was advertised as *Vision Sunday*. On October 21, 2001, the worship service ended after half an hour. As arranged, this researcher then stepped to the side and the Elders of the congregation stepped forward to address the congregation about the future. The plan was to invite the congregation’s comments on the topic.<sup>41</sup> *Vision Sunday* was a step forward, though the immediate lesson learned was that the group was too large to promote effective discussion.

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<sup>40</sup> For example, the first day this researcher came to work the room which had recently been remodeled for the Pastor’s use—the previous pastor had established no office in the church—had no furniture or computer. Several phone calls were placed to the leaders, yet no one seemed to know anything about it or claim any responsibility.

<sup>41</sup> Watching from the side, this researcher noticed that the Elders were talking far more than had been discussed. The plan had been for them to draw out of the congregation comments and ideas, not lecture to them. It was an important lesson.

*Vision Sunday* set a tone. It was followed up by persistent pastoral presentations to the Elders, Council, and Voters Meetings on the importance of planning. By the time of the second *Vision Sunday*, November 24, 2002, the congregation, encouraged along by the pastor, was well into the construction of eight new classrooms in the formerly unfinished Fellowship Hall basement.<sup>42</sup> It was the perfect backdrop for the on-going planning discussion.

To facilitate *Vision Sunday II*, an area LCMS pastor, Rev. Leon Houser, was invited to lead the congregation in goal setting and planning (see figure 8). The Sunday afternoon event was well attended and the list of ideas generated that day is presented in Appendix 4. Many of the goals and projects generated that day have since been accomplished. What became clear after the second *Vision* event was the congregation's structural inability to implement any



Figure 8. Members gathered in small group discussions during Vision Sunday II.

long-term projects or plans. In other words, once the congregation had done its work in identifying goals and projects, there was no structure in place for implementation. What has since been accomplished from the list generated that day has been done on a short-term basis, with many of the projects related to the needs of an aging facility.

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<sup>42</sup> This project, like many others carried out over the past six years, though significant in scope and size, came as the result of short-term, one-at-a-time plans. Though the hopes were long term, how these projects fit into the over-all mission of the congregation was vague.

In the summer of 2003, a member of the congregation spotted an advertisement in a synodical publication for a Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) service called *Strategic Ministry Planning* (see Appendix 3). Brought to the congregation's attention, action was taken in early 2004 to contact LCEF to learn more about their SMP program. A representative came and presented the program to the congregation on Thursday evening, January 27, 2004 (see figure 9).

The congregation then held an open discussion session on the following Sunday morning to discuss the ideas.<sup>43</sup> At a special Voters Meeting, after services, on February 22, 2004, the proposal to hire this particular program, for the cost of approximately \$15,000, was put to a vote and defeated. Though the program was rejected, the concept of strategic ministry planning was not.<sup>44</sup>



Figure 9. Congregational Members listen to SMP presentation by a Lutheran Church Extension Fund representative.

### **The Situation In 2005**

As this Doctor of Ministry Major Applied Project unfolds, the congregation is experiencing moderate growth, mostly from transfers from other LCMS congregations, some recaptures of those who had stopped attending church, and the occasional adult baptism (2 in 2004).

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<sup>43</sup> The discussion points can be seen in Appendix 5.

<sup>44</sup> The largest hurdle concerned a land (re)purchase. The District, in the mid 1980's, had bought back from the congregation seven of the original lots in order to help the congregation financially. The agreement had been that the congregation would purchase them back. The District was asking the congregation to do so in the near future. The second hurdle was, of course, the price of the program. Many felt the congregation could accomplish SMP with its own personnel and resources.

Though arguably one of the most stable and positive times within the congregation's history, few members are aware of the increasing frustrations faced by the staff which has not grown in numbers in a decade. Only the additional hours and the proficiency of the Pastor and church secretary keep this from being a crisis.<sup>45</sup>

The other unrecognized problem is the decrease in congregational participation in the ministry. In transitioning from a smaller congregation, where everyone knew each other and tasks were delegated by consent in an informal atmosphere, to a larger congregation with many new faces and a decreased sense of personal responsibility for the operation of the ministry, the old committee-based system has fallen into disuse. Meetings deal with facility and finances but little time is given to ministry. The current system works well for reacting to problems but little time is given to planning or setting goals for the future.

Strategic ministry planning can help this congregation learn to address present challenges and plot a route for the future. The benefits are clear. Making the decision to engage in strategic ministry planning is the hard part.

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<sup>45</sup> The staff is one full-time pastor working six to seven days a week, and one half-time, very talented, church secretary.



## CHAPTER FOUR: THE LITERATURE REVIEW

### Definition and Need

Strategic planning has been in use in business for several decades. The number of books published over the years on this topic is vast. They come and go in waves of popularity. Though the number of titles and authors focused upon strategic ministry planning for congregations is not nearly as great, they read very much like their popular, secular cousins.

Before examining the literature, strategic planning itself needs to be defined. In brief, strategic planning—or strategic ministry planning when discussing its use within the Church—is the process of understanding what an organization is to be doing and then intentionally doing it better.

Suspicion naturally rises among Christians whenever secular tools and concepts are imported into the church. Are they appropriate for use in the Church? Some argue that the Holy Spirit is the guide of the Church and it may appear that engaging in strategic ministry planning is a challenge to His leadership. Some may ask if strategic ministry planning opens the door to other secular influences that endanger the centrality of the Gospel. Chapter Two of this project answers many of these questions, showing that it is possible to use secular tools within the Church. They, of course, need to be use appropriately.

Even when the use of secular programs is accepted, Christians still want to know the possible range of results they could expect if they use strategic ministry planning. Specifically,

they want to know what the negatives are. To answer these questions, it is helpful first to discuss the topic of innovation.

Frans Johansson differentiates between what he identifies as “directional innovation” and “intersectional innovation” in his book *The Medici Effect*:

The major difference between a directional idea and an intersectional one is that we know where we are going with the former. The idea has *direction*. Directional innovation improves a product in predictable steps, along a well-defined dimension.... Intersectional innovations, on the other hand, change the world in leaps along new directions. They usually pave the way for a new field and therefore make it possible for the people who originated them to become the leaders in the field they created.<sup>1</sup>

Strategic ministry planning is a directional tool, not an innovative force. It seeks to improve what is already taking place. It is not a search for a new focus for the church. A congregation uses strategic ministry planning just as this researcher is using Frans Johansson’s work. Frans Johansson’s book never mentions Christianity, the Church, or ministry yet it has many useful ideas for a Christian researcher. Strategic planning was not developed for congregations yet it contains many helpful ideas that can enhance ministry. Strategic ministry planning is a tool used to develop the existing ministry imperatives that are already based upon parameters within the Church. If the Gospel is central to the members of a congregation, using strategic ministry planning will not change that.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Frans Johansson, *The Medici Effect*, (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2004), pages 18-19.

<sup>2</sup> Using Frans Johansson’s definitions of innovation, Christians would understand that the work of God in the person and actions of Jesus Christ was an innovation of a new direction for humanity. Where once there was only death and the grave, now there is life. A congregation’s work then is not to seek new routes of salvation, but to proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The innovation that takes place at the congregational level is in how best to share this Good News with others.

## Where It Begins

Strategic planning begins with a leadership vision. James Belasco wrote, “My experience tells me that an energizing, inspiring vision is the key to mobilizing support. This vision is the picture that drives all action. It includes both deeply felt values and a picture of the organization’s strategic focus.”<sup>3</sup>

A leadership vision is especially necessary where there is a problem in identifying the purpose of the organization. In business, for example, the problem can be a corporation that has lost its central focus, its identity, around which the employees and management can rally. In a congregation, the members may have developed conflicting personal views of their church’s purpose for existence.

Such books as James Belasco’s relate story after story about companies that became so entrenched in their thinking and routines that they failed to understand the changing needs of their markets and customers. They did things the old way, forgot their purpose, failed to teach new employees of the companies’ core values, and began to lose money and market share. The success stories in these books tell of triumphant turn-a-rounds brought on by visionary leadership and often resisted restructuring. There are such stories among congregations as well.

Has there been any emphasis on strategic ministry planning in the past? In a 1987 update of a 1973 work entitled *How to Manage Your Church*, for example, author Edgar Walz dedicated these few lines to the subject:

A statement of a church’s mission must be included in its constitution... That stated purpose must be the directive for everything done by a pastor, by church leaders, by a

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<sup>3</sup> James A. Belasco, *Teaching the Elephant to Dance*, (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1990) 11.

church's department and organizations, yes, by fellowship, its services, its finances, all of its management must aim at that stated purpose.<sup>4</sup>

Edgar Walz gives no guidance as to how to determine a congregation's mission, how to put it into writing, or how to communicate it to the people involved. It is assumed that the mission is narrow, easily understood by all, and that no more need be said.

### **Congregational Strategic Ministry Planning Needs, Weaknesses, and Approaches**

Aubrey Malphurs is one of the top leaders of strategic planning for congregations.<sup>5</sup> For Malphurs the need for congregational strategic ministry planning is self-evident. He mourns that, "Only 20% of America's 367,000 congregations actively pursue strategic planning."<sup>6</sup> The 80/20 rule is alive and well among congregations, and he believes that the downward trends in American Christianity demand new action among the eighty percent.

Malphurs defines strategic ministry planning "simply as the process of thinking and acting". As easy as it sounds, he does recognize that even among those congregations that do engage in strategic ministry planning there is one inherent weakness that consistently prevents success. Whether a congregation engages in overly simplified planning programs or in those so complicated that they require consultants, Malphurs writes:

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<sup>4</sup> Edgar Walz, *How To Manage Your Church*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987), 15.

<sup>5</sup> "Ordained in 1971, Dr. Malphurs planted his first church in 1972. He has also pastored two churches in Dallas, Texas, while teaching at Dallas Seminary. In 1997, he stopped pastoring to fully devote his time to his professorship and The Malphurs Group. Aubrey has ministered with CAM International, Christian Associates International and World Harvest Outreach, both in the US and in foreign countries, such as Russia, Finland, Latvia, Germany, Holland, Switzerland and France. He has been a consultant and seminar leader for the South Carolina, Texas, Florida and California Southern Baptist Conventions, the Salvation Army, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and many others." From <http://www.malphursgroup.com/AboutUs/Team.html>; Internet.

<sup>6</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, (Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 1999), page 9.

One of the weaknesses of conventional strategic models is their failure to encourage implementation of the results. The findings are filed away in some ministry's filing cabinet under "plan." When this happens, the entire process is undermined.<sup>7</sup>

Malphurs warns that congregations, like many businesses and other organizations, are often not as open to substantial, long-term change as they might believe they are.

Another weakness that hampers strategic planning success, corporate or congregational, is the laziness of the leadership. The leadership may want to see change, but their strategic planning efforts fails because instead of doing the foundational groundwork, including self-education, the leaders simply imitate the plans and programs of others in a boilerplate fashion. The hard lesson learned is that what works in one location and set of circumstances may not necessarily work somewhere else.<sup>8</sup> Thomas Rainer affirms this point:

Too many church leaders seek to copy the methodologies of churches without emulating their hearts. Never expect to be a church for the unchurched unless you have a passion for evangelism.<sup>9</sup>

No matter the program chosen, each congregation must do its own groundwork, cutting no corners in the process if it wants to succeed.

Many authors call for change in how congregations operate. Loren B. Mead, for example, as compared with Aubrey Malphurs, seeks just as significant a change in how congregations function, but instead of working with the congregations as they are, he promotes a revolution, "*Our task is no less than the reinvention of the church.* It may take several genera-

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<sup>7</sup> Malphurs *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 11.

<sup>8</sup> Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 13. This was illustrated in the community where this research project is being conducted. A local minister walked out into his congregation's sanctuary one Sunday morning wearing a Hawaiian shirt in place of his usual business suit. His abrupt change in clothing and actions confused many of the members. He was, of course, imitating a popular pastor in California who was known for dressing in just such a way. It confused the membership greatly.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Rainer, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 226.

tions. We will not see the end of it, but we must begin now.”<sup>10</sup> Mead believes that things already changing on their own. Yet, his interest is not in defining how to create the church of the future, but, empowered by the metamorphosis that is already taking place, he is trying to identify its front-line evolutionary forms to see where the church is going. He stops short, though, of predicting in detail what the future church will look like, where it is heading, and what it means. Ultimately, Mead simply desires big change.

Thom Rainer, instead of reading the times and predicting the future, researched a specific aspect of the church today. His interest was not in change for change’s sake but in knowing where exactly change should take place. Specifically, he wanted to know what causes formerly unchurched people to join churches. His book, *Surprising Insights From the Unchurched*, draws themes from interviews with newly active church members. Rainer simply quantified what he heard the newest members of growing churches had to say and listed their thoughts as fifteen recommendable objectives for congregations who want to be attractive to the unchurched.<sup>11</sup>

### **Strategic Ministry Planning: Do We Want It?**

The literature is full of encouragement to engage in strategic ministry planning, but the assumption is that a congregation can recognize the need. The books and authors skip—maybe

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<sup>10</sup> Loren B. Mead, *The Once and Future Church*, (Bethesda: Alban Institute, 2001), 43. This researcher once attended a presentation by Loren Mead hosted by a large Lutheran fraternal benefit society. As interesting as the speakers’ comments were, his theology grew so increasingly (purposefully?) offensive to the researcher that he, and others, did not return for the evening session.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Rainer, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 224-231.

because there is no answer—this foundational question: *How does a congregation determine that it needs or wants to engage in strategic ministry planning?*

Again, the literature is full of statements such as this one from Alan Nelson and Gene Appell:

Each year, estimates are that as many as 2,700 churches in the United States alone hold their last service, close their doors, and put up the “For Sale” sign. Scores of others exist in a holding pattern, going through the motions of church, void of vitality, hoping only to keep the bills paid and attendees pacified.<sup>12</sup>

Such comments stir the heart and heighten a sense of crisis, but the movement from crisis thinking to action is something of a mystery.

If congregations naturally resist change, strategic ministry planning within a congregation needs to find a sponsor of change from among its members and allow that leader to nurture heart-felt motivation for change in everyone else. The Pastor, or another member, can introduce the idea but the concept of planning has to appeal to a larger number of the members and develop among them confidence in the procedure if it is going to work. Where are such people to be found? Charles Olsen looks to the church board, or council, as the leaders of congregational change:

From a strategic standpoint, one who holds hope for renewal of congregational life has to start somewhere. What better place to start than the board and its meetings! If those meetings and relationships are life giving rather than life draining, the board can become a model of community and ministry for the whole church. As I see it, the level of commitment in a congregation will not rise above that of the set apart leaders.<sup>13</sup>

Aubrey Malphurs agrees with Olsen:

The first step is to determine who is involved in the discovery process. The ideal is to have everyone who is associated with the ministry involved. Since this isn't feasible,

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<sup>12</sup> Alan Nelson, Gene Appel, *How to Change Your Church*, (W Publishing Group, 2000), page XIX.

<sup>13</sup> Charles Olsen, *Transforming Church Boards*, (Alban Publications, 1995), page 9.

the responsibility rests with the primary leadership. In the church, this would be the head pastor, any staff, and the church board.<sup>14</sup>

It is therefore unreasonable to expect an entire congregation, even in the face of disaster, to understand its needs and the correct actions.

Yet, even a willingness to change does not mean success. In describing a strategic ministry planning learning curve, the authors of *Leading Congregation Change* write:

In every congregation that seriously engaged the process, a common pattern emerged. The strategic planning process began with great enthusiasm. The congregation developed a clearer sense of its situation and its environment and eventually established vision, then, as the vision-based priorities were implemented, significant conflict emerged.<sup>15</sup>

Strategic ministry planning cannot be a mere diversion or hobby of the congregation. It has to be engaged whole-heartedly, for the long run.

### **Getting a Handle on the Risk**

Before continuing with the topic of leadership, risk and what it means to a congregation should be discussed. Given equal information, assuming equal need, why do some congregations engage in strategic ministry planning and others not?

In his book *the Medici Effect*, Frans Johansson focuses on the conditions that nurture innovation. Risk is an important aspect of this topic. Johansson explores common misconceptions concerning risk, all of which are applicable to congregations. Specifically, he points out that, “Humans have a fundamental tendency to live their lives at a certain ‘acceptable’ level of risk. This level is different for each individual and it changes according to phases of our lives

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<sup>14</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Ministry Nuts and Bolts*, (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1997.) page 38.

<sup>15</sup> Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem, James Furr, *Leading Congregational Change*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), page 7.



but we all have a level at which we're comfortable" The word "congregations" could replace "people" in the text. It is important to note that different congregations have different acceptable levels of risk. Frans Johansson explains, "Gerald Wilde, a Canadian psychologist and leading risk expert, calls this tendency *risk homeostasis*. In a nutshell, risk homeostasis says that people will compensate for taking higher risks in one area of life by taking lower risks in another."<sup>16</sup> Congregations as well will seek to pull back in one area after it has been risky in another.

Frans Johansson supports his observations with common counter-intuitive examples.<sup>17</sup> His point is that people do not truly minimize risk in their lives but simply redistribute it, maintaining the same over-all level.

This discussion of risk has application to strategic ministry planning. Understanding it will help a leader to better interpret the often confusing actions of a congregation pushed too fast and too far beyond its comfort zone. It explains why congregations often feel that they need to focus on minimizing risk instead doing what they can to ensure success. Furthermore, congregations, like people, often make their decisions based upon perceived levels of risk that may not be valid. Johansson insists that the notion of minimizing risks is not a viable strategy. It cannot be done, he warns. Risk remains constant in a given situation. The chances of success can be improved, but the level of risk cannot be changed. A congregation might decide to

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<sup>16</sup> Frans Johansson, *The Medici Effect*, (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2004), pages 166-167.

<sup>17</sup> Documented research, for example, shows that people who wear seatbelts have just as many accidents as those who do not. Research shows that wearing seat belts causes drivers to take greater risks and that not wearing seatbelts causes drivers to be more careful, evening out the accident statistics. There are just as many pedestrians hit by cars in clearly marked crosswalks, for example, as there are at crosswalks that are poorly marked. Why? Because the perceived safety of the marked crosswalk acts to lower the perceived risk of being run over in that crosswalk causing people to step out in front of cars, when, at a poorly marked crosswalk, they would not. Frans Johansson, *The Medici Effect*, pages 166-169.

wait on a project until they have more funds in the bank. This may help the success of the project, but it will not minimize the risks of that project failing. More money in the bank simply means more money will be spent on the project, but again, the risk of failure will not decrease.

Frans Johansson believes that a person (a congregation), when it perceives a need, should go after the solution with the assumption that there is always going to be a chance of failure, focusing instead on using the resources at hand to achieve success.

### **The Pastor as Motivator and Leader**

How important is the pastor in the decision to engage in strategic ministry planning? Can it be the pastor's idea, and should he be the one to lead it? Aubrey Malphurs writes, "Although primary leaders are responsible, they must not attempt the process alone. The characteristic of a great leader is that he or she is able to involve others in the action."<sup>18</sup> The advice sounds good, but what percentage of pastors are great leaders? How does a pastor become a great leader? These questions go unanswered.

Other problems arise in reading the literature. For example, the books written on strategic ministry planning often have the same sort of introduction. The authors begin with, *When I arrived at my new church, I realized that there was something wrong... I could see that big changes were needed... I wasn't sure what I would do...* or something to that nature. Soon thereafter, though, the pronouns switch from "I" to "we". Not only does the new pastor identify the need for change but a core leadership suddenly appears that sees it too.<sup>19</sup> For stra-

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<sup>18</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Ministry Nuts and Bolts*, (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1997), page 39.

<sup>19</sup> It would be a very short book that opened with, "As the new Pastor I saw and identified a need in the congregation, but no one else ever did."

tegic planning to take place, and be taken seriously, a unique mixture of pastoral vision and congregation leadership must be developed and set in place. How this is accomplished is not clear. Certainly, in the case of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, it is taking years.

Another significant consideration not fully addressed in the literature is the honest factor. It can be stated this way: *Is it honest for a Pastor to arrive at a congregation and then insist on change?* In other words: *Is it fair to the current members, those people who joined a specific congregation, to be asked to change that congregation into a different congregation, one they might not have joined?* The reality is that when a pastor tries to go it alone, without the support of the leadership and the congregation, insisting on change, people leave. Alan Nelson and Gene Appel have a definite opinion on this. They wrote, “Change can be slow and intentional with very positive results. Count the cost. Pay the price. And don’t look back.” Depending upon a person’s understanding of the role of a congregation in its member’s lives, this attitude is alarming. The “cost” and the “price” they refer to are people. They continue:

One of the hardest things for me during the B Zone was losing key leaders who chose not to navigate the change with us. The chairman of the elders who hired me is no longer in the church. There are others from that initial elder group who are gone. I knew I was running with this God-given dream and that people were helped as a result, yet not everyone could support the idea. Some felt betrayed, so they left. This is part of the angst of leading. It just hurts.<sup>20</sup>

Their willingness to see people leave their congregations, to set themselves as martyrs of the cause of change, does not sit well. The implication is that change is more important than nurture, that those who leave the congregation are casualties to be expected. This flies in the face of pastor as the shepherd of the flock, caring for each member above his own ego.

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<sup>20</sup> Nelson and Appel, *How to Change Your Church*, page 263.

A third problem that arises in reading the literature on strategic ministry planning is the ramifications of the assumptions that the pastor is the significant leader and shaper of the congregation. If strategic ministry planning stalls or fails, then the blame is laid at his feet and his deficiencies are expounded upon.<sup>21</sup> How can a pastor lead when there is so much at stake?

Looking a little deeper into the concept of pastor as the leader of strategic ministry planning, is it possible for a pastor to become a dynamic leader? Everyone would agree that there is such a thing as a natural leader, and that a pastor, by definition of his office should possess a certain amount of leadership qualities, but can great leadership be learned? Bill George, a successful executive, wrote:

Authentic leaders genuinely desire to serve others through their leadership. They are more interested in empowering the people they lead to make a difference than they are in power, money, or prestige for themselves. They are as guided by qualities of the heart, by passion and compassion, as they are by qualities of the mind.... Authentic leaders are not born that way...<sup>22</sup>

Bill George believes that good leadership can be learned. For him, reading his book is a good start. The implication for strategic ministry planning is that pastor leadership education is an important first step in congregational planning.

Herrington, Bonem, and Furr have a helpful concluding chapter in their book *Leading Congregational Change* entitled “The Art Of Transformational Leadership”. They write, “Congregational transformation is a balancing act in many different respects... Change itself needs to be balanced between leading the congregation forward and pausing to allow members

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<sup>21</sup> Herrington, Bonem, and Furr, *Leading Congregational Change*, pages 10-11.

<sup>22</sup> Bill George, *Authentic Leadership*, (San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 2003), page 12.

to catch their breath.”<sup>23</sup> They go on to describe the difficulties involved in changing a congregation as well as several key ideas that the pastor leading change should keep in mind:

First, “Leaders have an array of options available to motivate people.”

Second, “A congregation will rarely grow beyond the health of its pastor and key leaders.”

Third, “Change is difficult to initiate.”

Fourth, “Every congregation is a distinct and complex entity.”

Fifth, “A congregation rarely has leaders who naturally possess the abilities needed to move through the change process.

Sixth, “Congregational change is normally slow...”<sup>24</sup>

The pastor as a leader needs to be aware of these ideas and know that his own ambitions, skill set, and vision will not be enough to bring about strategic change. This said, the resources are available to both educate and guide a pastor as he seeks to lead his congregation in strategic ministry planning.

### **Strategic Ministry Planning Structure**

Strategic ministry planning, as with its corporate parallels, has a basic structure:

1. Identify the general purpose of the congregation.
2. Identify the values of the congregation.
3. Define the congregation in one sentence from the one purpose and the many values.
4. Make plans and set goals using the Mission Statement as a guide.
5. Create the structure to implement and follow through, and evaluate goals and plans.

The steps may vary, but the structure is similar across plans.

The first step in strategic ministry planning is figuring out who the congregation is.

Aubrey Malphurs wrote, “The first step in strategic thinking and acting is to conduct a ministry analysis. It invites churches to ask the basic questions, How are we doing? And what kind

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<sup>23</sup> Herrington, Beonem, Furr, *Leading Congregational Change*, page 158.

<sup>24</sup> Herrington, Beonem, Furr, *Leading Congregational Change*, page 158-159.

of church are we?”<sup>25</sup> This can be accomplished through surveys and listening points. When complete the congregation will have a snapshot of themselves, one that describes who they are, what they are made-up of, and identifies their weaknesses and their strengths. Much of this will be of little surprise to the leadership.

The second step will often be an exercise in sifting out the values of the congregation. It is a process of clearly understanding what the members believe is important to them and identifying what they support. Not yet looking to the future, as Aubrey Malphurs indicates, this step “asks and answers the fundamental ministry question, ‘Why do we do what we do?’”<sup>26</sup>

The third step takes the values of the congregation and puts them into a Mission Statement. It is a key step and it is often at this point that the process ends for many congregations. Instead of simply being filed away, a valid mission statement—one that truly captures the congregation’s values—will accomplish the following: dictate the ministry’s direction, formulate the ministry’s function, focus the ministry’s future, provide a guideline for decision making, inspire ministry unity, share the ministry’s strategy, enhance effectiveness, ensure an enduring organization, and facilitate evaluation.<sup>27</sup>

The fourth step involves taking the Mission Statement and supporting material and developing a vision for the future and a strategy for accomplishing it. Often congregations begin at this point, brainstorming specific ideas with vague connections to the values of the congregation. An idea or two may be accomplished, but the support of the entire congregation

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<sup>25</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, page 61.

<sup>26</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, page 78.

<sup>27</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, pages 100-103.

may be lacking. This step in strategic ministry planning bases its ideas from the completed inter-congregation research and work.

The fifth step involves creating the systems and structure needed to accomplish the vision. By this point, the congregation will know where it needs to make changes and commit its resources. The structure and systems created will also emphasize the need for constant evaluation and recommitment as the future unfolds.

### **Summary**

The literature on strategic ministry planning is not large but it sufficiently offers the guidance needed in order to understand and carry out the basic steps. Ranging in extremes, the literature is most helpful when it makes application to a relatively functional congregation and assumes that that the congregation wishes to strengthen its ministry instead of recreating itself from the ground up. Where the literature is the weakest is in its assumptions that strong pastoral leadership is present and the congregation can be made to understand the needs and advantages involved in accomplishing strategic ministry planning. It also has difficulty in describing a clear process for motivating an uninformed congregation into action.

In all of the literature, Aubrey Malphurs stands out as an experienced and practical source for strategic ministry planning.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: THE PROJECT DEVELOPED**

### **A. Design of the Study**

This study is undertaken to identify and evaluate the attitudes, the knowledge base, and the significant factors involved in a certain decision by the Voters Assembly of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. This decision concerns the implementation of strategic ministry planning within the congregation. To accomplish this study, the following steps will be undertaken:

1. A statistically significant number of Voters will be confidentially interviewed before being presented the specific strategic ministry planning choices.
2. The congregation will be asked to consider engaging in strategic ministry planning and picking a program to follow.
3. After a decision is made concerning the use of strategic ministry planning, a statistically significant number of the people involved in the voting will be confidentially interviewed to discover what influenced in their decision.

Area LCMS pastors will also be interviewed to discover their understanding, experience, interest, and attitudes toward strategic ministry planning. Two District executives will be interviewed to assess their understanding, experience, interest, and attitudes toward strategic ministry planning.

### **B. Research Tools and Methodology**

Interviews and surveys will be the main tools used in this study. The following sections



will describe their design and intended use.

### Voting Member Interviews

To best gauge the congregation's pre-decision attitudes and knowledge, this researcher has chosen personal interviews. As the concept of strategic ministry planning is unfamiliar to many people, the member's interaction with the researcher during the interviews will allow the interviewer opportunity to inform the subject on the topic and draw-out meaningful responses.

The population chosen for the pre-decision interviews is the Voter Assembly of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.<sup>1</sup> These are the members constitutionally charged with authority over the congregation's operation.<sup>2</sup> As defined by the congregation's constitution, the Confirmed Members are those who are 18 and older.<sup>3</sup> At the commencement of this project, there were 167 Voting Members of the congregation. Statistical resources indicate that for a population of this size, interviews should be requested from 110 members. Being that this is congregation, this researcher expects to be granted, time allowing, interviews by a majority of the Voting Members randomly chosen.

From the 167 Voting Members, the 13 elected leaders of the congregation will automatically be placed on the list of interviews. Their leadership positions make their input of particular interest.

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<sup>1</sup> Such terms as "Voting Members" are capitalized because they are technical terms used in the constitution of the congregation. This constitution can be examined in appendix 19.

<sup>2</sup> The constitution in Appendix 19 outlines the operation of the congregation.

<sup>3</sup> Most members in this congregation are confirmed in the eighth grade.

Certain Voting Members will be intentionally excluded from being interviewed. They include college students who live outside of the immediate area, members who live at a great distance, and certain others whose age, health, or situation make an interview impossible or logically renders an interview of insignificant value. No members will be excluded for lack of participation in the congregation, though it should be noted that in order to remain a member of the congregation Voting Members are required to attend Holy Communion at least once a year.

Once selected, the Voting Members will receive a letter in their mailboxes in the narthex of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (see Appendix 9). Those letters not picked up will be mailed out after a few weeks. With so many members to interview, the process is expected to take all of February and last into March.

The purpose of these interviews will be to gather relevant information about the individual members, ask them particular questions concerning strategic ministry planning, and draw out from them their level of anticipated support and participation in the selection of a strategic ministry planning program for use by Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.

### The Subdivisions

The goal of this project is to identify the factors involved in the decision making process of the congregation concerning the use of strategic ministry planning. This researcher is also interested in knowing if there are significant differences among three specific, though artificially designated, subdivisions within the congregation.

The first subgroup to be measured against the whole of the congregation is composed of the thirteen elected leaders of the congregation. Their answers will be compared with the entire congregation and the other subgroups.

The second subgroup is composed of those people who were members of the congregation before this researcher became their pastor in 1999. Their answers will be compared with the whole congregation and to the other subgroups to see if there is a significant difference.

The third subgroup will be composed of those members who have joined the congregation since the researcher was installed as pastor. Their answers will be compared with the whole congregation and with the other subgroups to see if there is a significant difference.

The reason for the subgroup comparison is twofold. First, the researcher wishes to know if the elected officers of the congregation reflect the thoughts and will of the congregation in general. Second, the researcher wishes to know if there exists, as could be suspected, a difference in attitude and support toward strategic ministry planning between those who have been members more than six years and those who have joined within the past six years.<sup>4</sup> If such division in attitude and expectation exists, this could alter the expected success of strategic ministry planning. However, and more to the point of this study, knowing if there are two differing groups could help the researcher emphasize the needs and benefits of strategic ministry planning for a congregation in such circumstances.

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<sup>4</sup> The year 1999 is a significant dividing line within the history of the congregation. See chapter three and the history of the congregation. The experiences of the members of these two groups within the congregation are very different.

## Member Interview Questions

When meeting with the member, before the interview formally begins, the following written statement will be placed in front of the member and read aloud by the researcher:

Rev. Otto's project is to research the decision-making process involved in choosing, or not choosing, a **strategic ministry planning** program for Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.

The researcher will then stress that this interview and project is concerned with the decision making process within the congregation and not the actual implementation of strategic ministry planning. The interviewer will reassure the member that no matter the extent of their knowledge, interest, or opinions, the researcher is interested in knowing the member's truthful answers at this moment.

When a basic understanding of the purpose of the project and the interview is achieved, and before the interview has begun, the researcher will place in front of the member the following printed definition of strategic ministry planning and read it aloud:

**Strategic ministry planning**, for the purpose of this project, is defined as the intentional actions of a congregation to:

- 1) Clearly understand and state its purpose for existence;
- 2) Inventory its God-given resources to accomplish that purpose;
- 3) Map out its desires and its goals for engaging that purpose in the future, and
- 4) Structure/ restructure itself accordingly.

The use of paid/hired resources, programs, and experts from outside of the congregation may or may not be used in accomplishing such planning.

The *Release and Disclosure* form will then be placed before the member and read aloud by the researcher (see Appendix 11). When understanding is achieved, the member will be asked to sign the form. The subject's permission will then be sought to turn on the recorder and begin the interview.

The initial grouping of questions, designated by letters instead of numbers and printed below, is meant to gather general information about the member. They are relatively simple in order to help put the member at ease.

- A. About how long have you been a member of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church?*
- B. In a month's time, how many worship services would you say you normally attend?*
- C. In a year's time, of the four Voters Meetings held, how many would you say you normally attend?*
- D. Do you now, or have you in the past, held an elected office at Prince of Peace?*
- E. Do you know if Prince of Peace has a Mission Statement?*
- F. Do you know the purpose a Mission Statement serves?*

After the initial set of questions, questions 1a and 1b, printed below, will confirm that the subject has received the information provided beforehand, including the explanation of the purpose of this project, and examined the written definition of strategic ministry planning.

Question 1b will help determine if more explanation is needed before proceeding with the rest of the interview.

- 1a. Have you read the definition for strategic ministry planning provided in the letter sent to you?*
- 1b. Do you have any questions about what it means?*

The next set of questions, printed below, consists of three separate pairs of statements concerning congregations in general and Prince of Peace Lutheran in specific. They seek to disclose how the member thinks concerning the appropriateness of a congregation to construct a specific identity for itself.

- 2. I am going to read to you a pair of sentences. Then I want you to pick the sentence of the two, answering A or B, which best reflects your opinion of what a congregation should be. In total, there are three sets of sentences. I will repeat each set as many times as you like.*
  - A. Congregations are unique and each should seek to discover its own specific role in God's Kingdom, or,*
  - B. Congregations are basically the same, each serving the Kingdom of God in a similar way.*

- A. I joined this congregation because it is what I think a Christian congregation should be, or,*
- B. I joined this congregation because of its uniqueness among Christian congregations.*

- A. If I move from this area, I will look for a congregation similar to this one.*
- B. If I move from this area, I will look for a congregation that is unique to itself.*

The next set of questions, printed below, focuses the previous answers into a specific action statement. The first question purposely takes a strong pro-strategic ministry planning stance. Once answered, the bias of the question will be pointed out by the researcher and the member will be asked if their answer should be changed. The second question, if the first answer remains pro-strategic ministry planning, asks a specific question concerning the placement of the responsibility for congregational planning. The third question will ask the member to evaluate the effectiveness of current planning at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. This will help determine level of contentedness among the membership.

- 3a. Why should a congregation make plans and set goals for the future?*
- 3b. Who should be responsible for making such plans and setting such goals?*
- 3c. Is this happening at POP?*

The next set of questions, printed below, asks for examples of strategic ministry planning experiences. The answers will indicate both the member's understanding of strategic ministry planning and the extent of the member's experience.

- 4a. What have been your experiences with setting goals and making plans at Prince of Peace?*
- 4b. Or within any other congregation?*
- 4c. Or participated in similar planning at your job or within any other organization?*

Because strategic ministry planning programs often includes elements of long-term planning, the next question, printed below, will ask the member to consider and then react to long-term congregation planning.

*5. How important, or unimportant, at this time do you believe it is for Prince of Peace to intentionally make plans and set goals for the next 10 to 20 years?*

Having been introduced to the topic of strategic planning, the member will next be asked to consider its implementation at Prince of Peace Lutheran. The member will be asked to list concerns, their own and/or ones they can project upon the congregation, over such a program being considered for use at Prince of Peace.

*6. What **concerns** should our congregation have in making such a process a priority in the near future?*

The next question, printed below, will ask for nearly the same information as the previous question, but will emphasize the term “hesitate” in place of “concern”, eliciting additional possible reasons why the congregation might choose not to proceed with strategic ministry planning at this time.

*7. What would make our congregation **hesitate** to become involved in such a process in the near future?*

The next question, printed below, will ask the member to imagine that the concerns and hesitations of the congregation have been satisfactorily answered, and that the congregation has gone ahead and voted to engage in strategic ministry planning and even selected a particular, though unspecified, strategic ministry plan to use at Prince of Peace. The member will then be asked to list what benefits or results they would desire to emerge from such an investment of time, money, and resources, by the congregation.

*8. If Prince of Peace dedicated itself to making plans and setting goals for the future, what benefits would you hope to see come out of such effort?*

The next set of questions, printed below, will ask the members to state to what extent they would value being involved in the selection of a strategic ministry program, and then asks for the criteria they would employ.

- 9a. *At the April Voters Meeting, the Voters will be examining and possibly selecting an SMP program for use at POP. How important is it for to you to attend an informational presentation a week before that Voters Meeting? Why?*
- 9b. *What information would you want to know about a specific SMP in order to be able to make an informed decision about its possible use at POP?*

The next question, printed below, will ask the member to what extent they would participate in the decision at the Voters Meeting.

10. *If you knew that the Voters were going to be examining and possibly selecting an SMP program for use at POP at the April Voters meeting, how important would it be to you to attend that Voters Meeting and participate in the discussion and vote? Why?*

The next set of questions, printed below, returns to the topic of commitment to the decision process and the resulting project.

- 11a. *If the Voters Assembly voted to use a specific SMP program, and you were asked to participate in the process, would you be willing to dedicate your time and talents to the process if asked?*
- 11b. *What would make you hesitate to be involved in the process?*
- 11c. *What would make you eager to be involved?*

The last question, printed below, returns to the member's understanding of the purpose of the congregation.

12. *If a friend of yours asked, "What is the purpose of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church being in existence, what would you say?"*

### Pastoral and District Executive Questions

The purpose in interviewing area LCMS pastors and the LCMS district staff is to measure their familiarity of strategic ministry planning, their attitudes toward such planning, and their experience and their recommendations for Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. A letter



will be sent to each of pastors in the Cedar Rapids North and Cedar Rapids South Circuits of the Iowa District East of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (see Appendix 10).

Prior to beginning the formal interview, the following statement will be shown to the pastor and read by the researcher:

Rev. Otto's project is to research the decision-making process involved in choosing, or not choosing, a **strategic ministry planning** program for Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.

The researcher will stress that this questionnaire and project are concerned with the decision making process, not the actual implementation of strategic ministry planning. When an understanding is achieved on the purpose of the project, the researcher will provide a printed definition of strategic ministry planning and read the following definition to the pastor:

**Strategic ministry planning**, for the purpose of this project, is defined as the intentional actions of a congregation to:

- 1) Clearly understand and state its purpose for existence;
- 2) Inventory its God-given resources to accomplish that purpose;
- 3) Map out its desires and its goals for engaging that purpose in the future, and
- 4) Structure/ restructure itself accordingly.

The use of paid/hired resources, programs, and experts from outside of the congregation may or may not be used in accomplishing such planning.

The pastor will then be told that when the recorder is turned on they will be asked more questions concerning the definition.

Once the *Release and Disclosure* Form is read and signed, the recorder will be turned on and the following questions asked (see Appendix 11).

The opening questions, printed below, are intended to put the pastors at ease and introduce the topic. The pastors will be asked background information as well as questions that affirm a common base of decision making within the various congregations. This initial set of questions, concerning mission statements and their development, will give the interviewer an early measure of the common vocabulary and experiences yet to be discussed.

- A. About how long have you been in your current position?*
- B. About how long have you been in the ministry?*
- C. Does the ultimate decision making authority rest with your Voters Assembly?*
- D. Do you have any formal training or schooling in strategic ministry planning?*
- E. Does your congregation have a Mission Statement?*  
*How was that Mission Statement developed?*  
*How does this Mission Statement direct and guide the plans, goals, direction, and work of this congregation on a daily basis?*

The next set of questions, printed below, will focus the interview on strategic ministry planning.

- 1a. Have you read the definition for strategic ministry planning provided in the letter sent to you?*
- 1b. Do you have a good understanding of this definition? How well do you believe you understand the role of SMP in a congregation?*

The next set of questions, printed below, will seek to understand if the pastor believes that it is appropriate for a congregation to plan for the future.

- 2. In your opinion, which reflects an appropriate understanding of what congregations are:*
  - A. Congregations are unique and each should seek to discover its own specific role in God's Kingdom, or,*
  - B. Congregations are basically the same, each serving the Kingdom of God in a similar way.*

The next set of questions, printed below, will ask the pastor's opinion concerning who should be responsible for planning within a congregation.

- 3a. Within a congregation, who should be responsible for making short-term plans and set short-term goals?*
- 3b. Within a congregation, who should be responsible for making long-term (5-20 year plans and long-term goals)*
- 4. Have you ever been involved in strategic ministry planning at this congregation? What was the experience like?*  
*Have you ever been involved in strategic ministry planning at previous congregations?*  
*Have you ever been involved in strategic ministry planning at other jobs or within any other organization?*

The next question, printed below, seeks to discover the pastor's initial thoughts concerning the news that Prince of Peace Lutheran Church is considering entering into strategic ministry planning.

5. *What is your reaction when I tell you that there is a congregation in the Circuit considering engaging in SMP?*

The next question, printed below, will ask the pastor to list concerns he might have with strategic ministry planning.

6. *What concerns would you have for that congregation engaging in a formal strategic planning program?*

The next question, printed below, focuses in on reasons not to engage in strategic planning.

7. *If one of your own members suggested your congregation enter in a SMP process, what would cause you to hesitate?*

The next question, printed below, will ask for anticipated benefits and results from strategic ministry planning.

8. *If you heard of a congregation engaging in strategic ministry planning, what benefits would you hope it would experience?*

The next question, printed below, will seek any information the pastor knows concerning specific strategic ministry planning programs available to Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.

9. *Are you aware of any specific strategic ministry planning programs available to congregations?*

The next question, printed below, will ask the pastor if he is interested in learning the specific results experienced by Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.

10. *If Prince of Peace in Coralville entered into a strategic ministry program, how interested would you be in the process and the results?*

The next question, printed below, will ask for recommendations from the pastor.

*11. What recommendations would you have for a congregation considering SMP?*

The final question, printed below, will ask for the pastor's belief concerning the purpose of a congregation's existence.

*12. Briefly stated, what is the purpose of a congregation's existence?*

### Permission Document

A Release and Disclosure Form was developed to explain the confidentiality of the information collected, describe the handling of that information following the interview, and to obtain permission for the recording of the interview (see Appendix 11). For each interview of a member or a pastor, the document will be shared and signed before the recorder is turned on and the interview begun.

### **C. Implementation of the Project**

On January 21, 2005, the names of all of the Voting Members were printed and separated. The names of the members of the Church Council, thirteen in total, were selected from the total pool of names in advance. Also withdrawn from the pool of names were those who would not be available for interviews. These names included those who were in college outside of the immediate area, those who lived out of state, and those who were advanced in age, experiencing poor health, or otherwise were beyond participation in the activities of the congregation. From the remaining names, 110 were then selected by random draw.

On January 22, 2005, 110 letters requesting interviews from those selected Voting Members were distributed in the mailboxes in the narthex of the Church (see Appendix 9). An email was also sent out to those who had email addresses (89 of the 110), explaining that there was a letter from the Pastor in their church mailbox. This was done as an additional encouragement to participate in the project. The e-mail also suggested that it would be helpful if the subjects could examine their own schedule and contact the Pastor with a suggestion of a meeting time. One positive response came back within 24 hours from a member who had not even seen the letter but was enthusiastic to participate.

On Sunday, January 23, 2005, the Pastor made an announcement at the conclusion of each worship service concerning the project and the letters distributed in some of the members mailboxes. The tone was light and positive request form Pastor for help in something that would benefit the congregation. It was emphasized in announcement that even if a member did not have an opinion or knowledge on the topic, it was important that the Pastor interview the member as well.

In addition, on January 23, 2005, there was a quarterly Voters Meeting following the 10:15AM service. As part of the Pastor's report, the researcher briefly reviewed the Doctor of Ministry degree he was working on, the congregation's on-going support, the research project now being undertaken, and the topic of that project, the timeline, and the presence of the letters in the member's mailboxes. Two appointments were made for interviews immediately following the Voters Meeting.

On January 23, 2005, the thirteen Pastors of the two local Circuits, and the two District Executives, were each emailed a letter requesting an interview (see Appendix 10). The content of the letter was attached to the email and printed below the text of the email in case

there was no access to Microsoft Word to open the attachment. The email suggested that, if the pastor was agreeable to such an interview, it would be helpful if he would examine his schedule and emailed or telephone the researcher with a suggested time. One positive response was returned within 24 hours.

Email was chosen for the first contact as this is a common means of inter-parish communication. Those who were contacted but had failed to receive or study the email were sent a hard copy of the letter. A quick survey at the following Circuit Meeting, February 8, 2005 showed that all had received the email.

#### Recording the Data From the Pre-decision Interviews

The name of each person to be interviewed was arranged on a list and assigned a number. This list was the only link between the identity of the subject and the written and recorded records of the interviews.

A spreadsheet was created to record the following interview information:

1. The date the subject received the interview letter,
2. The date of the first contact with the subject,
3. The date of the interview, time, and location,
4. The “confirmed” or “unconfirmed status of the interview,
5. The length of the interview.

This spreadsheet also calculated the number and percentage of interviews granted, the number and percentage of interviews completed, the total average length of the interviews, and the locations (home, office, or church) of each interview.

Upon completion of each interview, the resulting digital recording was transferred to the researcher’s laptop computer where it was appropriately renamed to match the random

number assigned to the member or pastor. A copy of the digital interview was also transferred to a CD-ROM for safekeeping.

Initially, the interviews were to be transcribed. Early in the process this was determined to be unnecessary as many of the questions asked for specific answers, “yes” or “no” responses, numerical responses, or fell into similar categories.

The data from each interview was transferred to a spreadsheet where the questions were arranged from top to bottom and the member or pastor’s number across the top. The digital recordings of the interviews were kept to refer to later for specific quotes and future study of answers highlighted on the written form.

The final pre-decision interview was conducted on April 7, 2005. Out of the 110 interviews requested, 79 (71%) were conducted. More interviews could have been conducted if more time had been allotted. The interviews were halted at the time they were because of the impending April 20th Voters Meeting and the intent to present the findings to the Voters at that meeting.

The 79 member interviews total 1,894 minutes (31.5 hours) and averaged 24 minutes in length. The interviews were conducted in the member’s homes (62%), at the church (35%), and at their places of work (4%).

### The Pastoral Interviews

A spreadsheet was developed to record the following information:

1. The date the subject received the interview letter,
2. The date of the first contact with the subject,
3. The date of the interview, time, and location,
4. The “confirmed” or “unconfirmed status of the interview,
5. The length of the interview.

This spreadsheet also calculated the number and percentage of interviews granted, the number and percentage of interviews completed, and the total average length of the interviews.

Upon completion of each interview, the resulting digital recording was transferred to the researcher's laptop computer where it was appropriately renamed to match the random number assigned to the subject. A copy of the digital interview was also transferred to a CD-ROM for safekeeping.

Initially, the interviews were to be transcribed. This was determined to be unnecessary early into the process as many of the questions asked for specific answers, "yes" or "no" answers, numerical responses, or the answers fell into similar categories. The data from each interview's written notes was transferred to a response spreadsheet where the questions were arranged from top to bottom and the interviews spread across the top. The digital recordings of the interviews were kept to refer to later for specific quotes and future study of answers highlighted on the written form.

Of the 15 pastoral interviews sought, 12 (80%) were conducted. More would have been conducted if more time had been allotted. The first interview was held on February 3, 2005 and the last on March 17, 2005. All interviews but one were held at the interviewed pastor's office. One interview took place at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.

The 12 interviews totaled 428 minutes (7.1 hours).

Included in these 12 interviews were the two District executives. Because of confidentiality concerns, their answers are not discussed separately from the other pastors. Their answers were inline with the other pastor's responses.



## The Decision

Appendix 15 contains a copy of the one-page Decision Matrix prepared for the April 2005 Voters Meeting. The SMP decision was broken-down into these six choices:

1. The Congregation hire a professional to lead the entire congregation through SMP,
2. The Congregation hire a professional to lead the Church Council through SMP,
3. The Congregation hire a professional to lead a special committee through SMP,
4. The Congregation lead itself through SMP,
5. The Church Council lead itself through SMP,
6. A special committee lead SMP and bring it to the congregation.

The handout lists various advantages and disadvantages to each option.

The original plan of this research project was to bring to the April 2005 Voters Meeting a selection of strategic ministry planning options from which the congregation would choose. Using the information gathered in the interviews, the researcher would be prepared to answer all of the concerns and questions in advance of discussion, allowing the congregation to be better able to come to a decision. Once that decision was made, the pre-decision data would be compared with the post-decision data and conclusion made.

This is not how it worked out.

As this researcher proceeded with the project, serious concerns began to develop. The researcher concluded that it was not possible to carry the project through as planned. The knowledge gained in the interviews, in the study of the history of the congregation, in the examination of the structure of the congregation, and in the literature review strongly indicated that if the Voters were presented with strategic ministry planning options, and one was chosen, the process would ultimately stall and fail.

As the April Voters Meeting approached, this researcher made the decision to modify the original plan as it was unsuitable for the situation. Instead of presenting the congregation with a menu of options, the researcher recommended only one direction for the congregation.

The following is the report delivered to the April 2005 Prince of Peace Lutheran Church Voters Meeting:

*Voters Meeting – April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2005*

*Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ,  
Fellow Members of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church:*

*In December of 1999, I attended a meeting at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. I was, at the time, considering the Call to come and be the Pastor here. At that meeting, this congregation told me that their strategic ministry focus—though such words were not used—was to heal. Their plan was to focus on the preaching and teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the care of the members.*

*Once I accepted the Call to be the Pastor here, my strategic plan was to preach the Gospel, visit everyone in his or her home, and finish the basement as a sign that the past was the past. I also began to speak to the Elders about Vision and future planning.*

*On October 21, 2001, almost two years after receiving the Call, we held our first Vision Sunday. The service (there was only one Sunday morning service back then) was ended half an hour early and the Elders took over and opened a discussion concerning the future of Prince of Peace. We learned a lot that morning on how such events should be run.*

*On November 24, 2002, while construction was going forth in the basement, the congregation held Vision Sunday II. Rev. Leon Hauser came and led an afternoon event. The result was a fine list of things to do, but it was discovered that there was no means to implement the items (yet, many of the items have come to realization).*

*There was no Vision Sunday in 2003.*

*In January and February of 2004, we looked at the LCEF Strategic Ministry Planning program and elected not to enter into it at that time. The Voters liked the SMP concept, but were not convinced this program was the way to proceed. Points discussed included the cost, the need for outside help, and the pending land purchase.*

*In June of 2004, almost a year ago, I chose for my Major Applied Project in my Doctorial program the study of SMP in this congregation. Working with my Advisor, we narrowed down the scope of this project to tracking the decision process of this congregation as it considered SMP again. The steps were to be: 1) Initial Interviews, 2) Education of options, 3) Make a decision, and 4) Analyze that decision.*

*It is now April of 2005. After interviewing 78 Voting Members of the congregation, I am ready to make a recommendation to the congregation though it breaks from the planned path. Three factors have entered into the picture that have influenced my doing this. First, though the congregation seems to support the idea of SMP (though their understanding of the process is fuzzy at best), the willingness to commit the time necessary for a successful outcome is weak.*

*Second, the congregation does not have a clear understanding of how things are running at present.*

*Third, if the congregation decided to engage in SMP, eventually the carrying out of the plan would fall to the leadership, specifically the Church Council.*

*With these three factors in mind, for reasons I will explain, I cannot recommend that the congregation enter into a full congregational SMP project, led internally or externally, at this time. It is my evaluation that such an effort would result in less than desired results—it would fail.*

*Another option was to look at forming a special committee to do SMP, by themselves or led by an outside expert, but such an effort would not work for the same reasons.*

*The option and the place where I am recommending we begin is with the Church Council. I recommend this because:*

- 1. The Council would be responsible for carrying forth, staffing, and evaluating any SMP plan developed.*
- 2. The present structure, based upon a small and informal congregation, is not working. Despite the best efforts of dedicated members, the current operation of Prince of Peace is neither keeping up with the changing face of the congregation nor capable of handling the additional demands of a developed SMP plan.*
- 3. In fact, SMP, if done correctly, would require us to look at how we operate before we could consider anything else.*

*It is important that we understand, as a congregation, that how we are operating right now is very much like a baby elephant trying to fit into a telephone booth. Part of him is inside, good, but much of him is not. We are operating under a structure and attitude that worked well for a small, informal, cohesive congregation, but we are not such a congregation any longer.*

*The congregation we used to be was one in which most members knew each other. Decisions could be made in the parking lot, members could assume that so-and-so was going to take care of certain things as they came up. The demands were simple, the needs narrow, and the response assumed.*

*Today, we are a congregation in which we have members who have joined but have never been assimilated. A small congregation does not need to focus on assimilation, it just happens through contact and interaction. Not so with a congregation our size. This means that fewer members are involved, and fewer things are getting done.*

*More specific to this topic, the functioning of the Council has remained that of a small congregation. Reports are read concerning the finances and the property of the congregation--the vast majority of the Council's agenda--votes are taken, and short-term decisions are made. All of this is important, yet, what has happened is that the vital work that used to be done away from the Council's formal meetings--the informal structure upon which our whole committee system was based--has ceased to exist. How many decisions were made in the parking lot, after services by people standing and visiting, over the telephone, or during social activities between members? A lot. This is gone, and nothing has replaced it.*

*Some of the symptoms are: I, as Pastor, am working six or more days a week on basic congregational tasks. The church secretary's position is stretched beyond expectations. There are questions to be answered that have no one to answer them. Things are done without consultation of others (because that is the way of a small congregation) and problems occur. The Committee system is not functioning. Prob-*

*lems are not anticipated but reacted to when they come up. Neither Voters Assembly nor the Church Council have any means to generate new ideas or programs. Sign up sheets remain as a tool.*

*Hear me: This is not a comment on the people and leadership of our congregation. The members here love their church, work hard, and give generously. But it should concern us all that we all are working under a system and attitude which keeps us trapped in ruts that we have out-grown. We are the baby elephant desperately trying to fit into the phone booth, when, in fact, telephones do not need booths any longer, but fit into our pockets. Our biggest strategic ministry planning challenge is to recognize that though we may not know how a church can operate any differently than this, we are, in fact, by default, operating very differently than we were when we were a smaller congregation, for a good portion of the informal support has vanished.*

*In good Lutheran fashion, we have arrived at the point of asking, "What does this mean?" It means that we have to do what most congregations will never do: We have to jump out of the rut we have carved for ourselves. We have to acknowledge that important things have changed and we have not adjusted in how we operate. We have to learn to be interested in knowing who we are—not just assuming it—what we value, what are our strengths, and what are our weaknesses, and we have to know where we want to go. And most important, we have to pray for it—seek God's will for this congregation and then listen for God's direction.*

*From my study and my interviews with other pastors, I have already proposed that the Council institute a Yearly Planning Event. This is an important step. What I believe will initially come out of it is a realization of our current situation. This is a first step. But what also should be said is: this cannot be a Pastor project. I cannot change this congregation any more than I can talk any member into quitting drinking, loving their wife as Christ loves the Church, or making better decisions in their life. We will not change our congregation unless we want to. It means a dedicated program and a desire for a new attitude in how we see and understand our congregation's mission both to its members and to the world in Christ's name.*

### The Post-decision Interviews and Questionnaires

Following the researcher's presentation to the Voters Assembly on April 24, and the decision of the Voters that followed, the following questionnaire was developed and distributed to those who had attended the Voters Meeting. These questions were distributed by email when possible, or mailed:

- 1. This questionnaire is for those who attended the April 24<sup>th</sup> Prince of Peace Voters Meeting. Were you in attendance at that Voters Meeting?*
- 2. At this Voters Meeting, Pastor Otto delivered a verbal report concerning Strategic Ministry Planning based upon his interviews and study. Would you please briefly*

*describe the aspects of his report that stand out as significant to you and to the congregation?*

- 3. From memory, would you briefly describe Pastor Otto's recommendation to the Voters concerning SMP?*
- 4. From memory, would you please describe the nature of the content of the motion that was passed following the Pastor's report?*
- 5. After this Voters Meeting, based upon what you have learned, what do you believe should happen next concerning strategic ministry planning at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church?*
- 6. Were you one of those interviewed by Pastor Otto before the Voters Meeting?*

The full questionnaire, with introduction and confidentiality statement, is in Appendix 16.

This questionnaire brought to an end the field research portion of this project.

## CHAPTER SIX: THE PROJECT EVALUATED

### A. The Findings of the Study

In this section, the results of the interviews and surveys are presented and interpreted.

#### The Pre-decision Congregation Interview Data

The Voting Members of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church presented the following profile and responses in the interviews completed before the strategic ministry planning Voters Meeting held in April of 2005. These interviews were conducted from January 25, 2005 through April 7, 2005.

In the course of this project, the researcher wanted to know if there were any differences between the congregation as a whole and its Leadership, or between the “newer” and “older” members. As the results will show, the answer is that there are no significant differences between these groups. The congregation was found to be relatively uniform in its attitudes and perceptions. The data is presented for these four groups, but specific references to the subgroups will be limited.

Table 1. Pre-decision Interview Questions and Answers, Questions A, B, C.

		All Members		Congregational Leaders		Newer Members		Older Members	
		Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%
A	Membership in Years	10.6		10.7		2.5		17.7	
B	Services/Month	3.2		3.7		3.5		2.9	
C	Voters Meetings/Year	1.8		3.3		1.7		1.8	

Note: Consistent through all of the tables in this chapter: “All Members” will refer to every person who was interviewed for this project. “Congregational Leaders” will refer to the 13 members who hold elected office in the congregation. “Newer members” will refer to those who joined the congregation after 2/28/1999. “Older Members” will refer to those who joined the congregation before 2/28/1999.

Evaluation of Table 1: The responses to these preliminary questions indicate that the subgroup members perceive themselves as attending worship and Voters Meetings at about the same rate.

Table 2. Pre-decision Interview Questions and Answers, Questions D, E, F.

		All Members		Congregational Leaders		Newer Members		Older Members	
		Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%
D	<b>Have you ever been elected to an office of the congregation?</b>								
	Yes	30	38%	13	100%	10	27%	21	51%
	No	48	62%	0	0%	27	73%	21	51%
E	<b>Does Prince of Peace Lutheran Church Have A Mission Statement?</b>								
	Yes	54	69%	13	100%	19	51%	36	88%
	No	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Do not know	23	29%	0	0%	17	46%	6	15%
F	<b>Do You Understand the Purpose of Mission Statement?</b>								
	Was able to give definition	74	95%	13	100%	35	95%	40	98%
	Was not able	4	5%	0	0%	2	5%	2	5%

Evaluation of Table 2: Thirty-eight percent of the Voting Members interviewed have held an elected office in the congregation. Currently, the “newer” members hold the Vice Chair and five of the six Elder positions and overall 27% of them have held an office. The question concerning knowledge of the congregation’s Mission Statement revealed that though most members would guess that there is a Mission Statement, those who said “Yes” often

added, “But don’t ask me what it is.” The Mission Statement question was an introduction to the greater topic of the interview and a lead-in to the next question.

The interviews revealed that though the majority of the Voting Members knew of, and could reasonably describe, the purpose of a Mission Statement for a congregation or an organization, they had very little experience in creating Mission Statements or understood their daily application to a congregation or business.

Table 3. Pre-decision Interview Questions and Answers, Questions 2a, 2b, and 2c.

		All Members		Congregational Leaders		Newer Members		Older Members	
		Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%
2a	A. Congregations... unique	57	73%	10	77%	29	78%	28	68%
	B. Congregations... same	20	26%	3	23%	7	19%	14	34%
	Could not answer	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
2b	A. Should be...	52	67%	9	69%	26	70%	26	63%
	B. Unique among...	24	31%	4	31%	10	27%	15	37%
	Could not answer	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
2c	A. If I move... similar	60	77%	12	92%	32	86%	29	71%
	B. If I move... unique	16	21%	1	8%	4	11%	12	29%
	Could not answer	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%

Note: The full text of these questions is in Appendix 17.

Evaluation of Table 3: When asked to choose one sentence within each of these three pairs, the congregation consistently stated that they viewed Prince of Peace Lutheran Church as unique among congregations. Yet, despite its uniqueness, if they moved from the area, they would search for a congregation similar to Prince of Peace. This suggests that even as the members believe that a congregation can be unique, they also have a firm idea of what a congregation should be. For those interviewed, uniqueness is a favorable quality in a congregation, but one they would easily expect to find elsewhere.

The researcher did not ask the members for examples of what makes Prince of Peace Lutheran Church unique.



If the congregation saw itself as “unique” versus “similar” to other congregations, the researcher theorized that the congregation would then be more open to engaging in strategic ministry planning. If there is such a thing as uniqueness among congregations, then, it is supposed that there are attributes of individual congregations that can be purposely developed and directed. On the other hand, if congregations are thought to be cookie-cutter copies of one another, then strategic ministry planning would have little place or purpose.

Table 4. Pre-decision Interview Questions and Answers, Question 3a.

		All Members		Congregational Leaders		Newer Members		Older Members	
		Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%
3a	<b>Why should a congregation plan and set goals? All interviews but one gave reasons why a congregation should make plans &amp; goals.</b>								
	It should not	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%

Evaluation of Table 4: All but one member interviewed said that a congregation should make plans and set goals for the future. Such words as “stagnant” and phrases such as “Know where you are going” were used to explain their reasoning. It is surprising to the researcher that more members did not answer in the negative, as the one member did. This person’s response was, “It is the work of the Holy Spirit.” Those who said yes to this question often believe that the planning and goal setting by a congregation is a means by which the Holy Spirit can guide a congregation. This indicates that the congregation would have no objections to engaging in strategic ministry planning if they understood it to be helping the ministry of the congregation.

Table 5. Pre-decision Interview Questions and Answers, Question 3b.

	All Members		Congregational Leaders		Newer Members		Older Members		
	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	
3b	<b>Who should be responsible for planning?</b>								
	Congregation/Voters	32	41%	6	46%	15	41%	18	44%
	Council	16	21%	3	23%	11	30%	5	12%
	Pastor	22	28%	3	23%	9	24%	13	32%
	Standing Committees	2	3%	1	8%	1	3%	1	2%
	Elders	3	4%	0	0%	1	3%	2	5%
	The Holy Spirit	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	Chairman of the Congregation	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%

Evaluation of Table 5: In the previous question , the greater majority of the members were shown to believe that a congregation can and even should make plans and set goals. When asked to state who should be responsible for accomplishing this planning within the congregation the answers were spread out. In some of the interviews, to encourage an answer when the member seemed unclear of how to answer, the question was restated as, “If planning and goal setting is not being done, who should be responsible for getting it started?” The results suggest that the congregation/Voters Assembly is thought to hold the responsibility for planning and goal setting. Yet, in practice, the Voters Assembly has no structure or tradition to accomplish strategic planning. The newer members look more to the Church Council for leadership in planning, but the congregation as a whole, especially when the question was restated, holds the Pastor and the Council equally responsible for planning and goal setting. Yet, similar to the Voters Assembly, the Church Council also has no organized means to do substantial planning or goal setting, having focused upon the short term, immediate needs and situations within the congregation.

Table 6. Pre-decision Interview Questions and Answers, Question 3c.

	All Members		Congregational Leaders		Newer Members		Older Members		
	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	
3c	<b>Is this [planning and goal setting] happening at POP?</b>								
	Yes	38	49%	8	62%	16	43%	23	56%
	Weak Yes	28	36%	3	23%	15	41%	13	32%
	No	9	12%	2	15%	4	11%	5	12%
	Do not know.	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%

Evaluation of Table 6: After stating who was responsible in the congregation for making plans and setting goals, the members were asked if they believed that plans are currently being made and goals being set. Consistently the response was “yes”, often based upon general perceptions, not specific experiences or knowledge. The newer members, who are one of the sources for new ideas brought with them from other congregations, were weaker in their positive responses than the older members were. Considering the amount of discussion concerning strategic ministry planning over the past two years, this researcher would have projected the leadership of the congregation to be less positive about the over-all structure of the congregation in planning and goal setting. It would appear that the congregation, and the leadership, considers the congregation to be functioning at a satisfactory level, accomplishing not as much as it could, but still within an acceptable range. In other words, the congregation perceives little need for more planning or change in structure or operation in order to believe it is successful as a congregation.

Table 7. Pre-decision Interview Questions and Answers, Questions 4a, 4b, and 4c.

		All Members		Congregational Leaders		Newer Members		Older Members	
		Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%
4a	<b>Experience of SP at POP?</b>								
	Could list experiences	37	47%	9	69%	14	38%	23	56%
	Listed SMP experiences	5	6%	1	8%	1	3%	4	10%
	Could not list experiences	34	44%	2	15%	21	57%	14	34%
4b	<b>Involved in SP at other congregations?</b>								
	Yes - Examples not SMP	14	18%	5	38%	7	19%	7	17%
	Yes - SMP	4	5%	0	0%	3	8%	1	2%
	No	60	77%	8	62%	27	73%	34	83%
4c	<b>SP at other?</b>								
	Work	37	47%	7	54%	18	49%	20	49%
	Other organization	6	8%	4	31%	3	8%	3	7%
	None	37	47%	4	31%	18	49%	19	46%

Evaluation of Table 7: These answers show that the members have very little experience with strategic ministry planning. In their responses, no one referred to the past Vision Sundays, a recent example of strategic ministry planning, and few remembered the discussions of a year earlier concerning the hiring of a strategic ministry planning consultant. Out of all the members interviewed, only three had specific strategic planning experience in their work, two of which were positive experiences, and one negative. This indicates that if it desires to engage in strategic ministry planning, the members need to hire someone to lead them through it or spend time and effort training themselves. It certainly indicates that the congregational members will need to be educated in what is strategic ministry planning and their roles in it.

Table 8. Pre-decision Interview Questions and Answers, Question 5.

		All Members		Congregational Leaders		Newer Members		Older Members	
		Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%
5	Should Prince of Peace Lutheran Church plan 10-20 years ahead?								
	Yes	45	58%	10	77%	26	70%	20	49%
	Weak Yes <sup>1</sup>	27	35%	3	23%	8	22%	19	46%
	No	3	4%	0	0%	2	5%	1	2%
	Uncertain	3	4%	1	8%	2	5%	2	5%

Evaluation of table 8: Strategic ministry planning often has a long-term planning component as a part of the process. This question asked the members to consider long-term planning. Though the responses were positive, the researcher noted that a congregation that would think that far ahead was very novel to most of the members. Many were reluctant to commit to making definite plans that far ahead for fear that the plans might lock-in the congregation to something that could hurt the congregation in the end. Again, the idea of follow-through and consistent review of the plans over time seems not to enter the thoughts of the members. There appears to be no understanding among the members that strategic planning is to be an ongoing, organic, part of the way the congregation thinks and operates. As revealed in the interviews, most members think in terms of one-time projects. Significant education will need to happen to change the congregation's understanding of itself, and how it can chose to operate.

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<sup>1</sup> It was a judgment call by the interviewer when to determine when a "yes" answer was "weak". Hesitations, pauses, and struggle by the member being interviewed signaled the distinction between a "yes" and a "weak yes".

Table 9. Pre-decision Interview Questions and Answers, Questions 9 and 10.

	All Members		Congregational Leaders		Newer Members		Older Members		
	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	
9	<b>Would you attend an SMP Decision Informational meeting?</b>								
	Would attend	62	79%	13	100%	32	86%	31	76%
	Weak Would Attend	12	15%	0	0%	3	8%	9	22%
	Would not attend	3	4%	0	0%	1	3%	2	5%
	No need to attend	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Would like written material	52	67%	9	69%	24	65%	29	71%
	Only written materials	3	4%	0	0%	2	5%	1	2%
10	<b>Would you Attend SMP Voters?</b>								
	Yes	60	77%	12	92%	32	86%	29	71%
	Yes with conditions	17	22%	1	8%	6	16%	11	27%
	No	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%

Evaluation of Table 9: The positive responses concerning attendance at these meetings is both encouraging and suspect. The responses to these questions indicated that the Voters, as a whole, with no significant differences between the groups, are supportive of engaging in a strategic ministry planning decision process, and that they would also participate in strategic ministry planning if the congregation decided to engage in the process through a particular, but unstated, plan. A third of the respondents, when asked, expressed a desire for written materials, often qualified as “brief”, to study on their own before voting.

Table 10. Pre-decision Interview Questions and Answers, Question 12.

	All Members		Congregational Leaders		Newer Members		Older Members		
	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	
12	<b>What is the Purpose of Prince of Peace being in Existence?</b>								
	Mission/Evangelism	63	81%	12	92%	29	78%	35	85%
	Strengthen the Saints	43	55%	6	46%	22	59%	22	54%

Evaluation of Table 10: In this, the very last question of the interview, the members were asked to respond, in brief, to a question regarding the purpose of their congregation’s existence. This is at the very heart of strategic ministry planning. The researcher was looking

for one or both of two components in their answers. Their answer could be tallied as an *evangelism purpose*, a *member servicing purpose*, or both. The most common statement was, “To spread the Gospel”, or something very similar. An evangelism purpose was tallied almost twice as often as member servicing. This indicates that the members of the congregation, in similar proportions across the groups, strongly perceive the congregation as a whole as a means to share the Word of God and reach the lost.

The following Tables and questions generated a wider variety of answers. In these lists, the answers are arranged by sub-category and popularity.

Table 11. Pre-decision Interview Questions Answers, Question 6.

	All Members		Congregational Leaders		Newer Members		Older Members		
	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	
6	<b>When considering SMP, what Concerns could the congregation have?</b>								
	<b>Program Concerns:</b>								
	Cost?	33	42%	2	15%	10	27%	23	56%
	Can we find the right program?	20	26%	2	15%	8	22%	12	29%
	Gospel priority?	7	9%	0	0%	2	5%	5	12%
	Introduced properly?	4	5%	1	8%	1	3%	3	7%
	Do we know enough, or do we need outside help?	3	4%	0	0%	1	3%	2	5%
	How will we pick a program?	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
	Is there a set timeline?	1	1%	1	8%	1	3%	0	0%
	Are we organized to do this?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Is this what God wants us to do?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Is this program too much - setting the bar too high?	2	3%	0	0%	0	0%	2	5%
	Continue on in the future?	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	<b>Participation Concerns:</b>								
	Involvement and consensus?	30	38%	5	38%	13	35%	17	41%
	Will it cause division?	11	14%	0	0%	9	24%	2	5%
	Work/time involved too much?	10	13%	1	8%	7	19%	4	10%
	Can we find leaders	4	5%	0	0%	1	3%	3	7%
	People who dislike change might become unhappy	4	5%	1	8%	2	5%	2	5%
	That people will vote for it, but not be involved	2	3%	1	8%	2	5%	0	0%
	A waste of time	1	1%	1	8%	1	3%	0	0%
	Reluctance to plan	1	1%	1	8%	1	3%	0	0%
	It will burnout our leaders	1	1%	1	8%	0	0%	1	2%
	This will require leap of faith	1	1%	1	8%	1	3%	0	0%
	Will leadership support it?	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	<b>The Resulting Plan</b>								
	Will it increase evangelism?	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
	Will it increase missions?	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%

Table 11 continued

	All Members		Congregational Leaders		Newer Members		Older Members	
	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%
Will it include singles	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Include the youth?	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Strengthen our congregation?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
Include a broader demographic	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Help achieve goals long term?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
<b>Need Concerns:</b>								
That we won't do SMP	3	4%	2	15%	2	5%	2	5%
Talked into something	2	3%	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%
Worthwhile?	2	3%	0	0%	0	0%	2	5%
Do we know what it wants?	2	3%	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%
Pastor's idea only?	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
We will wait to do this when we do not have to	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
That we won't use outside help when we need it	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Just to please ourselves?	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
<b>MISC Concerns:</b>								
Take from the business at hand?	5	6%	2	15%	2	5%	3	7%
Take resources from pre-school?	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
Lead to mega church? (negative)	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
What if the Pastor takes a call during the process?	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Outsiders can be wrong.	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
None	3	4%	1	8%	1	3%	2	5%

Evaluation of Table 11: Question 6 asked the members to vocalize their concerns and the possible concerns of others concerning their congregation's involvement in strategic ministry planning as they have come to know it. Their answers arranged themselves into concerns over the program to be used, concerns over congregational participation, concerns over the results of the program, concerns over the need for a program, and miscellaneous concerns. Cost and involvement were the two top concerns of the members. The cost response may be linked to the \$15,000 program they considered and rejected a year earlier. It could also be the result of the financially lean years. In any case, cost effectiveness will need to be part of the strategic ministry plan presentation.



Table 12. Pre-decision Interview Questions Answers, Question 7.

	All Members		Congregational Leaders		Newer Members		Older Members		
	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	
7	<b>What would cause the congregation to hesitate to engage in SMP?</b>								
	<b>Program Hesitations:</b>								
	Cost	43	55%	7	54%	20	54%	23	56%
	Will it follow through?	3	4%	0	0%	1	3%	2	5%
	Do we know enough?	5	6%	1	8%	2	5%	3	7%
	The process does not fit cong.	5	6%	0	0%	3	8%	2	5%
	Do we understand the process?	2	3%	0	0%	0	0%	2	5%
	Theologically change the cong.?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	<b>Participation Hesitations:</b>								
	Do we have the resources, time and/or people?	15	19%	3	23%	9	24%	6	15%
	There is a fear of change/risks/lack of trust	8	10%	0	0%	4	11%	4	10%
	If there is fear of the process	4	5%	1	8%	1	3%	4	10%
	There is a lack of leadership	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
	Do not understand the scope of involvement?	1	1%	1	8%	0	0%	1	2%
	Vote for and also support?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Will we have the leadership?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Will people cooperate?	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	No support from cong.	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
	People's feelings hurt	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Core group tapped out already	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	<b>Need Hesitations:</b>								
	Can we do this for ourselves?	8	10%	2	15%	4	11%	4	10%
	We may be comfortable	7	9%	1	8%	4	11%	3	7%
	We won't understand need	3	4%	1	8%	3	8%	0	0%
	No clear need	2	3%	1	8%	1	3%	1	2%
	That the agenda is already set	3	4%	1	8%	1	3%	2	5%
	Is this the right time?	2	3%	1	8%	2	5%	0	0%
	There is no need	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
	Our past history	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	A Diversion from ministry	3	4%	0	0%	1	3%	2	5%
	If there is a lack of enthusiasm	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
	If there is a lack of agreement	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
	Don't force it.	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	<b>MISC Hesitations:</b>								
	Using outsiders - Privacy and Trust issues	2	3%	0	0%	0	0%	2	5%
	Wait until Preschool has run for one year	1	1%	1	8%	0	0%	1	2%
	Nothing - We need to do this.	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	None	4	5%	0	0%	2	5%	2	5%
	Cannot answer - do not support SMP concept	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%

Evaluation of Table 12: Question 7 asked the members to state any reasons they could conceive that would cause the congregation to hesitate to engage in strategic ministry planning at this time. The answers were often the same as with the previous question. The researcher

often restated the question, or added to it, by saying, “What sorts of things would make us decide to not do this at this time?” The answers fell into four categories: Hesitations over the program used, hesitations over member participation, hesitations over the need for strategic ministry planning, and miscellaneous hesitations. Three members gave no answer to this question. One member could not answer because the member does not support the concept of strategic ministry planning.

Table 13. Pre-decision Interview Questions and Answers, Question 8.

	All Members		Congregational Leaders		Newer Members		Older Members		
	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	
<b>8</b>	<b>What Benefits/Results do you expect?</b>								
	Clear direction and purpose	17	22%	7	54%	13	35%	5	12%
	Detailed Plan & goals	18	23%	2	15%	12	32%	6	15%
	Staffing Assessment	6	8%	2	15%	2	5%	4	10%
	Facility Assessment	3	4%	1	8%	1	3%	2	5%
	Preschool Assessment	3	4%	1	8%	1	3%	2	5%
	Operational Assessment	3	4%	1	8%	2	5%	1	2%
	Resource Assessment	3	4%	0	0%	1	3%	2	5%
	<b>General In Nature</b>								
	Increase in Membership	35	45%	7	54%	16	43%	20	49%
	Increase in Evangelism/Mission	30	38%	3	23%	12	32%	18	44%
	Increased participation and involvement in cong.	22	28%	4	31%	11	30%	11	27%
	Improved communication	5	6%	3	23%	2	5%	3	7%
	Create a closer cong.	8	10%	1	8%	5	14%	3	7%
	Benefit the community	6	8%	0	0%	1	3%	5	12%
	Increase finances and resources	4	5%	2	15%	3	8%	2	5%
	Increase fellowship	4	5%	0	0%	2	5%	2	5%
	Enhance current momentum	4	5%	0	0%	2	5%	2	5%
	Increase motivation/enthusiasm	3	4%	0	0%	1	3%	2	5%
	Increase worship attendance	3	4%	0	0%	2	5%	1	2%
	Bring in new ideas	3	4%	0	0%	0	0%	3	7%
	Increase optimism	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
	Increase opportunities	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
	Better prepared for the future	2	3%	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%
	Increase diversity	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	Increase programs	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	Increase services available	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	Learn from our past experiences	1	1%	1	8%	1	3%	0	0%
	Establish Long term goals	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Progress in reaching goals	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	Increase in Adult Baptisms	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%

Table 13 continued

	All Members		Congregational Leaders		Newer Members		Older Members	
	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%
Increase the faith/trust	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
Improve use of resources	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Helps to follow God's will	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Be better able to prioritize	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
Look at whole cong.	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Things get done	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Involvement of young people and young families	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
<b>Specific Projects and Goals Named:</b>								
Build a school	5	6%	1	8%	1	3%	4	10%
Build a parsonage	2	3%	1	8%	0	0%	2	5%
Build on to the church	2	3%	1	8%	1	3%	1	2%
Plan for the land	2	3%	1	8%	0	0%	2	5%
Serve the elderly	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
Expanded programs	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
Serve the Youth	2	3%	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%
Promote Church careers	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Survey our values	1	1%	1	8%	1	3%	0	0%
Serve the Family	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
Serve international students	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Serve local college students	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Reach ethnic groups	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Strengthen the committees	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Serve children	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
None	2	3%	0	0%	0	0%	2	5%
Cannot answer - do not support SMP concept	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%

Evaluation of Table 13: Question 8 asked the members to imagine that the congregation had decided to engage in strategic ministry planning and describe what benefits they hoped the congregation would experience from doing this work. The answers fell into the following categories: specific benefits, general benefits, and specific programs and goals. One member had no answer. One member did not answer out of a lack of support for the concept of strategic ministry planning. The wide mixture of answers suggests that the members do not have a clear understanding of the purpose and scope of strategic ministry planning. This researcher theorizes that most of the members have little understanding of how their congregation works or the understanding that it could be operated differently than it is.

Table 14. Pre-decision Interview Questions and Answers, Question 9.

	All Members		Congregational Leaders		Newer Members		Older Members		
	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	
9	<b>Details you would desire to know about the choices?</b>								
	Cost	37	47%	5	38%	18	49%	20	49%
	Expected Benefits/Results	17	22%	4	31%	11	30%	7	17%
	Scriptural/Confessional?	6	8%	2	15%	5	14%	1	2%
	Is it ministry focused?	3	4%	0	0%	2	5%	1	2%
	<b>Structure Questions</b>								
	Structure of the program?	18	23%	4	31%	8	22%	10	24%
	Timeline of the program?	13	17%	2	15%	5	14%	9	22%
	How generate new ideas?	4	5%	0	0%	2	5%	2	5%
	Follow up after Plan is made?	4	5%	1	8%	0	0%	4	10%
	General description of program?	3	4%	0	0%	1	3%	2	5%
	Data collection tools?	3	4%	1	8%	2	5%	1	2%
	What if snag or wall?	3	4%	1	8%	2	5%	1	2%
	How information presented?	2	3%	1	8%	2	5%	0	0%
	Completed Plan look like?	2	3%	1	8%	2	5%	0	0%
	How avoid conflict?	2	3%	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%
	What are the resources required?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
	How are decisions made?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	What will the program do, and what will we do?	1	1%	1	8%	0	0%	1	2%
	Diverse cross section involved?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Predetermined goals?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	<b>Leadership Questions:</b>								
	Internal or externally lead?	8	10%	0	0%	5	14%	3	7%
	Expected of our Leadership?	6	8%	3	23%	2	5%	4	10%
	Leaders and their backup?	3	4%	1	8%	3	8%	0	0%
	Options in professionals we use?	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	<b>Involvement Questions:</b>								
	Time and energy commitment?	27	35%	3	23%	11	30%	16	39%
	<b>Component Questions:</b>								
	Evaluation component?	6	8%	4	31%	4	11%	2	5%
	Facilities Assessment?	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	Evangelism component?	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	Are Small Groups involved?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	How is the community included?	2	3%	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%
	Is there fundraising?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	How will it determine needs?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	How will it get involvement?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	<b>Comparisons Questions:</b>								
	References from congregations?	25	32%	3	23%	11	30%	14	34%
	Is there written material?	2	3%	1	8%	1	3%	1	2%
	Differences between programs?	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	For volunteer organizations?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Is the material of a high quality?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	<b>Judgment Questions:</b>								

Table 14 Continued

	All Members		Congregational Leaders		Newer Members		Older Members	
	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%
Can we do this ourselves?	8	10%	2	15%	5	14%	3	7%
Is this program realistic?	4	5%	1	8%	2	5%	2	5%
Does this program fit us?	5	6%	0	0%	1	3%	4	10%
Process understandable?	4	5%	0	0%	2	5%	2	5%
Process comfortable?	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
User-friendly?	2	3%	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%
What is the success rate?	2	3%	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%
Clear presentation of all programs	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Is the congregation enthused about any particular process?	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Pros and cons	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
None	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Cannot answer - Do not support the SMP concept	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%

Evaluation of Table 14: Question 9 was by far the hardest question for the members to answer. With little understanding of what strategic ministry planning is, when asked to list the details they would like to know concerning the various strategic ministry planning programs available so they could make a choice among them, there were long moments of silence. Often examples of comparison-shopping were offered to help them understand what was being asked. It was further explained that the options could range from buying a few books and learning to do it ourselves to hiring a consultant for several thousands of dollars, as the congregation considered a year earlier. The answers fell into the following categories: general details, details about the structure of the programs, details concerning leadership, details concerning participation, details concerning the resulting plan, details concerning points of comparison, and details concerning judgments. One member did not answer the question. One member could not answer for a lack of support of strategic ministry planning. This question helped the researcher understand the dangers of leading the congregation to a decision point too soon.

Table 15. Pre-decision Interview Questions and Answers, Questions 11a, and 11b...

		All Members		Congregational Leaders		Newer Members		Older Members	
		Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%
11a	<b>Would you Participate in SMP if asked?</b>								
	Yes	60	77%	13	100%	34	92%	27	66%
	No	3	4%	0	0%	0	0%	3	7%
	I do not know	14	18%	0	0%	3	8%	11	27%
11b	<b>What would cause you to Hesitate to be involved?</b>								
	I do not have the time	49	63%	8	62%	27	73%	22	54%
	I do not believe this is right	17	22%	1	8%	6	16%	11	27%
	I do not possess the talents and skills needed	17	22%	4	31%	3	8%	14	34%
	There are no clear goals/path/benefit	5	6%	1	8%	3	8%	2	5%
	Do not want leadership role	2	3%	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%
	Felt it was forced upon us	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Leadership was weak	2	3%	0	0%	0	0%	2	5%
	Not being done right	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Who else is involved	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Participated in the past, now want to observe	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	I do not like committees	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	I do not know members	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Need transportation	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Felt it was a waste of time	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	No answer	4	5%	1	8%	2	5%	2	5%
	Low participation by cong.	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Public Speaking	2	3%	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%
11c	<b>What would cause you to be Eager to be involved?</b>								
	A large cong. involvement	13	17%	5	38%	7	19%	6	15%
	I feel that it is right	21	27%	1	8%	8	22%	13	32%
	Enthusiasm and excitement	16	21%	0	0%	7	19%	9	22%
	If talents matched the need	10	13%	1	8%	3	8%	7	17%
	Involved in something new	9	12%	1	8%	4	11%	5	12%
	There are clear goals	8	10%	1	8%	2	5%	6	15%
	Understand the purpose	8	10%	3	23%	5	14%	3	7%
	Quickly and efficiently	7	9%	2	15%	4	11%	3	7%
	Shaping the future	5	6%	0	0%	2	5%	3	7%
	Keeps cong. going forward	5	6%	1	8%	3	8%	2	5%
	It is fun	5	6%	0	0%	2	5%	3	7%
	Working with others	5	6%	0	0%	5	14%	0	0%
	It draws people together	3	4%	1	8%	2	5%	1	2%
	Congregation ownership	3	4%	1	8%	1	3%	2	5%
	It is doing God's work	3	4%	0	0%	3	8%	0	0%
	I am interested in process	2	3%	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%
	Involves building a school	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	If I am comfortable	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	A task I can do by myself	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	If it involved the family	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	No answer	7	9%	1	8%	3	8%	4	10%

Evaluation of Table 15: Finally, the members were asked what they would do if the congregation decided to enter into strategic ministry planning and they were asked to participate. The members were asked to first answer with a positive or negative response. Then they were asked to elaborate on their answer. The answers indicated that time is a precious commodity among the members. They were not going to commit to anything that took too much of their time or seemed to have no importance. Overall, despite the positive responses, the sense was that most of the members were not interested in committing themselves to strategic ministry planning. The congregation should do it, they seemed to be saying, but someone else would have to do the work.

#### The Pre-decision Congregation Interviews Interpretation

Three things stand out from the interviews:

1. The congregation is very satisfied with itself as is,
2. The cost of any strategic planning program would be a major factor in their decision,
3. The members interviewed indicated that they were hesitant to commit their time.

The congregation's satisfaction with the way things are comes from their observation that things are better now than at any other time in the congregation's history. In addition, there is little comprehension that a congregation can change how it chooses to operate. This researcher could see many of the members interviewed struggling to understand why something like strategic ministry planning would be conducted when there is no crisis at hand. Others, a fewer in number, understood that this would be the perfect time to do such planning.

The cost concern was triggered, in many cases, by the members' memories of the high price tag of the LCEF strategic ministry planning program considered in early 2004. They recalled the \$15,000 price tag more than any of the details and benefits of the program. Add to

that a history of financial struggling in the past and the members' reactions are understandable. Though the researcher reinforced throughout the interviews that the prices of the options available to the congregation could range greatly, strategic ministry planning has an association with high cost.

For a variety of reasons, the members interviewed did not see themselves able to give significant amounts of time to the strategic ministry planning process. They appeared to assume that it would require a lot of their time, and that the time would be spent in boring committee style meetings. The LCEF option considered a year and a half earlier called for several Friday night and Saturday morning meetings. The memory may have influenced the responses.

It was also learned that, to the members, meetings are associated with committees, which are associated with "a waste of time".

In these interviews, a large quantity of information was collected from the members concerning their various concerns, hesitations, and questions concerning strategic ministry planning. All of this information will be helpful when it comes time to conduct a congregational wide program.

### The Pastoral and District Interview Data and Interpretation

In preparation to present strategic ministry planning to the congregation, interviews were sought with 15 area LCMS pastors and Iowa District East Executives.<sup>2</sup> Interviews were conducted with 12 pastors. The following results and answers were collected:

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<sup>2</sup> At the District level, there are currently two executives, the District President, elected every three years, and a Called pastor who serves as an Assistant to the President of the District. Budget constraints have decreased the District staff



Average length of time in current position:	5.8 years
Average length of time in the ministry:	22.3 years
Ultimate authority rests with <i>Voters</i> Assembly:	100%
Strategic ministry planning training:	17% (2 of the 12)
Congregation has a Mission Statement:	75%
Mission Statement directs daily business:	37% (17% weak “yes”) <sup>3</sup>
Congregations are unique:	100%
Congregations are basically the same:	0%

	Short Term	Long Term
The pastor is responsible for planning:	50%	42%
The Church Council is responsible for planning:	17%	8%
A special committee is responsible for planning:	17%	17%
The Elders are responsible for planning:	8%	0%
The “Doers” are responsible:	10%	0%
The congregation is responsible for planning:	0%	25%
Uncommitted answer as to who is responsible:	0%	10%

Have been involved in strategic ministry planning:	83% (33% weak “yes”)
SMP in previous congregations:	50% (25% weak “yes”)

To the above questions, the pastors represent a wide range of experience in the ministry. They all operate under the traditional understanding of the role of the Voter’s Assembly, but their remarks and hesitations indicated that few thought that the Voter’s Assembly in their congregation was taking a lead in developing the ministry. Few of the pastors have any strategic ministry training, but the majority of their congregation’s have Mission Statements. Most of the Mission Statements, though, have little effect upon the daily ministry of their congregation. All of the pastors indicated that congregations are unique from one another, many able to talk about the striking difference between the congregations they have personally served.

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over the past few years. Being that the President and the Assistant to the President are both pastors, their responses are included with the other area LCMS pastors.

<sup>3</sup> In recording the answers to several of these questions, it became necessary for the researcher to distinguish between strong “yes” answers from those which were hesitant, or, as they are called, “weak”. For example, when 37% of the pastors said that their Mission Statement directed their congregation’s ministry on a daily basis, this researcher noticed that 17% of them either struggled or hesitated to give a yes answer, answering the question the way they did often because it was perceived as the correct answer. This is the explanation behind all of the “weak” answers which follow in this chapter.

When asked who is responsible for short and long term planning within the parish, they most often answered the pastor. The sense of the answer was one of resignation; no one else in the congregation will do it. When asked about their strategic ministry planning experiences, despite their answers, further questioning showed minimal exposure or understanding to the concept.

The pastors interviewed were next asked to give a reaction to the news of another congregation in the area considering using strategic ministry planning. Their responses were as follows:

*Good idea!*  
*They (Prince of Peace Lutheran Church) have good leadership*  
*Concern over whether the process followed will be theologically proper.*  
*Go for it!*  
*Emphasized that ownership by the congregation of the process is important.*  
*A lot of work.*  
*Great!*  
*Hurrah!*  
*I encourage them.*  
*I'm glad.*  
*A positive reaction.*  
*Hats off!*  
*God bless you. I pray that it works.*  
*Fine.*

The response to the news that a sister congregation was considering strategic ministry planning was by far favorable and supportive.

The pastors interviewed were asked next to list concerns that come to mind when they hear of a congregation considering strategic ministry planning. Their responses were as follows:

*Must have Christ as the center.*  
*Do not do this for the congregation's own sake.*  
*Poor leadership concerns.*

*Must be scriptural and confessional.<sup>4</sup>*  
*Will the process be God-led?*  
*Will the process interfere with the spreading of the Gospel?*  
*Will the process build unity, be inclusive, within the congregation.*  
*No follow through can be worse than no planning at all.*  
*Plan to do the Plan.*  
*Do not make the process too complicated.*  
*To be satisfied with the way things are is to be declining as a congregation.*  
*If the Plan falters, the pastor must be ready to act to keep it going.*  
*If the congregation has no experience, hire a professional.*  
*The process must involve a wide range of ideas and people.*  
*The program must have "Lutheran eyes".*  
*Educate the congregation up-front.*  
*Create a common vocabulary with the congregation.*  
*Is there the leadership in place?*  
*Decide if this will be internally or externally led.*  
*Who is involved in the process?*  
*Cost?*  
*How do I, as the pastor, fit in?*  
*That it would follow through.*  
*Is there the personnel available?*  
*Remember that the church is not a business.*  
*Keep Gospel focus.*

When asked about their concerns, a number of the pastors indicated the importance of keeping the focus of the process consistent with the mission of the Church. Strategic ministry planning invoked in several of them mistrust or an association with suspicious church growth techniques. The other significant concern was not to hurt the congregation by splitting it or causing division.

The pastors interviewed were next asked what they could envision that would cause a congregation to hesitate to engage in strategic planning. These are their responses:

*Afraid of going in the wrong direction.*  
*Reason unclear.*  
*Questionable resources.*  
*Questionable leadership.*  
*Questionable timing.*

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<sup>4</sup> "Scriptural" here is understood to mean that the process should not violate any teachings of the LCMS. "Confessional" means that the process should not violate the doctrine taught in the *Book of Concord*.

*The congregation does not have ownership of the process.*  
*The congregation is afraid of change.*  
*Unclear who to hire and how much to spend.*  
*Are the consultants trained to work with congregations?*  
*Cost—but shouldn't be a reason to hesitate.*  
*Cost.*  
*Concern that this process will send the congregation in a wrong direction?*  
*Questionable motives.*  
*How will the resulting Plan be carried on?*  
*Enough referrals on consultants.*  
*Is the pastor right for this process?*  
*Financial questions.*  
*Time and effort required.*  
*Do we have the willing workers?*  
*What is meant by strategic ministry planning?*  
*Communicate with the congregation first.*  
*Come to joint decision.*

Their answers ranged widely over a number of valid concerns.

The pastors interviewed were next asked to list potential benefits a congregation engaging in strategic ministry planning could expect from their time and effort. Their answers were as follows:

*Increase in evangelism and missions.*  
*Increased care for members.*  
*Look for opportunities in the community.*  
*Appreciate the pastor more.*  
*More well rounded ministry.*  
*Whatever comes of it, better be ready to do it.*  
*Improved leadership skills for the pastor.*  
*Prayer increase.*  
*Unity of membership.*  
*Become comfortable with strengths and weaknesses.*  
*Members see the personality of their congregation.*  
*Establish a direction of movement.*  
*If no goal is established, congregation will turn on pastor and leaders.*  
*Maturing as a congregation.*  
*Identify programs that need to be killed.*  
*Identify weaknesses.*  
*Targets to aim at; steps to follow.*  
*Clear understanding of who they are, and the ability to express it to others.*  
*Refocus the direction of the congregation to focus on key things.*

*Evangelism.*  
*Increase professional staff.*  
*Dreaming big.*  
*Become better at clearly articulating who they are to visitors.*  
*These are our decisions, no one else's.*  
*There is movement and direction.*  
*Clear vision for the future.*  
*Unity and enthusiasm.*  
*Become efficient in every area.*  
*Gain purpose and dedication.*  
*Become forward looking.*  
*Unity.*  
*Enhance ministry.*  
*Grow spiritually.*

It is a long and positive list. Though the pastors could not fully understand strategic ministry planning—because of a lack of exposure and education—they could envision everything they would want to see improved and enhanced in their own congregations.

The pastors interviewed were asked next if they knew of any strategic ministry planning programs. Their answers were as follows:

3 "Yes".  
2 Weak "Yes"  
7 "No"

Only one pastor could list a specific strategic ministry program. It was the one pastor whose congregation is currently involved in strategic ministry planning.

The pastors interviewed were next asked if they would be interested in the results of Prince of Peace Lutheran's work with strategic ministry planning. The answers were as follows:

10 Yes  
2 No

Despite the positive answers, the researcher noted the answers were not enthusiastic. When questioned further about learning of the results of Prince of Peace Lutheran's work in

strategic ministry planning, several of the pastors indicated that they believe that though something works for one congregation it does not necessarily follow that it will work for another. They were curious, but not professionally interested. The sense of their responses was one of having seen too many programs come and go over the years, never quite living up to their promises.

The pastors interviewed were next asked for their recommendations to a congregation considering strategic ministry planning. Their answers were as follows:

*Know who is responsible.*  
*Critical to review in future.*  
*Accountability.*  
*Gospel centered*  
*Find a mentor church*  
*Use theologically correct program*  
*Investigate many plans*  
*Determine if it is the right time*  
*Use outside help*  
*Have a definite Plan*  
*Do not let it cut into ministry*  
*Thoroughly investigate options*  
*Make sure everyone signs in blood*  
*Do not cut corners in the process*  
*Consider it prayerfully.*  
*It is wise to look outside of the box - consultants*  
*Make sure you feel comfortable...trust*  
*Don't cut funding from other areas to do this*  
*SP cannot replace the work of the Holy Spirit*  
*Prayerfully involve members*  
*Find someone with experience.*  
*Take time to prepare*  
*Use outside resource*  
*Be open and honest*  
*Be Christian and loving*

These answers covered a wide range of concerns, all given with great sincerity. The recommendations to seek outside help were given with firm emphasis as were the comments

concerning the theological correctness of the intent, the program used, and the results obtained.

Over all, this researcher discovered a lack of understanding and interest in strategic ministry planning among the pastors interviewed. Despite the answers indicating involvement with strategic ministry planning, only two congregations out of the ten represented in the interviews had any experience in congregational wide strategic planning as defined for this project. For the one, the process was begun before the interviewed pastor arrived when the congregation was in crisis. For the other, strategic ministry planning was so far in the past that none of the results of the effort were still in effect.

Of the other pastors who showed interest in strategic ministry planning, none had sought formal training, led their congregation in strategic planning, or considered recommending to their congregation they enter into major strategic planning. When asked if the pastors could provide the names of strategic ministry planning programs or sources, the answers were vague or out of date. The pastors, for example, recalled hearing of something at one time, or they remembered a presentation some time ago but have forgotten the details, or they once knew of a congregation that did something like strategic ministry planning but who that was and what they did is forgotten.

Though the pastoral interviews were interesting and beneficial in a collegial sort of way, they provided little help or guidance on the topic. There was a strong sense that each congregation is an island unto itself. There was also a sense of pessimism in the ability of a congregation to shape itself.

## The Decision

At the April 2005 Voters Meeting of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church this researcher presented his findings and recommendations to the congregation. This presentation was recorded in Chapter Five of this report. A modified version appeared in the congregation's newsletter and is presented in Appendix 18.

The following are the Congregational Secretary's notes from the April 2005 Voters Meeting concerning this project:

*Pastor spoke about the Strategic Planning Process. He reviewed his history with the congregation, starting with the initial plan of healing through the preaching and teaching of the Word and taking care of members. He described a process of two Vision Sundays, a Voter decision to not use an outside consultant, and his study process and interview process of 78 members of strategic planning.*

*Three factors have influenced Pastor's recommendation:*

*The congregation supports strategic planning, but there was weak willingness to commit time to the process.*

*The congregation does not have a clear picture of how the congregation is running. The congregation believes things are going well.*

*If the congregation carried out strategic planning, the leadership, particularly the council would need to carry it out.*

*Pastor recommends not entering into a strategic planning process at this time, whether*

*Form a special committee*

*Hire an outside consultant*

*Pastor recommends starting the planning process with the church council for the following reasons*

*Council would be responsible for the resources devoted to the process*

*Current planning process is based on an informal model for a small congregation*

*The model does not work anymore*

*Implications:*

*Do nothing: Other congregations in the circuit will be able to keep going<sup>5</sup>*

*Take action:*

*First step:*

*Council and leaders in the congregation will begin an annual planning retreat to find out*

*The structure doesn't exist*

*This is no longer Pastor Otto's project, but it is the congregation's work to follow the Holy Spirit.*

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<sup>5</sup> The reference is to a statement saying that Prince of Peace can go on as is. Few other congregations attempt strategic planning and they remain functioning just the same.



*Significant discussion ensued.  
Motion approved to affirm the first step, the annual planning meeting for the church council and other congregation leaders.  
Report approved as submitted.*

Any interpretation of the action taken by the Voters has to recognize that this researcher was not able to follow through on the original plan of this project as recorded in Chapter One of this report. Though the materials were prepared for the Voters, and the options concerning strategic ministry planning were shared with them (see Appendix 15), because of the things this researcher learned in the interviews and through the literature, he was not convinced that following this project's original plan was in the congregation's best interest. The reasons are given in the report to the Voters, but simply put, there was too little understanding, support, and interest among the members to launch into a congregational wide strategic ministry planning process, and there was no conceivable way to work such a process into the already established routine and focus of the Church Council.

As can be seen from the Secretary's notes printed above, the congregation chose to follow this researcher's recommendation begin now to lay better foundation in preparation for future strategic ministry planning. This researcher had already approached the Church Council a month earlier with the idea that the congregation should host a leadership retreat in June of 2005. This retreat could then be a first step in preparing the congregation for a more formal strategic ministry planning in the future. The Voters approved this recommendation and asked the Church Council to conduct a leadership retreat.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Falling outside of the scope of this project, it should be shared that the leadership retreat was held in early June 2005, was a success in everyone's opinion, and what has come out of it is a special task force of five members who are to study strategic ministry planning with the pastor and begin to teach it to the rest of the leaders in the Fall of 2005.

## The Post-decision Congregation Interviews and Questionnaire Data and Interpretation

On April 25, 2005, 26 emails and 2 letters with surveys were sent out to the Voting Members who had attended the April Voters Meeting. Of the 28 surveys, 11 were returned. The specifics and their answers are recorded in Appendix 20. Of the eleven surveys returned, eight of them had been members who had participated in the Pre-decision Interviews.

In summary, when the Voters were asked what they considered to be the top aspects of the Pastor's report, their responses focused on the congregation's need for strategic ministry planning, the congregation's transition from a smaller congregation to a larger one, and that the congregation's need to strengthen its structure in preparation for strategic ministry planning.

When asked to describe the pastor's recommendation to the Voters concerning strategic ministry planning, four of the eleven respondents to this question recalled that the pastor recommended that the Church Council organize a leadership retreat. Four others remember that the recommendation was to do nothing at this time. The others recalled the pastor saying that more work needs to be done before the congregation can use strategic ministry planning.

When asked to recall the content of the motion the Voters passed following the pastors presentation, all who answered remembered that it had to do with setting up an annual meeting.

When asked for their reasons for voting on the motion as they did, the Voters expressed the need to begin the process of preparing for the future, understanding that a special forum will need to be established for this. Several respondents saw the motion as a first positive step in the right direction.

Finally, concerning the report, the motion passed, and the discussion, what did they expect to happen next? Many of the respondents said that they expected the pastor and leaders to get together and begin to prepare for change. Others were hopeful, but not sure what will happen next.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

### A. Contributions to Ministry

This was a fascinating project, a discovery at both the personal and congregational levels. Through this process, three specific contributions were identified.

#### 1. A Clearer Understanding of the Congregation's Readiness

This project demonstrated the necessity for a pastor to understand his congregation before asking it to engage in a vital project like strategic ministry planning. This project taught this researcher how to solicit information from his members and research the existing conditions within the congregation. This included an understanding of how the congregation is structured, how it makes its decisions, how it thinks about itself, how much risk it will tolerate, and how much it will take honestly commit to a major project.

Consider, for example, the significance of the attendance at the April 2005 Voters Meeting. Before that meeting, fully one-half of the 167 Voting Members had been interviewed by the researcher. In those interviews, the congregation's needs were discussed and the benefits of strategic ministry planning were shared. More than that, the April 2005 Voters Meeting itself had been highlighted as an important future decision making meeting for the congregation. Yet only 28 Voters, one third of those interviewed, attended that meeting. If they had been allowed to, those 28 members could have committed the entire congregation to a strategic ministry planning program. Even though there was no way for the researcher to know how lightly the Voters Meeting would be attended, the researcher had already judged the situation and was prepared to direct the

Voters in a different, far more appropriate, direction. This happened because through the interviews the researcher accumulated a valuable understanding of the congregation. Through reading the literature, the researcher gained a better understanding of the dynamics needed to succeed with a project like strategic ministry planning. It was the time taken in research and interviewing that allowed the researcher to understand ahead of time that if things had been allowed to progress as first envisioned failure and frustration would have resulted.

There were many lessons learned along the way. The researcher, for example, created a questionnaire for the member interviews that was far more thorough than needed. On the other hand, that questionnaire increased the time spent with each member that was a benefit to his ministry. It would be difficult to estimate how much less knowledge would have been gained if, for example, the interviews had been half the length.

## 2. An Awareness of the Necessity of a Solid Foundation for Strategic Ministry Planning

Though the actual carrying out of a strategic ministry planning program was always beyond the scope of this project, the preparation for such a program was at its heart. The problem was that this researcher did not understand that what was needed was more than the congregational taking a vote to proceed. Though it was understood that there was the possibility that the congregation might not vote in favor of engaging in strategic ministry planning, it was this researcher's belief that the reason the congregation had not done this in the past was due to a lack of proper preparation for the decision. This researcher felt that if the advantages of strategic ministry planning were shared and explained in the proper way, if the options were clearly and concisely placed before the Voters, the Voters would make their decision and get on with the process. Nevertheless, the problem was not in the decision making process, but in the over-all preparedness of

the congregation to take on such a project. The surprise to the researcher was that as the research and interviewing unfolded, the researcher understood that what strategic ministry planning needed for it to be effective was missing.

Strategic ministry planning needs a specific foundation in place both at the levels of planning and implementation. First, there has to be a desire to engage the planning process. This desire is drawn from awareness that there is a problem, a crisis, or a need that is not being addressed. Beyond awareness, though, there also has to be an emotional commitment that propels people to offer up resources to meet the challenge. Nevertheless, even if there is such a desire and a commitment, there also has to be a structure in place to handle the process, grow with it, and implement the solutions and directions strategic ministry planning would produce.

At Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, neither the structure nor the commitment was in place. The new plan, the one recommended by the researcher and which is now unfolding in the congregation, is to begin work with a small portion of the congregation's leadership, educating them on strategic ministry planning, and developing the missing foundation. It could be argued that even this initial action with a small group of the leadership is actually strategic ministry planning. Nevertheless, the goal is to ultimately influence the entire congregation.

### 3. Greater Desire for Personal Self-Awareness

The third contribution to ministry from this project is the importance of understanding the motivations, personality, strengths, and weaknesses of the person championing strategic ministry planning. This researcher was looking for something like strategic ministry planning long before he even knew that such a thing existed. When it was discovered, this researcher accepted the con-

cept of strategic ministry planning without much consideration, not thinking for a moment that it would be anything less than a helpful tool in building up the congregation. Why was this?

The interviews conducted for this project with the pastors and District staff revealed that not only do few pastors know about strategic ministry planning, but that once they hear about it there is not much interest in learning more. Their curiosity did not lead to a strong eureka! response as it had with this researcher. In some of the interviews, the pastors expressed a tone of concern over a congregation getting involved in such a concept. Because of their experience, their suspicions and concerns are well taken.

Yet, the question remains open for exploration: Why does this researcher believe that this tool can help his congregation? Knowing the answer can provide both him and his congregation confidence in his leadership. There are plenty of examples of pastors who championed, even insisted on, such things as strategic ministry planning only to divide their congregations and diminish their ministry.

With this in mind, throughout the research, particular attention has been given to the subject of leadership and leadership development. As these topics were outside of the parameters of this project, not much space has been given to them in these pages. Yet, a desire to know more about himself led this researcher to spend time, for example, reviewing the personality profiles made when entering the Doctor of Ministry program. The *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* (MBIT) has been used and an understanding of the results sought through the books *Personality Type* and *Please Understand Me*.

## **B. Contributions to Personal and Professional Growth**

Personal growth became an important focus throughout this project.

When originally proposing this project, this researcher thought that it would be important to include elements of self-examination and pastoral leadership. Though this was eventually excluded from the project, it has nonetheless been drawn back into consideration by necessity of the research.

An important moment came midway through the member interviews. While sitting at a member's dining room table, during the introductory material, the member being interviewed unexpectedly asked the researcher, "If the congregation does not do strategic planning, does that mean you will get a lower grade on this project?" The member received quick assurance that the congregation's use of strategic ministry planning was not the objective of this project. After that interview, this researcher made it a point in future interviews to mention that strategic ministry planning is a tool the congregation can use, but that the Pastor's ego and grade point average are not tied to a yes vote in its favor.

The implication of the member's question touched an important point. He did not understand the motivation behind the big picture of strategic ministry planning and the project for which he was being interviewed. He was asking, in essence, "Why is this important to you, pastor? Is this about a grade, the advancement of the congregation, or something else?" It is a good question and one that deserves to be answered. It is a question the researcher needs to be clear on for himself. As written about in the previous section (3. Greater Desire for Personal Self-Awareness), the congregation deserves to know the answer to, "Why does our pastor want to see this congregation using strategic ministry planning?"

So, personal growth has come about through time spent in seeking to understand this researcher's motivation. This researcher knows that yes, his personality is drawn to certain processes and ways of thinking, but that no, this emphasis on strategic ministry planning is not for per-



sonal reasons. Answering these questions of motivation has also encouraged the researcher to further study the importance of knowing how to interact with other personalities, especially those in congregational leadership positions.

Personal growth has also taken place because of the interviews. The insight into the minds and lives of the members of the congregation was important, but the impact of the pastoral interviews even more so. It was a growing experience to spend time with peers, asking them questions outside of the normal range of conversation. No matter what their opinions of strategic ministry planning, they shared aspects of their ministry that would not have been disclosed otherwise. A greater appreciation and respect was gained overall.

Professional growth happened in various ways through this project. This pastor became a far better researcher, acquiring techniques that not only applied to this project but also will be used in ministry and education in the future.

Professionally, this project increased this researcher's knowledge in the field of strategic ministry planning.<sup>1</sup> It also improved his skills in pastoral leadership and congregation studies. Specifically, using the six dynamics of pastor leadership described in chapter four, under "The Pastor as Motivator and Leader", this researcher was able to learn how to investigate the congregation's desire to engage in strategic planning. Instead of guessing at the congregation's thought, this researcher learned how to investigate and learn the congregation's position. This researcher also learned to recognize that strategic ministry planning would only be as successful as his own ability to put time and energy into it. Until other leaders are identified and trained in strategic ministry planning, it is useless for the researcher to become frustrated or fatigued in trying to do it all

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<sup>1</sup> Of interest to this topic, see Appendix 7 for an example of a portion of strategic ministry planning accomplished at the level of an individual and Appendix 14 for correspondence between the researcher and a local business strategic planner.

himself. In leadership, this researcher learned that congregational change is slow in coming, but that this is not a reason to abandon the project. In the case of a congregation, the slowness of the process can strengthen its impact. This researcher also learned that no single book can describe any particular congregation. The researcher's congregation is unique from every other congregation, including those only a short distance away. In leadership, this researcher came to understand that though there may be a willingness among the congregation to change the skills and the leadership may not always be present. Finally, this researcher learned that as a leader, a pastor needs to learn that one of the most difficult aspects of strategic ministry planning is simply to get it started. Patience, persistence, and a big-picture over-view temper a leadership style that may want change to happen immediately or not at all.

This project pushed the researcher to learn techniques and practice skills which otherwise would not have been developed. It was a significant and positive experience.

### **C. Recommendations**

At the commencement of this project, it was this researcher's assumption that with enough preparation on his part, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church would easily make the decision to begin using strategic ministry planning. Like the horse Boxer in George Orwell's book, *Animal Farm*, whose solution to every problem was, "I will work harder," the researcher, with the best intentions, sought to do the congregation's work for it—at least the preparation.<sup>2</sup>

Whereas "I will work harder" has its application here, this researcher learned that the emphasis needs to be placed on clearly identifying the need instead of focusing on the solution. No

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<sup>2</sup> George Orwell, *Animal Farm*, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc, 1946), Page 37.

amount of smartly packaged information on strategic ministry planning programs would help the Voters understand that the structure of the congregation is becoming increasingly unsuitable.

This project ended not with a strategic ministry plan in place, but with a report from the pastor on the situation at hand. In this report, for those who heard it or later read it, the congregation heard things about itself that it had not considered. Instead of coming to the end of the decision process, the congregation found itself at the beginning. Yet, it was only by going through this process, working with the research project, that this researcher and congregation could understand themselves and find their footing.

The foremost recommendation of this study is this: Choosing a formal, complete, strategic ministry planning program should not be the first step in addressing a congregation's needs. A strategic ministry planning program decision is one that is built up to through initial congregational analysis and self-study. Though the pastor and even the leadership may understand the situation and the needs, the congregation must be brought up to that same level. For had this congregation gone ahead with congregational-wide strategic ministry planning as envisioned by the researcher, predictably, the process would have demanded much of the congregation's time and energy in necessary congregational self-study, leaving little energy (meaning low participation) for the main purpose of the process, planning for the future.

Because of this project, the congregation is better poised to build upon the lessons learned. Through the interviewing and the reading, vital groundwork has been laid for the future consideration of strategic ministry planning. The process now is to go back and continue to educate the congregation's leadership, followed by the congregation itself, allowing them to take ownership of the needs. When this is accomplished, they will be in the best position to determine if strategic ministry planning is a solution they can wholeheartedly support.

It is this researcher's desire that what has been learned in this project will benefit other congregations. It was a worthwhile project; relationships were built and strengthened, knowledge gained, and efforts focused. Above all, through this project, the pastor and the members of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church have a fuller appreciation of the range of God's blessings and the tools He is making available to them, knowing that He will guide them and that His Kingdom will prosper.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. A Brief History of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

11/27/74 The Iowa District East (IDE) purchases Coralville lots 3-7 for \$57,550	10/00/80 Prince of Peace Calls Rev. Boyken to be their Pastor	1990 Rev. Abatie accepts a Call to Illinois
04/00/75 IDE purchases lots 1-2 for \$12,000	00/00/80 IDE LWML donates \$3,000 for furnishings	05/23/90 1 <sup>st</sup> Call Meeting
06/22/75 IDE meeting at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Iowa City to discuss Coralville mission.	12/12/80 Prince of Peace incorporated by the state of Iowa	06/24/90 10 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration
07/09/78 Rev. Daniel Bohlken installed as Missionary-at-large at a service at Our Redeemer, Iowa City.	04/00/81 First service held in new building (Wednesday)	09/08/91 13th Call Meeting
07/15/78 Rev. Bohlken holds the first service held at Coralville United Methodist Church. 50 Attend.	05/03/81 Rev. Bohlken Installed at Prince of Peace	01/19/92 Rev. R. Installed
09/00/78 Potential architects are interviewed by Building Committee	06/14/81 Building dedicated	1992 Fellowship Hall Building Committee formed
01/00/79 Architects Wehner and Associates of Iowa City are recommended to IDE.	1982 Altar dedicated	1992 First Computer and printer purchased
01/30/79 IDE Board of Directors approves architect.	1982 Carpet installed	1992 Mission Statement developed
1979 The name "Prince of Peace" is chosen.	1982 Trees planted	1993 Building Expansion Committee established
07/20/79 Architect signs contract.	07/00/84 Constitution amended to include Women's Suffrage	07/09/03 Groundbreaking for Fellowship Hall
09/10/79 Architect presents a layout and model to Building Committee. It is approved.	1984 Car runs into northeast corner of the church. \$10,000 in electrical damage.	1993 Great Flood (rain fills hole for basement)
10/09/79 IDE District Mission Board approved building plan progress.	1985 IDE buys back 7 lots, for \$85,000, to help with debt	1993 Pioneer Youth Group formed
03/22/80 First Voters Meeting of the congregation	10/00/85 Rev. Bohlken takes a Call to Montana.	5/22/94 Fellowship Hall dedicated
03/25/80 Groundbreaking for church building	06/08/86 Rev. Roger Abatie installed at Prince of Peace	1997 ESL classes held
06/00/80 In convention, IDE accepts Prince of Peace as a new LCMS congregation	1986 Secretary hired	08/00/98 Rev. R. accepts call
08/00/80 Burger Construction begins work	1986 Sound system installed	1998 Hedge and trees planted along creek
	1986 Church Council determines the biggest challenge is the facilities	11/00/98 Rev. Otto called to Prince of Peace
	09/00/86 Shed built barn-raising style	02/00/99 New office remodeled for Pastor
	1986(?) Painting of interior	02/28/99 Rev. Otto installed at Prince of Peace
	10/25/87 New pulpit dedicated	1999 Pastoral visits to every member (60 visits)
	10/14/88 Piano purchased	05/02/99 Organ Installed (from a home in Chicago)
	1988 Chair Committee formed to replace metal folding chairs (150 chairs needed)	06/00/99 Paraments received from congregation in Ames
	03/20/89 Sanctuary chairs arrive	09/29/99 First Rally Day
	1989 New Chancel cross	10/16/99 First Annual Reformation Bonfire (58 attended)
		11/01/99 Marcia McGoldrick hired as church secretary

11/00/99 New form of guest-friendly bulletin introduced  
 1999 Portable stage built (for Pageant)  
 12/00/99 First Christmas Pageant (replaced Christmas Program)  
 2000 Good Friday and Holy Saturday services held  
 2000 Bibles are to be given to all completing 2<sup>nd</sup> grade on Confirmation Sunday from no on  
 02/18/00 First Annual Game Night (Hosted by Pastor and wife)  
 03/2000 Communion Rail installed and dedicated  
 05/2000 20 Additional sanctuary chairs purchased (\$62/each)  
 2000 Parking lot tree cut down  
 12/24/00 Chalice dedicated (memorial)  
 01/00/01 End of District Subsidy (financial support)  
 02/00/01 First Annual "Everyone Come To Church Sunday"  
 03/00/01 Basement Building Committee formed  
 2001 Glass top added to altar  
 07/15/2001 Organist Tom Drury's last Sunday  
 10/21/2001 VISION SUNDAY  
 12/2001 Gravel parking lot added  
 01/13/02 Altar Cross dedicated  
 01/00/02 Rev. Otto begins Doctoral classes in St. Louis

01/05/02 Basement Clean Up Day  
 01/00/02 Basement Fund Drive begins  
 04/28/02 Vote to finish the basement  
 04/2002 Pulpit raised up one foot (to improve visibility from back of the church)  
 04/2002 Chancel painted white  
 06/2002 8:00 Sunday service trial (June and July)  
 2002 Chancel Windows replaced  
 07/02 Youth Group trip to Duluth  
 09/15/02 Organist David Kroll and wife Renee, join  
 09/02 Construction on basement begins (Wagehoft)  
 11/24/02 VISION SUNDAY II  
 01/19/03 Basement Dedicated (District President Arp cuts the ribbon)  
 01/03 Sanctuary Ceiling and back wall painted white  
 02/02/03 8:00 Sunday service added  
 2003 Sanctuary Remodeled (removal of two classrooms)  
 2003 Airlock built on north door  
 2003 Awning installed over north doorway  
 07/2003 Introduced LCEF SMP idea at Voters Meeting  
 11/2003 New sound system installed (memorial)  
 01/27/04 Thursday 7:00PM LCEF SMP Presentations

02/08/04 Sunday 9:10AM LCEF SMP Open Discussion Session  
 02/22/04 Special Sunday LCEF SMP Voters Meeting  
 06/2004 SMP Decision chosen as Rev. Otto's Doctoral research project  
 2004 Youth Trip to Boston  
 09/01/04 Outside lit cross installed on south face of building (memorial)  
 11/00/04 Organist David Kroll begins to play for 8:00 service (Advent 1)  
 01/05 MAP research Interviews begun  
 2005 Hired janitorial services  
 2005 Re-purchased lots back from IDE (\$137,000)  
 4/05 Parking lot re-paved  
 09/05 Preschool Opened

#### Congregational Chairmen

1980 Lowell Schoer\*  
 1982 Ray Wagehoft\*  
 1984 Terry Koehn\*  
 1989 Everett Nelson\*  
 1995 John Gibson  
 1996 Ken Trimpe\*  
 2003 Kevin Samek\*

\*Indicates those who are still members as of 2005

## Appendix 2. Original Expansion Plans for Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

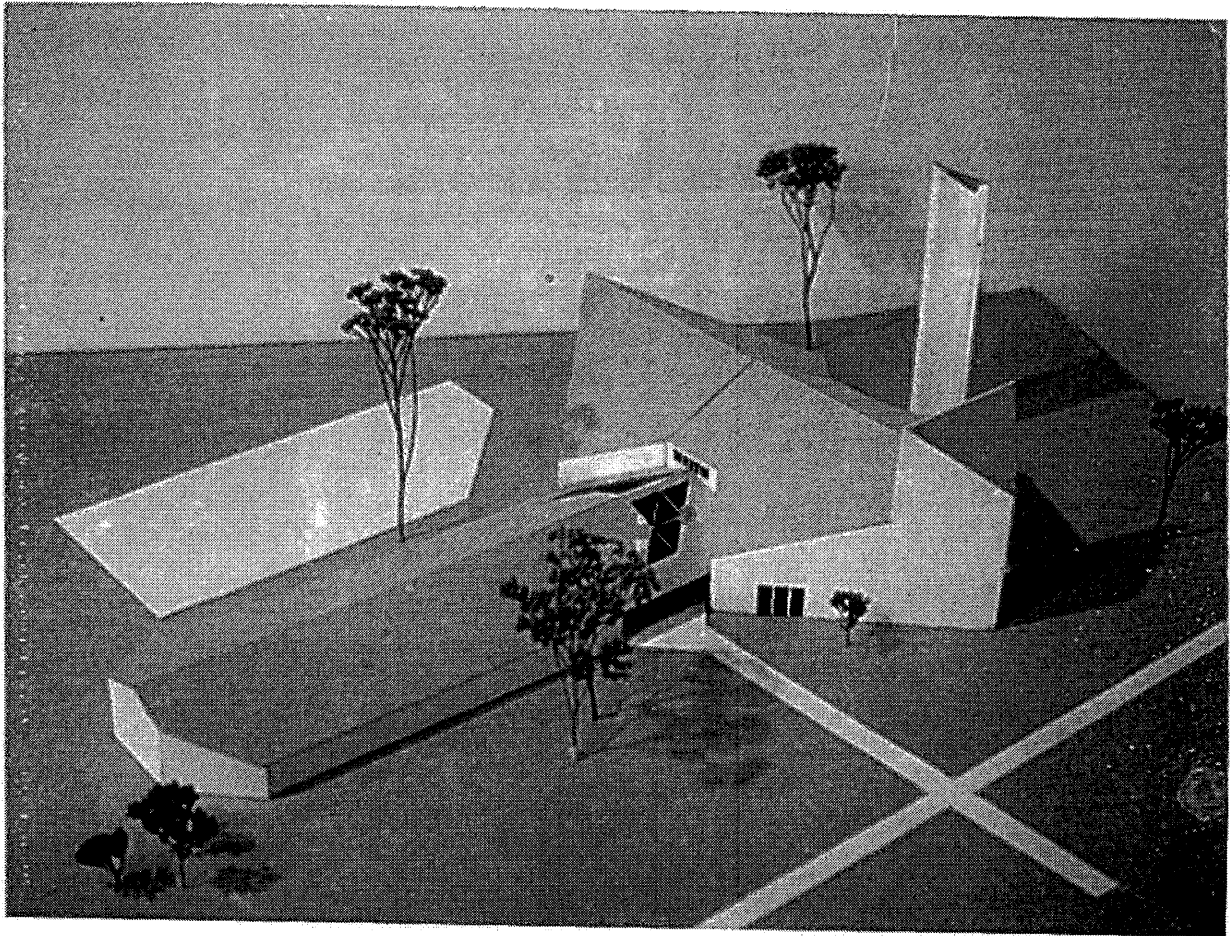


Figure 10. The original plans called for a bell tower (top right), a Narthex (top center), and extensive educational and administration wing to the north (left of original building).

### Appendix 3. Membership and Financial Statistics

Year	Baptized Members	Average Worship	Expenses	Subsidy Received
1978	?	55	?	?
1979	?	?	?	?
1980	132	65	\$33,272	\$19,81
1981	179	90?	?	\$17,40
1982	?	90?	?	?
1983	275	105	\$39,620	?
1984	266	98	\$59,900	\$10,20
1985	289	?	\$61,478	\$14,60
1986	286	100	\$74,177	\$25,01
1987	285	104	\$45,348	\$22,10
1988	280	97	\$86,660	\$20,90
1989	208	103	\$77,499	\$20,90
1990	218	108	\$67,069	\$12,85
1991	220	86	\$52,550	\$8,400
1992	228	99	\$90,601	\$11,85
1993	240	?	\$86,311	\$10,00
1994	237	80	\$94,079	\$20,00
1995	228	93	\$95,359	\$20,00
1996	220	95	\$83,275	\$18,00
1997	217	94	\$96,792	\$13,00
1998	224	90	\$104,90	\$16,00
1999	203	98	\$109,42	\$12,00
2000	203	96	\$106,52	\$6,000
2001	214	104	\$102,28	\$700
2002	223	123	\$210,00	
2003	238	132	\$216,65	
2004	238	133		





## Appendix 5. 2003 LCEF SMP Decision Artifacts

# Strategic Ministry Planning helps Christ Lutheran, O'Neill, Neb., find direction

Members of Christ Lutheran Church in O'Neill, Nebraska, were struggling with what steps to take in improving their ministry while also searching for a new pastor. Should they build a new fellowship hall? What about increasing enrollment in Sunday school classes? Why not focus on new outreach programs that involved the community?

While attending an LCEF district conference in Lincoln, Paul Carlson (a member of Christ's planning committee) found the congregation's answer in Strategic Ministry Planning. A ministry of LCEF, Strategic Ministry Planning (SMP) helps LCMS organizations find direction by asking God to share His calling through His Word for that ministry.

### Charting a Course

"Rather than talking 'building,' we needed to talk about what our congregation was trying to do," says Carlson. "We needed to find out where we were going as a congregation first because that would tell us whether or not we should pursue a building project."

Members of Christ had tried in the past to create a mission statement, but nothing was ever developed. The SMP process helped members open themselves up to what God wanted—first, with a month of prayer. Then, over a three-weekend period, the congregation developed a mission statement, vision and goals with the help of an SMP facilitator.

"Our facilitator walked us through the process with Scripture and prayer," explains Carlson. "As a congregation, we found out what we believe in, what our values are, and what is important to the congregation."

### A Re-Awakening

Carlson says that member involvement has increased since Christ Lutheran used Strategic Ministry Planning, and more people are committed to furthering the ministry.

"To me, it's been a re-growth, a re-awakening," adds Carlson. "SMP helped me understand that if I opened myself up to the process, God would show us His will."

After finishing the initial SMP process, Christ Lutheran Church has decided to put its building project on hold while members focus on creating new programs within the ministry, encouraging outreach into the community.

"I believe the SMP process works," says Carlson. "I don't think there is a congregation that exists that wouldn't benefit from going through this process."

*Founded in 1941, Christ Lutheran Church currently has 440 communicant members.*



## The SMP Process

Strategic Ministry Planning is a faith-based process, asking congregation members to seek their agenda from God. SMP is a fully participatory process that is different from other planning processes in that it is:

- Designed by Lutherans for Lutherans.
- Grounded in the Word and bound by LCMS doctrine.
- About the work (calling) of the congregation.
- Committed to a comprehensive plan.

At the completion of the initial SMP process, an organization has a clearer focus on its ministry. SMP also provides:

- Three-year strategic ministry plan.
- Demographic study.
- Financial resource report.
- Site capacity analysis.
- Facility utilization review.
- Ministry priorities.
- Implementation plan and schedule.
- Eight follow-up meetings with leadership.



*For more information about SMP, please call LCEF at 1-800-843-5233.*

The above is from page 2 of the summer 2003 issue of *Interest Time: An update on our work for the Lutheran Church Extension Fund Family*, the newsletter of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund. It was this article that initiated the congregation's interest in strategic planning.

# Prince of Peace Lutheran Church LCMS

Rev. Mitchell E. Otto 1701 8th Street Coralville, IA 52241 Phone: 319-338-1842 Email: popcoralville@juno.com



July 16th

To the Elected Officers, Elders, and Key People at Prince of Peace:

What about the future of Prince of Peace? How do we discover what God wants us to do? Do we wait and see what happens, or do we dare to try and make plans? What next?

Those of you who have been around me long enough know how important it is to me that our congregation find ways to do some basic planning for the future. In November of 2001, for example, the Elders led an open discussion at the end of a worship service. Last year, to continue, we brought in an area pastor to lead us in some basic Brainstorming one November Sunday afternoon. Both were successful in their own way.

Quite aware of the limit of my own leadership abilities and skills (I preach and I teach Christ crucified), wanting to see our congregation engage in more substantial planning for the future, I have been praying for guidance in this concern from our gracious God. It is possible that those prayers are now being answered. A few days ago my wife handed to me a page from a recent LCEF newsletter and said, "You should look at this."

You have in your hands the one page summary of an organization within the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod called Strategic Ministry Planning. I ask you to read this carefully, as I did. Encouraged by what I learned, I called the telephone number and spoke today to Mr. Rich Brumfield, the originator and fulltime employee of SMP within LCEF (Lutheran Church Extension Fund). It was an informative conversation which only encourages me to look into this further. At his behest, I visited the web site ([www.SMPinfo.org](http://www.SMPinfo.org)). I ask you to do the same.

I want to recommend to you and the congregation that we look furtherer into this. It is a huge undertaking that will have a price tag, yet the benefits may well be worth it. The program includes professional guidance, involvement of the entire congregation, follow up over several years, a three year plan with 20 year goals... It sounds exactly like something we could benefit from. It will take a commitment from the entire congregation, beginning with an initial (no obligation), introductory presentation one weekday night sometime this Fall.

Now you know as much as I do about SMP. If we get in soon, the cost will be about \$7,000 plus some travel expenses. Mr. Brumfield assured me that once a congregation hears the initial presentation, they will not think the price extravagant. Costs aside, I think we should investigate this.

Please read the page attached, visit the web site, pray as I am over this, and be prepared to discuss this at the next Council and Voter's Meeting.

Thank you.

In Christ,

Rev. Mitchell E. Otto

## Strategic Ministry Planning

*Asking God to reveal His Calling  
and accomplish His Plan  
for you and your congregation*

*"Commit to the Lord whatever you do,  
and your plans will succeed."*

*Proverbs 16:3*

Strategic Ministry Planning - a service of Lutheran Church Extension Fund

## Does this sound familiar?

Is your congregation without a unified ministry plan?

Does your congregation depend on one person or one interest group for direction?

Do you have "too few doing too much"?

Are there "competing" agendas among the laity or between the laity and staff?

Does your congregation's "Vision" consist of a Master Plan or an architectural model?

Are the demographics of the congregation very different than those of the neighborhoods around you?

Have you been stuck for months (years?) trying to figure out what to do next?

Can your congregation answer  
these four questions?

**Who are we?**

**What do we stand for?**

**Where are we going?**

**How will we get there?**

## Fundamentals

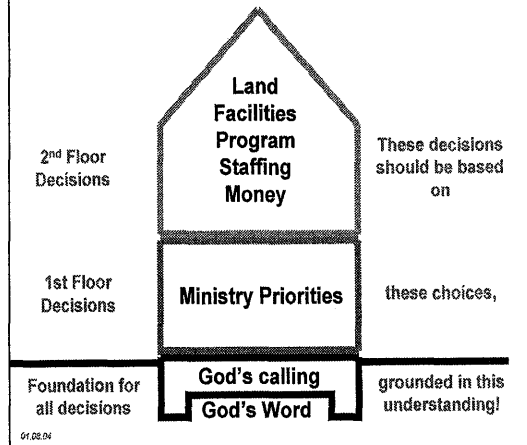
## SMP is about . . .

The WORK (calling) of the Church, in support of the administration of the Word and Sacraments.

## SMP is not about . . .

The administration of the Word and Sacraments (WORSHIP).

## The "House of Decisions"



## Empty Hands

*Proverbs 3:5-7*

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart  
and lean not on your own understanding;*

*in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.  
Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.*

**We go to God with empty hands, asking Him  
to show us His way.**

**We set aside personal agendas and politics, allowing  
God to work through the Body of Christ as He sees fit.  
We gather as the Body of Christ, trusting God to guide  
us into all truth by the Holy Spirit working through us,  
according to His promises.**

*John 16:13-14*

*But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He  
will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will  
tell you what is yet to come.*

## The Month of Preparation

- **Prayer and Bible Study regarding God's plan for us**
  - **Prayer, Hospitality, and Communications teams formed**
  - **Each member of the congregation invited to the Events in at least three ways**
  - **Historical data re Congregation**
  - **Demographics**
  - **Walkabout**
- 01.04

# The Process

## Event 1 – Seeking His Calling

- **Friday night – 7:00pm to 9:00pm**
- **Saturday morning – 8:00am through Lunch**
- **The gathered Body of Christ**
  - Everyone given the opportunity to participate
- **Empty Hands**
  - Personal agendas set aside
- **Defining our Vocabulary**
- **Our best understanding of God's calling (work) for this congregation**
  - Mission, Values, Vision, and Goal
- **Sunday morning Chapel Talk**
  - By one of the attendees
  - Results distributed
  - Invitation to the next Event

## Event 2 – Seeking His Plan

- Friday night – 7:00pm to 9:00pm
- Saturday morning – 8:00am through Lunch
- The gathered Body of Christ
  - Everyone given the opportunity to participate
- Fears
  - Confess and repent of fears that would keep you from doing God's calling
- Defining the Plan (First Floor)
  - Our best understanding of God's plan for this congregation's work
  - Strategies and Tactics
- Sunday morning Chapel Talk
  - By one of the attendees
  - Results distributed
  - Invitation to the next Event

## Event 3 – Leading to Action

- Friday night – 7:00pm to 9:00pm
- Saturday morning – 8:00am through Lunch
- The gathered Body of Christ
  - Everyone given the opportunity to participate
- Implementing the Plan (Second Floor)
  - Analysis of Financial, Site, Facilities, and Staffing resources and potential
  - Priorities and Schedule
  - The role of Unity and Teamwork
- Sunday Presentation & Voters
  - By your Facilitator
  - After the last worship service
  - Review the entire process and resulting SMP
  - Consider adoption of the SMP as policy for the congregation.

## Follow Up

- 8 On-Site Visits over 2 years
- Three Phases
  - Alignment of all Boards w/ Congregational Calling Statement + SMP
  - Strategic Leadership Training
  - Strategic Management
- Continuation of the Process . . . .  
without SMP Facilitator

# Compensation

## The Cost

For the entire SMP process,  
the cost is \$12,500 (+ travel)

For this, you receive:  
Demographics Study  
11 onsite meetings  
Calling Statement  
Strategic Ministry Plan  
Financial Analysis  
Site Capacity Analysis  
Facility Use Analysis  
Staffing Analysis  
Alignment of all ministries with God's calling  
Governance Model Review  
Strategic Leadership Training  
2 Year follow-up

01.08.04

# Comparisons

### How is this process different?

- **By Lutherans for Lutherans**
  - Grounded in the Word and bounded by LCMS doctrine
  - Completed by more than 90 LCMS congregations of all sizes, locations, and circumstances

### How is this process different?

- **Faith-based decision-making**
  - Does not rely on politics or science to establish agendas
  - No surveys, focus groups, or polls.
  - No preconceived definition of the “ideal” congregation.
  - “Experts” are used only for counsel regarding 2<sup>nd</sup> floor decisions, not for setting agendas.

### How is this process different?

- **Comprehensive**
  - Impacts all decision-making about the WORK (calling) of the congregation



01.08.04

### How is this process different?

- **Blessed by God with results!**
- In SMP alumni congregations, God has blessed them with improved:

Unity  
Accountability  
Multiplication  
Stewardship  
..

01.08.04

### How is this process different?

- **Blessed by God with results!**
- **SMP Alumni Congregations (since 1996)**
  - **Worship Attendance** up 4% (LCMS **down** 9%)
  - **Adult Confirmations** up 23% (LCMS **down** 32%)
  - **Giving per Worship Attendee** up 68% (LCMS up 22%)

01.08.04

### For more info:

[www.smpinfo.org](http://www.smpinfo.org)

[richbrumfield@earthlink.net](mailto:richbrumfield@earthlink.net)

[jonlorenz@earthlink.net](mailto:jonlorenz@earthlink.net)

*The following notes were made during the 02/08/2004 congregational discussion meeting that preceded the Voters Meeting to decide whether to hire LCEF's Strategic Ministry Planning Program.*

S.M.P. Discussion

9:10

Questions/Comments

- Land next to us?
  - Will SMP guide us—what we should do with the land?
- Calvary-Lutheran.org (David Sanderson's father's congregation used SMP)
  - Used SMP – look for their information
- Congregation attend 3 weekend Mtg?
  - get participation?
- Use our own talents to guide us instead of using SMP
- what direction do we go?
  - growth – we exceed SMP's #'s
  - financially – stable
  - work within our church first – we facilitate it ourselves instead of SMP

The above notes were written during the open discussion. At the time, the Iowa District East was gently pressuring the congregation to purchase back several land lots to the north of the church property that had been obtained by the District in the mid 1980s to help the congregation through a difficult financial period. The land was supposed to have been repurchased years earlier, but with change at the District levels, conditions at the congregational level, matters were left to ride. At the time of this discussion, the arrangements and the means to purchase the land were not clear.

The notes also show that the father of one of the members was currently leading his congregation through LCEF SMP. It was suggested that we look closer at their progress. This was never done as the congregation voted not to pursue LCEF's plan. Later, it was learned that the other congregation pulled out of the LCEF's plan, highly dissatisfied.

The notes indicate a reluctance to dedicate the congregation to the plan LCEF was offering, and a belief that we could do this with the talent within the congregation.

The final entries compared LCEF's expected results with the congregation's current experience, pointing out that the congregation was already progressing in those areas without SMP.



## **Appendix 6. July 2004 Voters Meeting Presentation**

Rev. Mitchell E. Otto

Preparing the Congregation for Strategic Planning  
M.A.P. Proposal, In Process, In Part

July 6, 2004

### **I. THE PROJECT INTRODUCED**

#### **A. The Problem**

The problem faced by the members of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Coralville, Iowa is that though the congregation desires to engage in Strategic Ministry Planning, it does not know how to find, evaluate, and choose the appropriate resources.

#### **B. The Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to increase the congregation's understanding of strategic planning, and the options available, in order that it can make a knowledgeable choice of the various programs available.

This Major Applied Project will assist the congregation in making an educated decision. By searching out the various Strategic Ministry Plan programs available, the researcher will survey the various plans available, make comparisons, and then provide the congregation with a summary of the benefits and goals of each program. This project will also seek to understand the congregation's understanding and attitudes toward strategic planning both before and after a decision has been made. In the process, the leaders and members of the congregation, along with District and Synodical staff, will be contacted and interviewed.

### **II. The Objectives**

1. One objective of this project is to assess the congregation's level of commitment to growth in ministry at the beginning and end of the research phase of this project.
2. One objective of this project is to determine the congregation's understanding of the changing needs of the congregation as it grows.
3. One objective of this project is to identify the tools available to the congregation in strategic planning.
4. One objective of this project is to present to the congregation the various strategic ministry tools available in a manner that they can make an informed decision.

When complete, this project will contribute to ministry an example of decision making in the choosing of a Strategic Ministry Planning program for a congregation of the size and situation of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Coralville, Iowa.

## Appendix 7. October 2004 Voters Meeting Presentation

*The following document was presented to the October 2004 Voters Meeting as an example of one of the steps and results of strategic Planning.*

### Pastor Otto's Top 16 Personal Values

These values are constant, passionate, biblical, core beliefs that drive my ministry.

Answering the question, "Why I do what I do, and make the decisions I do, as the Pastor of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church."

I value my wife and Children, for to do less would be to dishonor God who gave them to me.

Genesis 2:24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

I value my wife and children's faith in Jesus, as without this we would be separated in eternity.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

I value knowing that God is my creator, for through this I have source, support, and purpose in existing.

Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Exodus 9:16 But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you My power, so that My name may be proclaimed in all the earth.

I value the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is the only means by which I am saved from hell.

John 6:48 "I am the bread of life."

I value Baptism, as it is my re-creation at God's hand.

1 John 5:4 For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world— our faith.

I value the Lord's Supper, as it is God's gift to sustain my eternal life when I cannot yet see eternity.

John 6:53 So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you."

I value my participation in weekly worship, as this is the action and desire of a believer.

Psalms 29:2 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name; worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness.

I value Christ-centered worship and preaching, as this is what I need from the Holy Spirit to maintain faith.

2 John 1:9 Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.

1 Cor. 2:2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

I value Confirmation instruction, as it is laying a foundation of Christ in advance.

Psalms 71:5 For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O Lord, from my youth.

I value clear, creative, presentation, for without Christ being presented clearly, how can people be saved?

Col. 4:4 that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

I value the separation of Law and Gospel, as anything less weakens faith in Jesus Christ.

Matthew 11:30 "For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

I value knowing that I am at the same time sinner and the same time saint, for in this I know where my battles lie.

2 Tim. 2:11 The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with Him, we will also live with Him.

I value the sanctified life, as I, a sinner, am God's tool to bring the Gospel to others.

Proverbs 21:28 A false witness will perish, but the word of a man who hears will endure.

I value the mission work of the individual, member of this church as this is how the church grows.

Matthew 9:31 But they went away and spread His fame through all that district.

I value the appearance of the facilities at Prince of Peace and the friendliness of the people, as guests' first impressions are important.

Hebrews 13:2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

I value being Pastor of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, as this congregation is in the right place, at the right time, with the right Gospel.

John 12:26 "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there will My servant be also. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him."

WHICH LEADS TO:

Personal Mission Statement: They Will Hear the Good News of Jesus Christ and Know Who They Are.

## Appendix 8. Interview SMP Definition Handout

Thank You for This Interview

Rev. Otto's project is to research the decision-making process involved in choosing, or not choosing, a **strategic ministry planning** program for Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.

**Strategic ministry planning**, for the purpose of this project, is defined as the intentional actions of a congregation to:

- 1) Clearly understand and state its purpose for existence;
- 2) Inventory its God-given resources to accomplish that purpose;
- 3) Map out its desires and its goals for engaging that purpose in the future, and
- 4) To structure/ restructure itself accordingly.

The use of paid/hired resources, programs, and experts from outside of the congregation may or may not be used in accomplishing such planning.

## Appendix 9. Interview Request Email and Letter

# Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

Rev. Mitchell E. Otto  
17018<sup>th</sup> Street  
Coralville, IA 52241-1601  
Phone: 319-338-1842  
[popcoralville@juno.com](mailto:popcoralville@juno.com)

January 20, 2005

[Name of Member]:

This letter is a request for your assistance.

As you may know, I am working on an advanced degree, *Doctor of Ministry*, at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. For the past few years, I have traveled to St. Louis for a couple of weeks each summer, steadily advancing through the classroom requirements. I believe that this work has made me a better Pastor and the congregation has been supportive. About half way through my classes now, I am taking this year to work on what is called the **Major Applied Project** (MAP). This is a formal project, required for this degree, which asks me to research an important need of our congregation.

I have chosen for my project a need that we have been discussing at Prince of Peace for several years now, **strategic ministry planning**. This term may or may not be familiar to you, but is of interest to me and to the members of Prince of Peace as a means by which we can purposely plan for the future of our congregation.

What I am asking from you are a few minutes of your time to answer some interview questions I have written concerning strategic planning within our congregation. This is not a test, and you cannot fail or give any wrong answers. Even if you have little to say, that is still important for me to know. In addition, this is a confidential process, meaning that nowhere in my reporting will your name appear or be attached to any quotation or opinion. Only I will know of your participation and your answers.

If you would agree to this, we can arrange to meet at your home, work, the church, or some other location where you would feel comfortable. I estimate that the questions will take ten to twenty

minutes. During the interview, my purpose and conversation will be narrowly focused upon this specific topic. In other words, I will have to be a researcher more than I will be your Pastor during this interview. If there are other things you would like to discuss with me, as your Pastor, we can certainly set up a separate time for that.

Your assistance in this project will be of benefit to me in my studies, but will also benefit the congregation as I prepare to present to the congregation some of the options we have as we consider entering a specific **strategic ministry planning** process.

I will contact you soon, within the next several weeks, to ask for an appointment. I hope that you will grant me your time. On a separate sheet of paper, I have included a short definition of **strategic ministry planning** for you to read before we meet. This will help us to begin with a shared understanding of what we will be discussing in the interview.

In Christ,

Pastor Mitchell Otto

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Saturday - January 22<sup>nd</sup>

Dear Prince of Peace Member:

I need your assistance!

If you are receiving this e-mail it means that you and/or someone in your family, being a Voting Member of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, has randomly been picked “out of a hat” for an interview with me concerning my research project for my studies at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis.

If your name was drawn from “the hat”, there is an envelope with your name on it in your mail box at church. When possible, please pick up the envelope and read the letter. Much is explained in that letter. I will be calling or e-mailing to set a time for the interview—if you will grant it—after I know you have the letter. It may take several weeks, though.

It would be very helpful for me, since there are well over 100 interviews to be conducted, if you could look at your schedule and contact me by phone or e-mail with a suggestion of a date and time. I will come to your home, business, or meet you at church or in the park if that is where you would be comfortable. It will not take more than 20 minutes per interview, I am estimating, as the topic of questioning is very narrow (strategic ministry planning at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church). If more than one person in a family has been chosen for an interview, I will need to interview each one separately. All interviews will be strictly confidential. Your name will not be used in any portion of my paper.

I am looking forward to this! Your participation will be a big help to me and to your congregation.

Thank you.

In Christ,

Pastor Otto

**Appendix 10. Interview Request Letter to Pastors**

# Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

Rev. Mitchell E. Otto  
1701 8<sup>th</sup> Street  
Coralville, IA 52241-1601  
Phone: 319-338-1842  
popcoralville@juno.com

January 22, 2005

Rev. \_\_\_\_\_:

This letter is a request for your assistance.

As you may know, I am working on an advanced degree, *Doctor of Ministry*, at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. For the past few years, I have traveled to St. Louis for a couple of weeks each summer, steadily advancing through the classroom requirements. I believe that this work has made me a better Pastor and my congregation has been supportive. About half way through my classes now, I am taking this year to work on what is called the **Major Applied Project (MAP)**. This is a formal project, required for this degree, which asks me to research an important need of my congregation.

I have chosen for my project a need that we have been discussing at Prince of Peace for several years now, **strategic ministry planning**. This term may or may not be familiar to you, but is of interest to me and to the members of Prince of Peace as a means by which we can purposely plan for the future of our congregation.

What I am asking from you are a few minutes of your time to answer some interview questions I have written concerning strategic planning within congregations. This is not a test, and you cannot fail or give any wrong answers. Even if you have little to say on the topic, that is important to my research. In addition, this is a confidential process, meaning that nowhere in my reporting will your name appear or be attached to any quotation or opinion. Only I will know of your participation and your answers.

If you would agree to this, we can arrange to meet at your office or some other location where you would feel comfortable. I estimate that the questions will take thirty minutes or less. During the interview, my purpose and conversation will be narrowly focused upon this specific topic. I know how valuable your time can be.

Your assistance in this project will be of benefit to me in my studies, but will also benefit Prince of Peace Lutheran Church as I prepare to present to the congregation some of the options we have as we consider entering a specific **strategic ministry planning** process.

I will contact you soon to ask for an appointment. I hope that you will grant me your time.

On a separate sheet of paper, I have included a short definition of **strategic ministry planning** for you to read before we meet. This will help us to begin with a shared understanding of what we will be discussing in the interview.

In Christ,

Rev. Mitchell Otto



## Appendix 11. Release and Disclosure Form

### RELEASE AND DISCLOSURE FORM

The follow points have been explained to me to my satisfaction:

1. This interview is confidential. I understand that my name will not be used in the written documents associated with this project except for the Pastor's written calendar of appointments and the document that matches my name with the number assigned to this interview and its resulting materials.
2. All notes and recordings will be destroyed when Concordia Seminary issues a final grade for this project.
3. Until they are destroyed, all recordings and documents will remain in the files and on the computer of Rev. Otto.
4. I give my permission for this interview to be recorded.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 12. Member Interview Form

Member Interview Form Member # \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Strategic ministry planning, for the purpose of this project, is defined as the intentional actions of a congregation to, 1) clearly understand and state its purpose for existence, 2) inventory its God-given resources to accomplish that purpose, 3) map out its desires and its goals for engaging that purpose in the future, and 4) to structure/ restructure itself accordingly. The use of paid/hired resources, programs, and experts from outside of the congregation may or may not be used in accomplishing such planning.

- Sign release form for taping

- A. About how long have you been a member of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church? \_\_\_\_\_
- B. In a month's time, how many worship services would you say you normally attend? \_\_\_\_\_
- C. In a year's time, of the four Voters Meetings held, how many would you say you normally attend?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- D. Do you now, or have you in the past, held an elected office at Prince of Peace? \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Do you know if Prince of Peace has a Mission Statement? \_\_\_\_\_
- F. Do you know the purpose a Mission Statement serves? \_\_\_\_\_
1. Have you read the definition for strategic ministry planning provided in the letter I sent to you?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Do you have any questions about what it means? \_\_\_\_\_
2. In your opinion, which statement reflects an appropriate understanding of congregations:
- A. Congregations are unique and each should seek to discover its own specific role in God's Kingdom, or,  
B. Congregations are basically the same, each serving the Kingdom of God in a similar way.
- A. I joined this congregation because it is what I think a Christian congregation should be, or,  
B. I joined this congregation because of its uniqueness among Christian congregations.
- A. If I move from this area, I will look for a congregation similar to this one.  
B. If I move from this area, I will look for a congregation that is unique to itself.
3. Why should a congregation make plans and set goals for the future? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who should be responsible for making such plans and setting such goals? \_\_\_\_\_ Is this happening at POP? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What have been your experiences with setting goals and making plans at Prince of Peace?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Or within any other congregation? \_\_\_\_\_
- Or participated in similar planning at your job or within any other organization? \_\_\_\_\_
- 
5. How important, or unimportant, at this time, do you believe it is for Prince of Peace to intentionally make plans and set goals for the next 10 to 20 years? \_\_\_\_\_
- 
6. What **concerns** should our congregation have in making such a process a priority in the near future?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. What would make our congregation **hesitate** to become involved in such a process in the near future? \_\_\_\_\_
8. If Prince of Peace dedicated itself to making plans and setting goals for the future, **what benefits** would you hope to see come out of such effort? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
9. At the April Voters Meeting, the Voters will be examining and possibly selecting an SMP program for use at POP. How important is it for to you to attend an informational presentation a week before that Voters Meeting? Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What information would you want to know about a specific SMP in order to be able to make an informed decision about its possible use at POP? \_\_\_\_\_
10. If you knew that the Voters were going to be examining and possibly selecting an SMP program for use at POP at the April Voters meeting, how important would it be to you to attend that Voters Meeting and participate in the discussion and vote? Why? \_\_\_\_\_
11. If the Voters Assembly voted to use a specific SMP program, and you were asked to participate in the process, would you be willing to dedicate your time and talents to the process if asked?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 What would make you hesitate to be involved in the process? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What would make you eager to be involved? \_\_\_\_\_
12. If a friend of yours asked, *What is the purpose of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church being in existence*, what would you say? \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix 13. Pastoral Interview Form

Pastor Interview Form Interviewee # \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Strategic ministry planning, for the purpose of this project, is defined as the intentional actions of a congregation to, 1) clearly understand and state its purpose for existence, 2) inventory its God-given resources to accomplish that purpose, 3) map out its desires and its goals for engaging that purpose in the future, and 4) to structure/ restructure itself accordingly. The use of paid/hired resources, programs, and experts from outside of the congregation may or may not be used in accomplishing such planning.

- Sign release form for taping

A. About how long have you been in your current position? \_\_\_\_\_

B. About how long have you been in the ministry? \_\_\_\_\_

C. Does the ultimate decision making authority rest with your Voters Assembly? \_\_\_\_\_

D. Do you have any formal training or schooling in strategic ministry planning? \_\_\_\_\_

E. Does your congregation have a Mission Statement? \_\_\_\_\_

How was that Mission Statement developed? \_\_\_\_\_

How does this Mission Statement direct and guide the plans, goals, direction, and work of this congregation on a daily basis? \_\_\_\_\_

1 Have you read the definition for strategic ministry planning provided in the letter I sent to you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Do you have a good understanding of this definition? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ How well do you believe you understand the role of SMP in a congregation? \_\_\_\_\_

2. In your opinion, which reflects an appropriate understanding of what congregations are:

A. Congregations are unique and each should seek to discover its own specific role in God's Kingdom, or,

B. Congregations are basically the same, each serving the Kingdom of God in a similar way.

3.a Within a congregation, who should be responsible for making short-term plans and set short-term goals? \_\_\_\_\_

Long-term (5-20 years) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Have you ever been involved in strategic ministry planning at this congregation? What was the experience like? \_\_\_\_\_

At previous congregations? \_\_\_\_\_

At other jobs or within any other organization? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is your reaction when I tell you that there is a congregation in the Circuit considering engaging in SMP? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What concerns would you have for that congregation engaging in a formal strategic planning program? \_\_\_\_\_

6. If one of your own members suggested your congregation enter in a SMP process, what would cause you to hesitate? \_\_\_\_\_
7. If you heard of a congregation engaging in strategic ministry planning, what benefits would you hope it would experience? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Are you aware of any specific strategic ministry planning programs available to congregations?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. If Prince of Peace in Coralville entered into a strategic ministry program, how interested would you be in the process and the results? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What recommendations would you have for a congregation considering SMP? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Briefly stated, What is the purpose of a congregation's existence? \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 14. Correspondence with a Local Business Strategic Planner

*While being interviewed, one of the members of the congregation shared how her company was in the midst of an extensive strategic planning program. From the materials the member lent to the researcher, the following email correspondence developed.*

March 12, 2004

KSF:

Do you have any experience with Strategic Planning with Christian congregations?

Sincerely,

Rev. Mitchell Otto

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

Coralville, Iowa

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Mitchell Otto:

I apologize for the slow response. I was in Mexico for a week doing mission work for Rotary then returned for a week of Influenza A. I am just getting back to the office for several hours now. Yes, we have done strategic planning for Christian churches. I am an Elder in my church. (Central Park Presbyterian)

I have a number of questions for you. If you don't mind, I will spill some of them on you now. What tells you it's time to do strategic planning? When you have been successful in your planning, what will have changed? How experienced is your church with planning? How solid are the relationships between people in your church? Is your church at a fork in the road where there are two or more strongly held and competing agendas? How long have you been on board? What are your personal strengths and weaknesses? You don't have to answer these questions now. Please just think about them.

If you want to get together and discuss your situation, please call me next week and we can schedule a meeting. My phone number is listed below. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Daryl Spivey

KSF Associates, Inc.

3349 Southgate Court SW

Cedar Rapids, IA 52404

Phone: 319-365-7991

Fax: 319-366-8586

[dspivey@ksfinc.com](mailto:dspivey@ksfinc.com)

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Friday - March 18

Daryl Spivey:

Thank you for writing back concerning Strategic Planning for our congregation.

These are the questions you asked and my brief answers:

What tells you it's time to do strategic planning?

Answer: We are transitioning from being a smaller congregation to a larger one. We know that we cannot keep operating the same way. We also know that there are things we want to accomplish but are unsure of how to get there working with our present structure.

When you have been successful in your planning, what will have changed?

Answer: We will have established a clear identity, a stated purpose, and both short and long term goals, and a plan to follow. We will have the gained the ability to communicate to those not

in our congregation our purpose for existence and our uniqueness as a congregation. We will have a greater unity and increased participation within the congregation. We will have structured ourselves to match our goals and identity.

How experienced is your church with planning?

Answer: We have held several one-time planning events. They generated ideas, but have had little follow through. One year ago, we seriously considered hiring a strategic ministry planning consultant—but did not. It was rejection of that particular program, at that time, but not a rejection of strategic planning itself. Like many organizations, we can generate many ideas, but we do not have the structure or mind set to know how to implement them and keep them going. We are very much a reactionary group, but wish to become more proactive.

How solid are the relationships between people in your church?

Answer: Right now, I am in the middle of a research project for a doctoral degree. My project has to do with the decision making process of this congregation as it considers accomplishing strategic planning. As of today, I have interviewed 70 of our members on their knowledge, their concerns, their hesitations, and their desired results concerning strategic planning (I learned of you through one of these interviews). One of the things I am interested in, for reasons I can explain at another time, is the possibility that there is division among the members—especially between those who were here when I arrived and those who have joined since. I as suspected, I have found no division. There is a unity here. No one is arguing with anyone else.

Is your church at a fork in the road where there are two or more strongly held and competing agendas?

Answer: We are at a fork in the road only in so much as these are the best years of this congregation's 25 year life. It is a good time for us to engage in strategic planning as we can do it now because we want to, not because we have to. There are no competing agendas, but there is past history to be aware of—one that has caused me to be careful of when I am bold in what I propose and when I need to be sensitive to the past experiences of the members. One of the biggest challenges right now is to convince those who are very happy with the way things are going that now is the time to consider doing this. We have some opportunities coming up, but I see we do not have the structure to tackle them.

How long have you been on board?

Answer: I was Called to be the Pastor here just over six years ago. I am 44 years old and this is my second congregation. When I arrived, the congregation had gone through about 10 years of tough times—but their entire history has been tough. I have worked hard to get them past that by focusing on short term goals to show that the past is the past. In that regard, I have been talking strategic planning and the future with the congregation and its leadership since day one. Of the 250 members, about half have joined since I became pastor. Of course, they do not know of the past as anything but ancient history. The current leadership is about half old and half newer members.

What are your personal strengths and weaknesses?

Answer: My strengths are in teaching and personal care. When people join our congregation they tell us it is because the friendliness of the congregation—compared to other churches they have visited—and because of my preaching and general positive attitude. My weaknesses are pretty well hidden from the congregation, though their impact is clear to me. (Through my doctoral program I have had my personality tested and measured.) Even though the congregation would tell you that we have accomplished many wonderful things since my arrival, even give me credit for much of it, I know that I do not know how to lead them and inspire them to the next stage of their existence. I have shared this with the leadership. I do not have the personality that causes people to jump up and do what I say just because I said it.

I hope this helps you understand our situation a little better. Strategic planning is on the table for the congregation this year. Possibly, you could be one of the options we consider. Are you interested in pursuing this any further? Have you had experiences with congregations?

Sincerely,

Rev. Mitchell Otto

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

Coralville, Iowa

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Mitchell:

Quite a story. Don't be too tough on yourself regarding the leadership issue. It is the rare church that has grown like you describe. Congregations have probably (in my opinion) been more misled than appropriately guided by charismatic ministers. The congregation has to outlive any minister. We have seen in business where the more flashy leaders can tend to actually build a dependence on themselves and the business (church) suffers because of it when that leader leaves

We have a great deal of business, government and not-for-profit experience. Other than my personal leadership experiences in my own church for 20 years, not much church stuff. My view is that the kind of diversity we have is a strength. Companies that tend to utilize industry experts tend to receive the same advice everyone else is getting in the industry and consequently produce an average result.

Our organizational skill uniqueness is the ability to help clients design a new culture that is congruent with the strategic plan they are attempting to bring alive. There are numerous organizations with great plans collecting dust on their shelves. Typically, the major barrier to a new plan is the organization's old culture.

We are also unique in our ability to help leadership cause the right things to happen. We have discovered where organizations typically go wrong in the change process and build in steps to overcome these obstacles. For example, we find that organizations tend to be weak in making a true commitment on the front end to the change process. They tend to ignore current and historic realities in their behavior and culture that, unless identified and confronted will weaken the results. They tend to build a plan focusing on their individual responsibilities and interests rather than understanding their role in leading the ENTIRE organization as a team. They tend to ineffectively involve the rest of the organization while the plan is being built. They tend to roll-out the plan in a way that creates rejection rather than acceptance. They tend to loose steam before driving alignment in the organization top to bottom. They tend to neglect to develop the people and management skills necessary to drive and deepen the plan. (Note: This type of development is toward the end of the process---not at the front) Hope this paragraph doesn't sound negative. It isn't. It's freedom when these things are dealt with. There is a guy in Iowa City (I don't remember his name but could find out) that has helped our church for several years. He does good work and the price is right. We do some volunteer work but my calendar is committed for this year. If you want to meet and discuss things further, please give me a call.

By the way, who was it that mentioned my name or at least where does that person work? Just curious.

Respectfully,

Daryl Spivey

KSF Associates, Inc.

3349 Southgate Court SW

Cedar Rapids, IA 52404

Phone: 319-365-7991

Fax: 319-366-8586

[dspivey@ksfinc.com](mailto:dspivey@ksfinc.com)



Tuesday - March 22<sup>nd</sup>

Daryl Spivey:

Thank you for your reply and comments.

If you feel it would be best to refer us to the fellow in Iowa City, I would appreciate his name. My goal is to gather a number of options for our congregation to consider.

As to the person through whom I learned your name, I don't have that person's permission to share their name, but I have had a good look at your materials.

Thank you.

Rev. Mitchell Otto

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

Coralville

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Rev. Mitchell Otto:

First things first. I am interested in helping you. I don't know what your budget is for this activity. Some people who consult are subsidized by a "real job" and do their consulting as a sideline or supplement. Consulting is my job and is the source of putting bread on our table. At the same time, I mention Dan Killinger as a competent alternative if you are not in a position to pay a half-rate fee for my services or if you want to expand your interview scope.

Dan may not even know my name. He conducted a retreat session for Central Park Presbyterian Church in Cedar Rapids about 2 months ago. He had done a session for them a year ago that produced good results. I was a participant of the recent session and thought he did a good job. The Central Park person who originally recommended Dan is Dave Rodgers of Alliant Energy. Dave saw Dan conduct a planning session for the Eagles, Elks or one of those other animal clubs.

The person (Dave Green) who coordinated the recent session with Dan said Dan is most easily reached through a message or conversation on his wife's cell phone---# 319.560.4993.

Please keep me informed and also, please remember I am interested in providing services for you.

Respectfully,

Daryl Spivey...

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Mitchell:

Have you had a chance to speak with my referral? What was your reaction?

As I said in my last correspondence, I don't want to talk you out of using me. At the same time, in good conscience, I felt the need to identify someone else for you to compare his services with mine.

Respectfully,

Daryl Spivey...

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Maundy Thursday

Daryl:

As you can imagine, I am very busy through this weekend. And after that, I am going to take a long nap. Strategic planning is on hold for the next few days.

Blessed Easter.

Rev. Mitchell Otto

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[4/26/05]

Mitchell:

Just checking to see how your planning aspirations are unfolding.

Respectfully,

Daryl Spivey...

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Thursday - May 28

Daryl Spivey:

Thank you for your follow-up e-mail. I was thinking about contacting you and letting you know what has happened in regard to strategic planning at our congregation.

This past Sunday, at our congregation's quarterly Voters Meeting, the ultimate authority in congregational matters, I presented a report on my research and interviews (as part of my doctoral work). The plan had been, at this time, to present to the congregation several strategic planning options. They would have been asked to decide if they desired to engage in strategic planning and, if yes, pick one of the options to follow. I had contacted you as potentially being one of the options for the congregation to consider. But, as I worked through my interviews and research, I found that I could not follow through on my plan. Before we enter into formal strategic planning--by which I mean hiring someone to lead the congregation through a formal process--there are a number of things we have to work on first. Simply put, we are a larger congregation still trying to operate as we once did when we were a smaller, informal, congregation. The informal decision making process that worked so well in the past has fallen away as we have grown and leadership positions have passed into new hands. We had not recognized this change as we struggled with the symptoms of a broken system without understanding the problem. We failed to replace the old system and mind set with one that matched our growth. Any strategic planning that is attempted right now would fail (as past efforts have) because of the missing pieces in our structure. It was obvious that any strategic planning we entered into now would first have to deal with this situation before anything else could be attempted. Following my presentation, after I carefully explained that this is no one's fault and is actually a great opportunity, discussion ensued and those present seemed to take to heart what I was describing and understand what I was proposing. This means that we have started to look at things a little differently. The members took up my recommendation to work on the operating structure of the congregation as a first priority. After all, I explained, the leadership will be the ones asked to carry through the specifics of future strategic planning. In a month, we are going to begin a series of self-led retreats that will start to address these challenges.

Thank you for your time and interest. There may be an opportunity to contact you again in the future and invite you to share the specifics of your unique services with us.

Sincerely,

Rev. Mitchell Otto

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[4/28/05]

Mitchell:

I want to point out one major observation from your comments. Your current struggles emerged from success. They are the pains of improvement, not distress. Congratulations.

It sounds like you made the right choice. At the same time, remember that you must keep in mind where you are going as you create your new structure. Brigham Young left your neighborhood in about 1849 using handcarts. Not the best transportation system but one that with risk, would work. He said "Let them gird up their loins and walk." They made it using this transportation structure. But, they improved it later.

Well, I must have some latent "preacher" tendencies. I just re-read the previous paragraph. I had that story in my head since my 1965 U of I professor "Steamboat" Willie Peterson Iowa History class. The story may not have quite hit the mark but I'll leave it in for your humor.

I have enjoyed our running conversation and wish you well. If I can be of help, please let me know.

Respectfully,  
Daryl Spivey...

## Appendix 13. PASTORAL SMP REPORT TO THE 2005 APRIL VOTERS MEETING

*The following verbal report was delivered to the 2005 April Voters Meeting during the Pastor's Report.*

Voters Meeting – April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2004

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ,

Fellow Members of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church:

In December of 1999, I attended a meeting at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. I was, at the time, considering the Call to come and be the Pastor here. At that meeting, this congregation told me that their strategic ministry focus—though such words were not used—was to heal. Their plan was to focus on the preaching and teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the care of the members.

Once I accepted the Call to be the Pastor here, my strategic plan was to preach the Gospel, visit everyone in their home, and finish the basement as a sign that the past was the past. I also began to speak to the Elders about Vision and future planning.

On October 21, 2001, almost two years after receiving the Call, we held our first Vision Sunday. The service (there was only one Sunday morning service back then) was ended half an hour early and the Elders took over and opened a discussion concerning the future of Prince of Peace. We learned a lot that morning on how such events should be run.

On November 24, 2002, while construction was going forth in the basement, the congregation held Vision Sunday II. Rev. Leon Hauser came and led an afternoon event. The result was a fine list of things to do, but it was discovered that there was no means to implement the items (yet, many of the items have come to realization). There was no Vision Sunday in 2003. In January and February of 2004, we looked at the LCEF Strategic Ministry Planning program and elected not to enter into it at that time. The Voters liked the SMP concept, but were not convinced this program was the way to proceed. Points discussed included the cost, the need for outside help, and the pending land purchase. In June of 2004, almost a year ago, I chose for my Major Applied Project in my Doctorial program the study of SMP in this congregation. Working with my Advisor, we narrowed down the scope of this project to tracking the decision process of this congregation as it considered SMP again. The steps were to be: 1) Initial Interviews, 2) Education of options, 3) Make a decision, and 4) Analyze that decision. It is now April of 2005. After interviewing 78 Voting Members of the congregation, I am ready to make a recommendation to the congregation though it breaks from the planned path. Three factors have entered into the picture that have influenced my doing this. First, though the congregation seems to support the idea of SMP (though their understanding of the process is fuzzy at best), the willingness to commit the time necessary for a successful outcome is weak. Second, the congregation does not have a clear understanding of how things are running at present.

Third, if the congregation decided to engage in SMP, eventually the carrying out of the plan would fall to the leadership, specifically the Church Council.

With these three factors in mind, for reasons I will explain, I cannot recommend that the congregation enter into a full congregational SMP project, led internally or externally, at this time. It is my evaluation that such an effort would result in less than desired results—it would fail.

Another option was to look at forming a special committee to do SMP, by themselves or led by an outside expert, but such an effort would not work for the same reasons.

The option and the place where I am recommending we begin is with the Church Council. I recommend this because:

1. The Council would be responsible for carrying forth, staffing, and evaluating any SMP plan developed.

2. The present structure, based upon a small and informal congregation, is not working. Despite the best efforts of dedicated members, the current operation of Prince of Peace is neither keeping up with the changing face of the congregation nor capable of handling the additional demands of a developed SMP plan.

3. In fact, SMP, if done correctly, would require us to look at how we operate before we could consider anything else.

It is important that we understand, as a congregation, that how we are operating right now is very much like a baby elephant trying to fit into a telephone booth. Part of him is inside, good, but much of him is not. We are operating under a structure and attitude that worked well for a small, informal, cohesive congregation, but we are not such a congregation any longer.

The congregation we used to be was one in which most members knew each other. Decisions could be made in the parking lot; members could assume that so-and-so was going to take care of certain things as they came up. The demands were simple, the needs narrow, and the response assumed. Today, we are a congregation in which we have members who have joined but have never been assimilated. A small congregation does not need to focus on assimilation, it just happens through contact and interaction. Not so with a congregation our size. This means that fewer members are involved, and fewer things are getting done.

More specific to this topic, the functioning of the Council has remained that of a small congregation. Reports are read concerning the finances and the property of the congregation—the vast majority of the Council’s agenda—votes are taken and short-term decisions are made. All of this is important, yet, what has happened is that the vital work that used to be done away from the Council’s formal meetings—the informal structure upon which our whole committee system was based—has ceased to exist. How many decisions were made in the parking lot, after services by people standing and visiting, over the telephone, or during social activities between members? A lot. This is gone, and nothing has replaced it.

Some of the symptoms are: I, as Pastor, am working 6 or more days a week on basic congregational tasks. The church secretary’s position is stretched beyond expectations. There are questions to be answered that have no one to answer them. Things are done without consultation of others (because that is the way of a small congregation) and problems occur. The Committee system is not functioning. Problems are not anticipated but reacted to when they come up. Neither Voters Assembly nor the Church Council have any means to generate new ideas or programs. Sign up sheets remain as a tool.

Hear me: This is not a comment on the people and leadership of our congregation. The members here love their church, work hard, and give generously. But it should concern us all that we all are working under a system and attitude which keeps us trapped in ruts that we have out-grown. We are the baby elephant desperately trying to fit into the phone booth, when, in fact, telephones do not need booths any longer, but fit into our pockets. Our biggest strategic ministry planning challenge is to recognize that though we may not know how a church can operate any differently than this, we are, in fact, by default, operating very differently than we were when we were a smaller congregation, for a good portion of the informal support has vanished.

In good Lutheran fashion, we have arrived at the point of asking, “What does this mean?” It means that we have to do what most congregations will never do: We have to jump out of the rut we have carved for ourselves. We have to acknowledge that important things have changed and we have not adjusted in how we operate. We have to learn to be interested in knowing who we are—not just assuming it—what we value, what are our strengths and what are our weaknesses, and we have to know where we want to go. And most importantly, we have to pray for it—seek God’s will for this congregation and then listen for God’s direction.

From my study and my interviews with other pastors, I have already proposed that the Council institute a Yearly Planning Event. This is an important step. What I believe will initially come out of it is a realization of our current situation. This is a first step. But what also should be said is this; this cannot be a Pastor project. I cannot change this congregation any more than I can talk any member into quitting drinking, loving their wife as Christ loves the Church, or making better decisions in their life. We will not change our congregation unless we want to. It means a dedicated program and a desire for new attitude in how we see and understand our congregation’s mission both to its members and to the world in Christ’s name.

<p>The Source:</p>	<p><b>EXTERNAL</b> (HIRE)</p>	<p><b>INTERNAL</b> (LEARN)</p>
<p>The Extent:</p>		
<p><b>CONGREGATION</b></p>	<p><b>1</b> The congregation hires an outside consultant to lead the entire congregation through strategic ministry Planning. <i>Advantages:</i> Professionally lead. Thorough in coverage. The congregation is solidly committed to the process. <i>Disadvantages:</i> Price. Multi-year commitment by the congregation.</p>	<p><b>4</b> The congregation trains itself and leads itself through strategic Planning. <i>Advantages:</i> Self reliance and skills. <i>Disadvantages:</i> Lower commitment by congregation due to small investment. Requires a committee to dedicate itself to learning, teaching, and leading strategic ministry planning.</p>
<p><b>COUNCIL</b></p>	<p><b>2</b> The congregation hires an outside consultant to work with the Church Council through strategic ministry Planning. <i>Advantages:</i> Professionally lead, thorough in coverage, the congregation is supportive of the process. <i>Disadvantages:</i> Price. Commitment by the Council. Length of terms.</p>	<p><b>5</b> The Council trains itself to learn and lead itself through strategic Planning. <i>Advantages:</i> Self reliance and new skills. Reach the core group. <i>Disadvantages:</i> Additional time required, possible lack of interest on the Council. Limited direct impact on congregation.</p>
<p><b>COMMITTEE</b></p>	<p><b>3</b> The congregation hires an outside consultant to work with a special committee through strategic ministry Planning. <i>Advantages:</i> Professionally lead. Thorough in coverage. Congregation is supportive of the process. <i>Disadvantages:</i> Price. Committee will have to teach congregation.</p>	<p><b>6</b> The congregation appoints a special committee to learn SMP and make recommendations to Council and Voters. <i>Advantages:</i> Self reliance. <i>Disadvantages:</i> Low commitment by congregation and Council. Start to something bigger.</p>

## Appendix 16. The Post Decision Questionnaire

April 25, 2005

\_\_\_\_\_  
NAME

Thank you for your attendance at the April Voters Meeting of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. As you know, I am conducting a research project for a doctoral degree on the subject of strategic ministry planning at our church. At the Voters Meeting I delivered a report on this topic. It was based upon reading and 78 interviews with members of our congregation and 15 interviews with pastors and District leaders. The Voters listened to my report, asked questions, discussed it, and voted on a certain motion. As a researcher, I would like to know how and why the Voters made the decision that they did. As a Voter in attendance, I would ask that you please take a moment to answer the following questions. This will help me with my project and help the congregation to make progress in this area.

Please know that: Your answers will be completely confidential; your name will not be used or associated with your answers; and all email and written answers will be destroyed when this project is completed.

Thank you.

In Christ,

Pastor Otto

1. This questionnaire is for those who attended the April 24th Prince of Peace Voters Meeting. Were you in attendance at this Voters Meeting?
2. At this Voters Meeting, Pastor Otto delivered a verbal report concerning strategic ministry planning. Would you please briefly describe the top three aspects of his report that stand out as significant to you and to the congregation?
3. From memory, would you briefly describe Pastor Otto's recommendation to the Voters concerning strategic ministry planning?
4. From memory, would you please briefly describe the content of the motion which was passed following the Pastor's Report?
5. On this motion, what were the top two reasons why you voted the way you did?
6. After this Voters Meeting, based upon what you have learned, briefly describe what you expect to happen next concerning strategic ministry planning at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church?
7. Finally, were you one of those interviewed by Pastor Otto before the Voters Meeting?

Thank you.

You may email your answers to Pastor Otto at [popcoralville@juno.com](mailto:popcoralville@juno.com), or send them in by mail, or drop them off at church sometime soon.

## Appendix 17. The Member Interview Results Spreadsheet

		All Members		Congregational Leaders		Newer Members		Older Members	
		Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%
A	<b>Membership in Years</b>	10.6		10.7		2.5		17.7	
B	<b>Services/Month</b>	3.2		3.7		3.5		2.9	
C	<b>Voters Meetings/Year</b>	1.8		3.3		1.7		1.8	
D	<b>Ever elected to an office of the congregation?</b>								
	Yes	30	38%	13	100%	10	27%	21	51%
	No	48	62%	0	0%	27	73%	21	51%
E	<b>Does Prince of Peace Lutheran Church Have A Mission Statement?</b>								
	Yes	54	69%	13	100%	19	51%	36	88%
	No	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Do not know	23	29%	0	0%	17	46%	6	15%
F	<b>Do You Understand the Purpose of Mission Statement?</b>								
	Was able to give definition	74	95%	13	100%	35	95%	40	98%
	Was not able	4	5%	0	0%	2	5%	2	5%
1	<b>Have you read the letter and SMP definition?</b>								
	Yes	77	99%	13	100%	37	100%	41	100%
	No	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	<b>Do you have any Questions concerning the SMP definition?</b>								
	No	65	83%	13	100%	31	84%	35	85%
	Yes	12	15%	0	0%	6	16%	6	15%
2	<b>A. Congregations... unique</b>								
	B. Congregations... same	57	73%	10	77%	29	78%	28	68%
	Could not answer	20	26%	3	23%	7	19%	14	34%
	Could not answer	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
2	<b>A. Should be...</b>								
	B. Unique among...	52	67%	9	69%	26	70%	26	63%
	Could not answer	24	31%	4	31%	10	27%	15	37%
	Could not answer	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
2	<b>A. If I move... similar</b>								
	B. If I move... unique	60	77%	12	92%	32	86%	29	71%
	Could not answer	16	21%	1	8%	4	11%	12	29%
	Could not answer	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
3	<b>Why should a congregation plan and set goals? All interviews but one gave reasons why a congregation should make plans &amp; goals.</b>								
	It should not	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
3	<b>Who should be responsible for planning?</b>								
	Congregation/Voters	32	41%	6	46%	15	41%	18	44%
	Council	16	21%	3	23%	11	30%	5	12%
	Pastor	22	28%	3	23%	9	24%	13	32%
	Standing Committees	2	3%	1	8%	1	3%	1	2%
	Elders	3	4%	0	0%	1	3%	2	5%
	The Holy Spirit	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	Planning Committee	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	Chairman of the Congregation	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
3	<b>Is this [planning and goal setting] happening at POP?</b>								
	Yes	38	49%	8	62%	16	43%	23	56%
	Weak Yes	28	36%	3	23%	15	41%	13	32%
	No	9	12%	2	15%	4	11%	5	12%
	Do not know.	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
4	<b>Experience of SP at POP?</b>								
	Could list experiences	37	47%	9	69%	14	38%	23	56%
	Listed SMP experiences	5	6%	1	8%	1	3%	4	10%
	Could not list experiences	34	44%	2	15%	21	57%	14	34%
4	<b>Involved in SP at other congregations?</b>								
	Yes - Examples not SMP	14	18%	5	38%	7	19%	7	17%
	Yes - SMP	4	5%	0	0%	3	8%	1	2%
	No	60	77%	8	62%	27	73%	34	83%
4	<b>SP at other?</b>								
	Work	37	47%	7	54%	18	49%	20	49%
	Other organization	6	8%	4	31%	3	8%	3	7%
	None	37	47%	4	31%	18	49%	19	46%
5	<b>Should Prince of Peace Lutheran Church plan 10-20 years ahead?</b>								
	Yes	45	58%	10	77%	26	70%	20	49%
	Weak Yes	27	35%	3	23%	8	22%	19	46%



		All Members		Congregational Leaders		Newer Members		Older Members	
	No	3	4%	0	0%	2	5%	1	2%
	Uncertain	3	4%	1	8%	2	5%	2	5%
6	<b>When considering SMP, what Concerns could the congregation have?</b>								
	<b>Program Concerns:</b>								
	Cost?	33	42%	2	15%	10	27%	23	56%
	Can we find the right program?	20	26%	2	15%	8	22%	12	29%
	Will the Gospel priority?	7	9%	0	0%	2	5%	5	12%
	Will it be introduced properly?	4	5%	1	8%	1	3%	3	7%
	Do we know enough, or do we need outside help?	3	4%	0	0%	1	3%	2	5%
	How will we pick a program?	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
	Is there a set timeline?	1	1%	1	8%	1	3%	0	0%
	Are we organized to do this?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Is this what God wants us to do?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Is this program too much - setting the bar too high?	2	3%	0	0%	0	0%	2	5%
	Will it continue on in the future?	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	<b>Participation Concerns:</b>								
	Involvement and consensus?	30	38%	5	38%	13	35%	17	41%
	Will it cause division?	11	14%	0	0%	9	24%	2	5%
	Work/time involved too much?	10	13%	1	8%	7	19%	4	10%
	Can we find leaders	4	5%	0	0%	1	3%	3	7%
	People who dislike change might become unhappy	4	5%	1	8%	2	5%	2	5%
	That people will vote for it, but not be involved	2	3%	1	8%	2	5%	0	0%
	A waste of time	1	1%	1	8%	1	3%	0	0%
	Reluctance to plan	1	1%	1	8%	1	3%	0	0%
	It will burnout our leaders	1	1%	1	8%	0	0%	1	2%
	This will require leap of faith	1	1%	1	8%	1	3%	0	0%
	Will leadership support it?	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	<b>The Resulting Plan</b>								
	Will it increase evangelism?	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
	Will it increase missions?	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
	Will it include singles	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	Include the youth?	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	Strengthen our congregation?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Include a broader demographic	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	Help achieve goals long term?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	<b>Need Concerns:</b>								
	That we won't do SMP	3	4%	2	15%	2	5%	2	5%
	Talked into something	2	3%	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%
	Worthwhile?	2	3%	0	0%	0	0%	2	5%
	Do we know what it wants?	2	3%	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%
	Pastor's idea only?	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
	We will wait to do this when we do not have to	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	That we won't use outside help when we need it	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	Just to please ourselves?	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	<b>MISC Concerns:</b>								
	Take from the business at hand?	5	6%	2	15%	2	5%	3	7%
	Take resources from pre-school?	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
	Lead to mega church? (negative)	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	What if the Pastor takes a call during the process?	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	Outsiders can be wrong.	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%

		All Members		Congregational Leaders		Newer Members		Older Members	
	None	3	4%	1	8%	1	3%	2	5%
7	<b>What would cause the congregation to hesitate to engage in SMP?</b>								
	<b>Program Hesitations:</b>								
	Cost	43	55%	7	54%	20	54%	23	56%
	Will it follow through?	3	4%	0	0%	1	3%	2	5%
	Do we know enough?	5	6%	1	8%	2	5%	3	7%
	The process does not fit cong.	5	6%	0	0%	3	8%	2	5%
	Do we understand the process?	2	3%	0	0%	0	0%	2	5%
	Theologically change the cong.?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	<b>Participation Hesitations:</b>								
	Do we have the resources, time and/or people?	15	19%	3	23%	9	24%	6	15%
	There is a fear of change/risks/lack of trust	8	10%	0	0%	4	11%	4	10%
	If there is fear of the process	4	5%	1	8%	1	3%	4	10%
	There is a lack of leadership	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
	Do not understand the scope of involvement?	1	1%	1	8%	0	0%	1	2%
	Vote for and also support it?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Will we have the leadership?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Will people cooperate?	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	No support from congregation	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
	People's feelings are getting hurt	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Core group tapped out already	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	<b>Need Hesitations:</b>								
	Can we do this for ourselves?	8	10%	2	15%	4	11%	4	10%
	We may be comfortable	7	9%	1	8%	4	11%	3	7%
	We won't understand the need	3	4%	1	8%	3	8%	0	0%
	No clear need	2	3%	1	8%	1	3%	1	2%
	That the agenda is already set	3	4%	1	8%	1	3%	2	5%
	Is this the right time?	2	3%	1	8%	2	5%	0	0%
	There is no need	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
	Our past history	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	A Diversion from ministry	3	4%	0	0%	1	3%	2	5%
	If there is a lack of enthusiasm	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
	If there is a lack of agreement	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
	Don't force it.	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	<b>MISC Hesitations:</b>								
	Using outsiders - Privacy and Trust issues	2	3%	0	0%	0	0%	2	5%
	Wait until Preschool has run for one year	1	1%	1	8%	0	0%	1	2%
	Nothing - We need to do this.	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	None	4	5%	0	0%	2	5%	2	5%
	Cannot answer - do not support SMP concept	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
8	<b>What Benefits/Results do you expect?</b>								
	Clear direction and purpose	17	22%	7	54%	13	35%	5	12%
	Create a detailed Plan & goals	18	23%	2	15%	12	32%	6	15%
	Staffing Assessment	6	8%	2	15%	2	5%	4	10%
	Facility Assessment	3	4%	1	8%	1	3%	2	5%
	Preschool Assessment	3	4%	1	8%	1	3%	2	5%
	Operational Assessment	3	4%	1	8%	2	5%	1	2%
	Resource Assessment	3	4%	0	0%	1	3%	2	5%
	<b>General In Nature</b>								
	Increase in Membership	35	45%	7	54%	16	43%	20	49%
	Increase in Evangelism/Mission	30	38%	3	23%	12	32%	18	44%

	All Members		Congregational Leaders		Newer Members		Older Members		
Increased participation and involvement in congregation	22	28%	4	31%	11	30%	11	27%	
Improved communication	5	6%	3	23%	2	5%	3	7%	
Create a closer congregation	8	10%	1	8%	5	14%	3	7%	
Benefit the community	6	8%	0	0%	1	3%	5	12%	
Increase finances and re-sources	4	5%	2	15%	3	8%	2	5%	
Increase fellowship	4	5%	0	0%	2	5%	2	5%	
Enhance current momentum	4	5%	0	0%	2	5%	2	5%	
Increase motivation/enthusiasm	3	4%	0	0%	1	3%	2	5%	
Increase worship attendance	3	4%	0	0%	2	5%	1	2%	
Bring in new ideas	3	4%	0	0%	0	0%	3	7%	
Increase optimism	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%	
Increase opportunities	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%	
Better prepared for the future	2	3%	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%	
Increase diversity	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	
Increase programs	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	
Increase services available	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	
Learn from our past experiences	1	1%	1	8%	1	3%	0	0%	
Establish Long term goals	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%	
Help progress in reaching goals	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	
Increase in Adult Baptisms	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	
Increase the faith/trust in God	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%	
Improves our use of re-sources	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	
Helps us to follow God's will	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	
Be better able to prioritize	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%	
Look at whole congregation, Things get done	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	
Involvement of young people and young families	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%	
<b>Specific Projects and Goals Named:</b>									
Build a school	5	6%	1	8%	1	3%	4	10%	
Build a parsonage	2	3%	1	8%	0	0%	2	5%	
Build on to the church building	2	3%	1	8%	1	3%	1	2%	
Plan for the land	2	3%	1	8%	0	0%	2	5%	
Serve the elderly	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%	
Expanded programs	2	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%	
Serve the Youth	2	3%	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%	
Promote Church careers	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	
Survey our values	1	1%	1	8%	1	3%	0	0%	
Serve the Family	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%	
Serve international students	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	
Serve local college students	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	
Reach ethnic groups	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	
Strengthen the committees	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	
Serve children	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	
None	2	3%	0	0%	0	0%	2	5%	
Cannot answer - do not support SMP concept	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	
9	<b>Would you attend an SMP Decision Informational meeting?</b>								
Would attend	62	79%	13	100%	32	86%	31	76%	
Weak Would Attend	12	15%	0	0%	3	8%	9	22%	
Would not attend	3	4%	0	0%	1	3%	2	5%	
No need to attend	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%	
Would like written material also	52	67%	9	69%	24	65%	29	71%	
Only written materials	3	4%	0	0%	2	5%	1	2%	
9	<b>Details you would desired to know about the choices?</b>								
Cost	37	47%	5	38%	18	49%	20	49%	
Expected Benefits/Results	17	22%	4	31%	11	30%	7	17%	
Scriptural/Confessional/LCMS?	6	8%	2	15%	5	14%	1	2%	

	All Members		Congregational Leaders		Newer Members		Older Members	
Is it ministry focused?	3	4%	0	0%	2	5%	1	2%
<b>Structure Questions</b>								
Structure of the program?	18	23%	4	31%	8	22%	10	24%
Timeline of the program?	13	17%	2	15%	5	14%	9	22%
How will it generate new ideas?	4	5%	0	0%	2	5%	2	5%
Follow up after Plan is made?	4	5%	1	8%	0	0%	4	10%
General description of program?	3	4%	0	0%	1	3%	2	5%
Data collection tools?	3	4%	1	8%	2	5%	1	2%
What if snag or wall?	3	4%	1	8%	2	5%	1	2%
How information presented?	2	3%	1	8%	2	5%	0	0%
Completed Plan look like?	2	3%	1	8%	2	5%	0	0%
How avoid conflict?	2	3%	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%
What are the resources required?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
How are decisions made?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
What will the program do, and what will we do?	1	1%	1	8%	0	0%	1	2%
Diverse cross section involved?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
Predetermined goals?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
<b>Leadership Questions:</b>								
Internal or externally lead?	8	10%	0	0%	5	14%	3	7%
Expected of our Leadership?	6	8%	3	23%	2	5%	4	10%
Leaders and their backup?	3	4%	1	8%	3	8%	0	0%
Options in professionals we use?	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
<b>Involvement Questions:</b>								
Time and energy commitment?	27	35%	3	23%	11	30%	16	39%
<b>Component Questions:</b>								
Evaluation component?	6	8%	4	31%	4	11%	2	5%
Facilities Assessment?	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Evangelism component?	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Are Small Groups involved?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
How is the community included?	2	3%	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%
Is there fundraising?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
How will it determine needs?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
How will it get involvement?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
<b>Comparisons Questions:</b>								
References from congregations?	25	32%	3	23%	11	30%	14	34%
Is there written material?	2	3%	1	8%	1	3%	1	2%
Differences between programs?	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
For volunteer organizations?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
Is the material of a high quality?	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
<b>Judgment Questions:</b>								
Can we do this ourselves?	8	10%	2	15%	5	14%	3	7%
Is this program realistic for us?	4	5%	1	8%	2	5%	2	5%
Does this program fit us?	5	6%	0	0%	1	3%	4	10%
Process understandable?	4	5%	0	0%	2	5%	2	5%
Process comfortable?	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Is the program user-friendly?	2	3%	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%
What is the success rate?	2	3%	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%
Clear presentation of all programs	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Is the congregation enthused about any particular process?	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Pros and cons	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
None	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Cannot answer - Do not	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%

		All Members		Congregational Leaders		Newer Members		Older Members	
	support the SMP concept								
10	<b>Would you Attend SMP Voters?</b>								
	Yes	60	77%	12	92%	32	86%	29	71%
	Yes with conditions	17	22%	1	8%	6	16%	11	27%
	No	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
11	<b>Would you Participate in SMP if asked?</b>								
	Yes	60	77%	13	100%	34	92%	27	66%
	No	3	4%	0	0%	0	0%	3	7%
	I do not know	14	18%	0	0%	3	8%	11	27%
11	<b>What would cause you to Hesitate to be involved?</b>								
	I do not have the time needed	49	63%	8	62%	27	73%	22	54%
	I do not believe this is right for congregation	17	22%	1	8%	6	16%	11	27%
	I do not possess the talents and skills needed	17	22%	4	31%	3	8%	14	34%
	There are no clear goals/path/benefit	5	6%	1	8%	3	8%	2	5%
	Do not want leadership role	2	3%	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%
	Felt it was forced upon us	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Felt the leadership was weak	2	3%	0	0%	0	0%	2	5%
	Felt it was not being done right	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Who else is involved	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Participated in the past, now want to observe	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	I do not like committees	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	I do not know many members	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Need transportation to church	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Felt it was a waste of time	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	No answer	4	5%	1	8%	2	5%	2	5%
	Low participation by cong.	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	Public Speaking	2	3%	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%
11	<b>What would cause you to be Eager to be involved?</b>								
	A large cong. involvement	13	17%	5	38%	7	19%	6	15%
	I feel that it is right	21	27%	1	8%	8	22%	13	32%
	Enthusiasm and excitement	16	21%	0	0%	7	19%	9	22%
	If my talents matched the need	10	13%	1	8%	3	8%	7	17%
	Being involved - something new	9	12%	1	8%	4	11%	5	12%
	There are clear goals	8	10%	1	8%	2	5%	6	15%
	Understand the purpose	8	10%	3	23%	5	14%	3	7%
	Quickly and efficiently (easy)	7	9%	2	15%	4	11%	3	7%
	Involved in shaping the future	5	6%	0	0%	2	5%	3	7%
	It keeps the cong. going forward	5	6%	1	8%	3	8%	2	5%
	It is fun	5	6%	0	0%	2	5%	3	7%
	Working with other members	5	6%	0	0%	5	14%	0	0%
	It draws people together - unity	3	4%	1	8%	2	5%	1	2%
	Congregation has ownership	3	4%	1	8%	1	3%	2	5%
	It is doing God's work	3	4%	0	0%	3	8%	0	0%
	I am interested in the process	2	3%	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%
	It involves building a school	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	If I am comfortable	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
	A task I can do by myself	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	If it involved the family	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
	No answer	7	9%	1	8%	3	8%	4	10%
12	<b>What is the Purpose of Prince of Peace being in Existence?</b>								
	Mission/Evangelism	63	81%	12	92%	29	78%	35	85%
	Strengthen Saints	43	55%	6	46%	22	59%	22	54%

## Appendix 18. Newsletter Article to the Congregation

Dear Members of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church:

I apologize for the length of this letter to you. If I could shorten it I would, but I need to take this opportunity to bring you up to date.

At the April Voters Meeting, I presented the findings of my doctoral project interviews and research. There were 28 of our 160 Voters in attendance.

I began that presentation by briefly reviewing some of our congregation's history. I described the first meeting I ever attended here at Prince of Peace, before I was the Pastor, while I was considering the Call to come. It was a Sunday afternoon and the members who attended poured out their hearts and hopes to me. Their plan was to heal. That was in December of 1998.

In October of 2001, we held our first *Vision Sunday* in which we attempted to talk as a congregation about our future. It was a learning experience. A year later, as the basement was in the process of being finished, we held *Vision Sunday II* in November of 2002. It was well attended and we generated a long list of things we wanted to do. What we learned, afterward, is that we had no way to do any of it.

In the summer of 2003, a member of the congregation spotted an ad in a publication from our Synod for something called *Strategic Ministry Planning*. It was a new concept to all of us. We learned about it, brought in one of LCEF's representatives to share the program with us, had a discussion meeting, and, in February of 2004 voted not to enter that program. The ideas were supported, but the cost was not. We also had a few other things on the table at the time.

In June of 2004 I proposed to Concordia Seminary that the topic of my Major Applied Project (research project) for my doctoral studies focus on Prince of Peace Lutheran Church and Strategic Ministry Planning. My proposal was accepted immediately. In January of this year, I began my field research. Between January 28<sup>th</sup> and April 7<sup>th</sup> I interviewed 79 randomly selected Voting Members of the congregation and 12 area LCMS Pastors and District Officers. The

interviews totaled 40 hours all together. I want to thank everyone who was able to give of their time to this. I also appreciate the 30 people who were selected for interviews but I was unable to meet because time simply ran out. I had to move on with the project.

At the April Voters Meeting, I presented my recommendations to the congregation. I would reprint the report I gave, but it was rather lengthy.

In summary, I recommended to the congregation that we not proceed with *Strategic Ministry Planning* at this time. I said this not because I do not believe we need to do this, but because I did not believe we could be successful at it at this time.

There were a couple of reasons for this. First, though the congregation seems to support the idea of engaging in *Strategic Ministry Planning*—though they are a little fuzzy on the idea—when asked if they would participate with their time and talents if asked, I received a mixed message. Often members said “yes” with their mouths, but their body language and hesitation were saying “no”.

Second, it became clear to me that the congregation does not know how things are going right now. The congregation, as a whole, believes that everything is running fine now (Why change it?), but could cite little actual evidence to back their thoughts. Simply put, the congregation believes that someone else is taking care of things.

The third reason why I made this recommendation was that I realized that when the congregation was finished with the process of *Strategic Ministry Planning*, the implementation of the resulting plan would fall to the Church Council.

Now, it is important to realize that we have a wonderful congregation made up of wonderful, hard working, members who give generously. Prince of Peace Lutheran Church is doing as well, if not better in some areas, than 80% of the congregations out there. Things are good.

But (and you knew there was a “but” coming) something has happened. It is not a bad thing. It is not anything that anyone is to blame for. It is natural and what we would all have hoped for. Sometime in the last six or so years, we stopped being a *Small Congregation*. At the Voters Meeting, one member suggested it happened when we went from one to two services on Sunday mornings (2003). That is as good a marker as any.

*What does this mean?* It means a lot for the future of Prince of Peace. To get straight to the point, we are not a *Small Congregation* any longer, but we are trying to operate as one. We have grown and changed, but we still try to think and act as we did when we were a different congregation.

The most important aspect of this change is this: *Small Congregations* make their decisions in the parking lot after meetings. This just a way of saying that in *Small Congregations*, the decisions are made through the personal interaction of members who know one another very well. In a *Small Congregation*, everyone knows their responsibilities (whether they hold an office or not) and everyone assumes that the person who has always taken care of a certain thing will continue to do so. It is a good system for such a congregation. (One of the symbols of a *Small Congregation* is the posted sign-up sheet.)

What has happened, though, is that we have grown. And though people may know one another, they do not relate to one another as people do in a *Small Congregation*. The vital conversations that used to happen in the parking lot have ceased, but everything else continues as it has. The Church Council and Voters Meetings, for example, follow the same agenda and conduct their important business (mostly building and money) as always, not realizing that something (mission planning) is missing now from the operation of the church.

This is no one’s fault—no more than it is our children’s fault when they grow to be teenagers. We may miss our little children, but we cannot treat our teens like babies. Well, we could, but there is a name for that: dysfunctional. Teens are lovable as the teens they are. The fault would

come if we did not recognize and accept the change in our congregation and react accordingly. (The symptoms of this change are all around us, but would take several more pages to expound on. For you older members, just think of the things that used to happen here which are not happening now even though we have more members.

We have an opportunity to realize that we are not the same congregation we were a few years ago, and react accordingly. Of course, we do have a choice in this. We do not have to do a thing. I found plenty of examples of older, larger, congregations, which still try to operate as they did when they were smaller. They exist, they are frustrated, and they are not thriving. (How many thriving congregations have one full-time—that is, 6 days a week plus—pastor and one half-time—plus—church secretary?)

Therefore, it was my recommendation to the Voters that before we take the step into full-blown, congregational wide, strategic ministry planning, we start with the heart of the congregation, the Church Council. The research shows that as the Council goes, so goes the congregation.

The Voters at the April Meeting, after they soaked in all I was saying, directed the Church Council to proceed with a plan which was already in formation. That Plan is that on June 4<sup>th</sup>, a Saturday morning, the leadership of the congregation will have a retreat in which they will begin the process of transitioning Prince of Peace Lutheran Church from operating and thinking like a small congregation to one that functions in accordance with the gifts God has given.

This is a big step for us, but the truth is that our congregation has already changed—as we hoped and prayed that this would happen. The exciting thing is that we know that God has brought us this far.

I have been praying prayers of thanksgiving for this congregation (each of you by name) for over six years now, but I have also, each day, asked for His help and guidance with the future of His congregation. I remind you also to pray daily. Ask God the Father, in Jesus’ name, to

continue to bless Prince of Peace with peace we are enjoying. Ask Him for more members, to send to us people who do not know Jesus, to cause us to be prepared to welcome them, and ask Him to use our congregation and all its members to advance His Kingdom of Light in this dark work.

When I first arrived at Prince of Peace and took in the situation, I said many times, "Prince

of Peace Lutheran Church is in the right place, at the right time, with the right message." It is also all the more true that we should desire to be intentional in our prayers and plans as a congregation, to God's glory and for the salvation of others.

In Christ Jesus,  
Pastor Otto



**Appendix 19. The Congregation Constitution**

**CONSTITUTION  
OF  
CORALVILLE PRINCE OF PEACE  
LUTHERAN CHURCH  
CORALVILLE, IOWA**

**CONSTITUTION**

**PREAMBLE**

**ARTICLE I NAME**

**ARTICLE II AFFILIATION**

**ARTICLE III PURPOSE**

**ARTICLE IV CONFESSIONAL STANDARD**

**ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP**

**ARTICLE VI OFFICES OF PASTOR AND TEACHER**

**ARTICLE VII AUTHORITY OF THE CONGREGATION**

**ARTICLE VIII OFFICERS**

**ARTICLE IX DIVISION**

**ARTICLE X DOCTRINAL CONFORMITY**

**ARTICLE XI CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION**

**BY-LAWS**

**ARTICLE I VOTER'S ASSEMBLY**

**ARTICLE II CALLING OF PASTORS AND TEACHERS**

**ARTICLE III OFFICERS**

**ARTICLE IV THE CHURCH COUNCIL**

**ARTICLE V ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

**ARTICLE VI DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

**ARTICLE VII COMMITTEES**

**ARTICLE VIII AMENDMENTS**

**PREAMBLE**

God requires that a Christian congregation shall conform to his divine Word in doctrine and practice (Psalm 119:105; Matthew 28:18-20; Galatians 1:6-8; 2 Timothy 4:1-5) and that all things be done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40). Therefore we, the members of Coralville Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, accept and subscribe to the following Constitution and Bylaws, in accordance with which all spiritual and material affairs of our congregation shall be governed.

**ARTICLE I NAME**

The name of this congregation shall be Coralville Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, located at Coralville, Iowa.

## **ARTICLE II AFFILIATION**

This congregation shall be affiliated with the Lutheran Church- Missouri Synod "as long as the Lutheran Church- Missouri Synod remains in agreement with the confessional standard of Article IV of this constitution".

## **ARTICLE III PURPOSE**

The purpose of this congregation shall be to seek the honor and glory of God, to carry out his will, to manifest the unity of our faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior, to spread the kingdom of God and to foster Christian fellowship and love, by preaching of the Word of God, by administration of the Sacraments, and by the religious instruction of all its members, according to the Confessional Standard of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Article IV)

## **ARTICLE IV CONFESSIONAL STANDARD**

A. This congregation acknowledges and accepts all the canonical books of the old and new testaments as the revealed and inerrant Word of God, verbally inspired, and submits to them as the only infallible authority in all matters of faith and life.

B. This congregation acknowledges and accepts all the confessional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, contained in the Book of Concord of the year 1580, as true and genuine expositions of the doctrines of the bible. These confessional writings are:

The three Ecumenical Creeds  
(Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian),  
The Unaltered Augsburg Confession,  
The Apology of the Augsburg Confession,  
The Smalcald Articles,  
Luther's Large and Small Catechisms, and  
The Formula of Concord.

## **ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP**

### **A. BAPTIZED MEMBERSHIP**

#### **1. Definition:**

Baptized members are all members who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and who are under the spiritual care of the pastor of this congregation.

#### **2. Reception:**

Baptized members are received through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, through transfer, or with the consent of one or both parents or guardians in the case the children who have been baptized in another Christian congregation.

#### **3. Duties:**

Baptized members shall conform their lives to their baptismal vow.

#### **4. Termination:**

Baptized members who have not been received into communicant membership shall have their membership terminated for the same reasons that communicant membership is terminated in-so-far as they are applicable.

### **B.COMMUNICANT MEMBERSHIP**

#### **1. Definition:**

Communicant members are those baptized members who have been confirmed in the Lutheran faith, accept the confessional standards of Article IV of this Constitution, are familiar with the contents of Luther's Small

Catechism, and who are not members of organizations whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God.

**2. Reception:**

Communicant members are received through the rite of confirmation, by transfer from a sister congregation, upon profession of faith, or by reaffirmation of faith, provided they conform to the requirements for membership in this congregation. Their reception shall be approved by the Church Council and subsequently by the Voters' Assembly.

**3. Duties:**

Communicant members shall conform their entire lives to the rule of God's Word and to that end make diligent use of the means of grace, exercise faithful stewardship of God's gifts, and impart and accept fraternal admonition as the need so arises.

**4. Termination:**

a. Communicant members in good standing may be transferred by the pastor to a sister congregation immediately upon their request and shall subsequently be reported to the Voters' Assembly for approval. Members who move out of the community and thereby become inactive shall be encouraged to transfer their membership to a sister congregation near them.

b. Communicant members who join congregations outside our fellowship thereby terminate their membership. Their names shall be removed from the membership list by resolution of the Voters' Assembly.

c. Communicant members whose whereabouts are unknown and whose addresses cannot be established shall have their names removed by resolution of the Voters' Assembly.

d. Communicant members who recklessly absent themselves from worship and the Lord's Supper for a period of one year, may be declared by resolution of the Voter's Assembly to have forfeited their membership.

e. Communicant members who conduct themselves in an unchristian manner shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20; if they remain impenitent after proper admonition, they shall be excommunicated.

Each case shall be presented individually to the Voters' Assembly for action. A unanimous vote by the voters present shall be required for excommunication. Such a vote must be based upon Scriptural standards and not upon personal prejudice. If said member deliberately absents himself or herself from the meeting at which his or her case is discussed, or in some other manner makes it impossible to deal with him or her, he or she thereby excommunicates them self.

## **C. VOTING MEMBERSHIP**

**1. Definition:**

Voting members are communicant members who have reached the legal age of voting in the state of Iowa and who have been received by the Voters' Assembly.

**2. Reception:**

Applicants for voting membership shall be received as voting members by resolution of the Voters' Assembly, provided they meet the "above" requirements" (Article V.C.1)" of such membership in this congregation.

**3. Duties:**

Voting members shall attend the meetings of the Voters' Assembly regularly, participate in the work of the of the congregation, and willingly accept responsibility according to ability and gift.

**4. Termination:**

Voting membership may be terminated by resolution of the Voters' Assembly because of continued unexcused absence. Termination of communicant membership automatically terminates voting membership.

## D. ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

### 1. Definition:

Associate Members are those received as such by this congregation, who are members in good standing of an LC/MS congregation and are in the area for a purpose which is temporary in nature.

### 2. Reception:

They will be received into fellowship upon approval of the congregation in which they hold regular membership and a majority of those present at a Voter's Assembly of this congregation.

### 3. Statistical Data:

Associate Members will not be reported in any membership statistics to District or Synod. When included in membership records of this congregation they will carry the designation of Associate Member.

### 4. Duties:

Associate Members will enjoy all the privileges and responsibilities of regular membership except they will not be permitted to vote in the Voter's Assembly or hold an elected office.

### 5. Termination:

Associate Membership will be terminated upon request of the person, request of the home congregation, when their residence is no longer temporary, or if they have not worshipped or communed for six months. Their home congregation will be notified upon termination.

## ARTICLE VI OFFICES OF PASTOR AND TEACHER

The pastoral office of this congregation as well as the office of a called teacher, shall be conferred only on such ministers, teachers, and candidates who profess and adhere to the confessional standard set forth in Article IV of this Constitution and who are qualified for their work. Pastors and teachers shall be pledged to this confessional standard. [Note: For removal or dismissal from office, see Article VII - D.]

## ARTICLE VII AUTHORITY OF THE CONGREGATION

### A. General:

The Voters' Assembly shall be the governing body of this congregation and shall be empowered to administer and manage all its affairs. The establishment and conduct of all organizations and societies within the congregation shall be subject to the approval and supervision of the Voters' Assembly.

### B. Right of Calling:

The right of calling pastors or teachers shall be vested in the Voters' Assembly and shall never be delegated to a smaller group or to an individual.

### C. Decisions:

All matters shall be decided by a majority vote of the Voters' Assembly unless otherwise specified by this Constitution or the By-Laws. However, not even the Voters' Assembly shall be empowered to order, enact or decide anything contrary to the Word of God and any such ordinance, enactment, or decision shall be null and void.

### D. Right of Removal from Office:

1. Any pastor, teacher, or officer may be removed from office by the Voters' Assembly by a two-thirds majority ballot vote, in Christian and lawful order, for one of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, or willful neglect of duties.
2. The congregation may request the resignation of any pastor, teacher, or officer from his position in the congregation in case of prolonged incapacity or general incompetence.

**E. Right of Removal from Membership:**

The Voters' Assembly shall have the authority to exclude any communicant member according to Matthew 18:15-18. The person so excluded (excommunicated) shall forfeit all rights of a member {see Article V - B - 4d}.

**ARTICLE VIII OFFICERS**

A. The officers of this congregation shall be such officers, boards, or committees as the Bylaws of this Constitution may prescribe.

B. Congregation officers or committees, whether elected or appointed, shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them, and whatever authority may have been delegated to them may at any time be altered or revoked.

**ARTICLE IX DIVISION**

If at any time a division should take place on account of doctrine, the property of the congregation and all interests connected therewith shall remain with those members who continue to adhere unreservedly to the confessional standard in Article IV of this Constitution. In the event the congregation should totally disband, the property and all interests connected therewith shall be transferred to the Iowa District East of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.

**ARTICLE X DOCTRINAL CONFORMITY**

All hymnals, prayers, liturgies, and textbooks for instruction in Christian doctrine used in this congregation must conform to Article IV of this Constitution.

**ARTICLE XI CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION**

A. This Constitution may be amended by the affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of the members present at any meeting of the Voters' Assembly, provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at a previous meeting of the Voters' Assembly.

B. Article IV "and also Article XI,B" of this Constitution and any other article or section that pertains to Scriptural doctrine and practice shall be unalterable and irrevocable.

**BY-LAWS OF  
PRINCE OF PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH  
CORALVILLE, IOWA**

**ARTICLE I VOTERS' ASSEMBLY**

**A. MEETINGS:**

1. Regular meetings of the Voter's Assembly shall be held at a selected time (usually the second week) of every month of January, April, July, and October).
2. The January meeting of the Voters' Assembly shall be the annual meeting.
3. Special meetings of the Voters' Assembly may be called by the pastor, the president of the congregation, or the Church Council. The date and place of the said meeting shall be publically announced on two succes-

sive Sundays prior to the date of the meeting. The congregation shall have the right to take up those items of business which were stated as the purpose of the special meeting.

**B. QUORUM:**

Ordinarily the voters present at a properly called meeting shall constitute a quorum to do business. However, for amending the Constitution, for the purchase or sale of property, for the erection of buildings, or for the removal from office of a called pastor or teacher, a majority of all voting members shall be required for a quorum. In the absence of a majority, those present may fix a date for an adjourned meeting. The members who are present at such an adjourned meeting shall constitute a quorum.

**C. ORDER OF BUSINESS:**

In the regular meetings of the Voters' Assembly, the order of business shall be:

Opening devotion

Roll Call

Reading of minutes

Reception of new members and transfers

Reports of officers and committees

Unfinished business

New business

Adjournment with prayer

**ARTICLE II CALLING OF PASTORS AND TEACHERS**

A. At any properly called meeting of the Voters' Assembly, eligible and qualified candidates shall be submitted by nominating committee. This committee shall consist of at least three voting members selected by the Board of Elders. Any voter is entitled to make additional nominations from the floor.

B. The list of candidates shall be publically announced to the congregation on the Sunday [following worship] prior to the meeting at which the call is to be extended.

**ARTICLE III OFFICERS**

The officers of this congregation shall consist of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Board of Elders, Board of Trustees, and Sunday School Superintendent. Voting members shall be entitled to hold these offices except that only male voting members shall be entitled to hold the offices of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Elders.

**ARTICLE IV THE CHURCH COUNCIL**

**A. MEMBERSHIP:**

The Church Council shall consist of the officers of the congregation. The pastor shall be an ex officio member of the Church Council with full rights and privileges to vote.

**B. MEETINGS:**

The Church Council shall meet in regular monthly session on a date selected by the Council. The pastor or any three members of the Church Council may call a special meeting by personally informing each member of the Council adequately in advance. A majority of the Council shall constitute a quorum.

**C. DUTIES:**

It shall be the duty of the Church Council to consider and discuss all matters pertaining to the general welfare of the congregation, to review all reports, and to present recommendations to the congregation. The Church Council shall act in matters committed to it by the Voters' Assembly. In cases of emergency, it shall have the authority to act in behalf of the congregation.

## **ARTICLE V ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

### **A. PROCEDURE:**

A nominating committee, appointed by the chairman of the congregation, shall present a slate of candidates to the congregation in December. Additional nominations may be made by the voting members. No person shall be nominated without his or her consent. A ballot shall be prepared for the election to be held in the January meeting. All officers shall be elected by majority ballot vote. The officers-elect shall assume their respective duties on February 1. In case of a vacancy in an elective office, the Church Council shall appoint a successor to fill the unexpired term and the officers so appointed shall assume office immediately.

### **B. TERM OF OFFICE:**

The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer of the congregation are elected for a term of one year. The members of the Board of Elders, the Board of Trustees, and the Sunday School Superintendent are elected for a term of two years. The terms shall be arranged for the Elders and Trustees that an equal number of each is elected every year. All officers may succeed themselves.

## **ARTICLE VI DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

### **A. CHAIRMAN:**

The duties of the Chairman shall include presiding at all meetings of the Voters' Meeting, appointing committees according to the instructions of the By-laws or the resolution of the Voters' Assembly, and responsibility for seeing that the resolutions of the Voters' Assembly are carried out. He shall also serve as the Chairman of the Church Council.

### **B. VICE-CHAIRMAN:**

The Vice-Chairman shall assume the duties of the Chairman whenever the latter is absent or unable to serve.

### **C. SECRETARY:**

The Secretary shall record proceedings of the Voters' Assembly (and Church Council), register all members attending the meeting, and submit minutes for adoption at the following regular meeting. He or she shall be the custodian of all church records pertaining to his or her office and at the expiration of his or her term of office shall deliver them to his or her successor.

### **D. TREASURER:**

The Treasurer shall disburse the funds of the congregation in accordance with its resolutions and under the direction of the Church Council. The Treasurer shall prepare and submit monthly reports at the Church Council meeting, up-to-date reports at the Voters' Assembly, and an annual report of disbursements at the January Voters' meeting.

### **E. FINANCIAL SECRETARY:**

The Financial Secretary shall keep a record of the receipt of the congregation and deposit them promptly in the congregation's accounts. The Financial Secretary shall prepare and submit monthly reports at the Church

Council meeting, up-to-date reports at the Voters' Assembly, quarterly reports of contributions to individual members, and an annual report of receipts at the January Voters' meeting.

**F. BOARD OF ELDERS:**

The Board of Elders, as assistants to the pastor, shall concern itself with the spiritual life of the congregation and, under his direction, shall be charged with the supervision of public worship, church discipline, and church publications. The board shall annually elect its own Chairman and Secretary. It shall be authorized to appoint such officers and committees as are necessary to carry out its duties, subject to the approval of the Church Council.

**G. BOARD OF TRUSTEES:**

The Board of Trustees shall be charged with the supervision of all real and personal property of the congregation and shall hold and manage such property in agreement with instructions given by the Voters' Assembly.

**H. SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT:**

The Superintendent of Sunday School shall supervise the administration of the Sunday School under the direction of the Board of Elders. He or she shall report regularly to the Voters' Assembly on the status of the Sunday School.

**ARTICLE VII COMMITTEES**

**A. AUDITING COMMITTEE:**

This committee shall consist of three members appointed by the Chairman. The Auditing Committee shall make an audit of the books and records of the Treasurer. It shall make its report to the Voters' Assembly at the earliest possible date after the close of the fiscal year.

**B. NOMINATING COMMITTEE:**

This committee shall consist of three members appointed by the Chairman of the congregation with the Pastor as an ex officio member.

**C. OTHER:**

Such committees as authorized by the congregation or Church Council shall be appointed by the Chairman.

**ARTICLE VIII AMENDMENTS**

These By-laws may be amended in a properly convened meeting of the Voters' Assembly by a two-thirds majority of all voting members present, provided the proposed change has been announced at least one week prior to the meeting in which the amendment is voted upon.

The Constitution and By-Laws  
were revised July 27, 1997



## Appendix 20. The Post-decision Questionnaire and Answers

1. This questionnaire is for those who attended the April 24th Prince of Peace Voters Meeting. Were you in attendance at this Voters Meeting?

[Eleven of the 28 participants responded.]

2. At this Voters Meeting, Pastor Otto delivered a verbal report concerning strategic ministry planning. Would you please briefly describe the top three aspects of his report that stand out as significant to you and to the congregation?

Response #1:

1. People in congregation are reluctant to give more of their time to do SMP at this time. SMP requires a lot of time by a lot of church members to be successful.
2. Need to reorganize how Church business is conducted before doing SMP.
3. Pastor and Marcia are over worked in current church organization.

Response #2:

- 1) The majority of the congregation was not willing to put forth effort (time commitment) for performing SMP as a voters assembly.
- 2) The large majority of the congregation is very happy with the status of the church (Sunday School Program, Preschool Start-up, New Parking Lot, and Pastor Otto)
- 3) The congregation does not have a direction or specific purpose that they are moving toward. No overall plan is laid out for the council or committees to use as a guide (This is not saying that the congregation is not looking to spread the Word of God and Baptize new members, for the council and the congregation are still actively working on this mission).

Response #3:

*Things not going as smoothly as most people think.  
Need more committee involvement.  
Not ready for SMP.*

Response #4:

- 1) SMP using an outside consultant will not work at POP.
- 2) Due to disorganization & planning, Pastor and Marcia are over-worked.
- 3) Without a plan for its future, POP will not fulfill its mission.

Response #5:

*The congregation is in transition from a small congregation to a larger congregation and the organization of the congregation has not kept up with the changes. We are not getting the new members involved and or feeling totally immersed in the congregation. The congregation in general is concerned about time commitments regarding their assistance with POP.*

Response #6:

*SMP could be accomplished by either the congregation, council or committee. We would still have to decide if we will be trained by hiring someone to lead us through or by teaching ourselves. Most*

*voters were willing to support the idea of SMP, but most are not willing to commit excessive amounts of time to the project.*

Response #7:

*Any strategic planning would be pointless at this point because we first have to restructure the committee system; our congregation has moved from being a small, centralized one to a medium sized, de-centralized one; and the members are not communicating working together enough to continue doing things the way we have been doing them.*

Response #8:

*One of the main aspects that I remember is that the church needs to perform strategic ministry planning but due to the lack of time it is not likely it will occur. It is apparent that our Pastor and Church Secretary are overworked and do not have time to take on more. If strategic planning is to occur the congregation has to embrace it and help make things happen.*

Response #9:

- 1. The POP congregation is not prepared to take on strategic ministry planning.*
- 2. If we paid an outside consultant to help us with the planning, we wouldn't be prepared to carry out the results.*
- 3. Our strategic planning will take years to carry out.*

Response #10:

- 1. There is a need for strategic ministry planning at POP.*
- 2. At this point the infrastructure required for moving ahead with SMP is lacking.*
- 3. POP is currently experience some growing pains (which is a good thing), but we must remember what it is that attracts people to POP and strive towards maintaining and/or restoring those qualities.*

Response #11:

- (1. I think it was significant that Pastor Otto acknowledged that the current structures at Prince of Peace do not support what is needed for the ultimate health and growth of the congregation as too few workers are being utilized to do too many tasks.*
- (2. I also think it was significant that Pastor Otto asked the congregation to pray about the role that strategic ministry planning could potentially have in our congregation.*
- (3. Finally, I thought it was significant that Pastor could identify his own shortcomings in the area of strategic ministry planning and identify ways in which he is going to continue to work on implementing strategic ministry planning processes.*

3. From memory, would you briefly describe Pastor Otto's recommendation to the Voters concerning strategic ministry planning?

Response #1:

*Not do SMP at this time, but have Council and other Church leaders attend an offsite to plan next steps.*

Response #2:

*Pastor Otto recommended that the council plan an annual planning meeting to set-up goals and discuss where the church would like to go in the next year and years.*

Response #3:

*Not ready at this time*

Response #4:

*I've got to be very honest here. I don't remember a specific recommendation. I do remember leaving the Voters Meeting with a feeling that POP is in "critical condition" and is in need of re-organization.*

Response #5:

*The congregation as it is currently organized is not ready to take on strategic planning. The pastor will continue to work with the church council on fostering a change in the structure. Strategic planning maybe something we need to do in the future but we are not ready now.*

Response #6:

*I believe you recommended that we hold off on SMP until we have a long range planning session to focus our desires and restructure the way we accomplish tasks. We need to go beyond the "committee system" and ensure communication with all aspects of the church. We need to dream, but most importantly, we need to be able to realize that dream when the time comes.*

Response #7:

*He recommends that we first try to assess our current committee and government situation before we embark on any sort of strategic ministry planning.*

Response #8:

*The recommendation was to do nothing at this time.*

Response #9:

*To pursue an annual planning meeting for the voting member of POP. We also feel that once we meet, we will realize these meetings need to be held frequently.*

Response #10:

*At this point Pastor cannot recommend that POP move ahead with SMP.*

Response #11:

*I remember that Pastor told the congregation that it would not be in the voters' best interests to engage in a formal form of strategic ministry planning at this time, because we are not yet ready to do it.*

4. From memory, would you please briefly describe the content of the motion which was passed following the Pastor's Report?

Response #1:

*Hold annual leadership planning meeting and begin process of reorganizing committees.*

Response #2:

*A motion to set-up a planning meeting for the council annually.  
Set a time and place for annual SMP workshop*

Response #3

*A motion passed empowering the Council to schedule and conduct an annual planning meeting.*

Response #4

*Motion: Strategic planning will not occur at this time and Pastor and the council will investigate and discuss changes in our organization structure.*

Response #5:

*Motion to table the discussion until the long range planning session is held by the Church Council and leaders.*

Response #6:

*The motion was to have an annual meeting of the elders and other church leaders to look at and discuss the current state of the committee and government system.*

Response #7:

*There was a motion for the voting members of the congregation to have an annual meeting to discuss future plans for strategic planning.*

Response #8:

*David made a motion to get the above mentioned meeting scheduled.*

Response #9:

*Authorization for the church leaders to hold a yearly planning meeting.*

Response #10:

*I believe the motion stated that the church council at Prince of Peace should take steps to implement strategic ministry planning processes.*

5. On this motion, what were the top two reasons why you voted the way you did?

Response #1:

*1) I believe it is up to the leadership of the church to define the path that the congregation should move and then present that to the voters for approval.*

*2) I believe this is the next best step to understand what is needed to complete SMP (The council needs to first align on what the status of the church is and what is needed, if there is any hope of getting alignment through the whole congregation).*

Response #2:

*May get more people involved.*

*May help in choosing a direction for the congregation.*

Response #3:

- 1). *our current committee system is not working due to lack of leadership and committees not knowing their specific purpose, duties and goals.*
- 2). *we cannot continue as we have in the past because we are different congregation with a new set of challenges and needs.*

Response #4:

*I believe in the 80/20 rule and large voters meeting is not a place to discuss our future organization structure. There did not seem to be any clear consensus in the room.*

Response #5:

*We do need to focus our thoughts and a smaller group should be able to discuss things better than the larger group of all voters. The best small group to discuss things is the council because they are already informed on many issues which will be discussed.  
We need to assess how things are being done around the church, and a yearly meeting seems like a good place to see how much and how fast things are changing.*

Response #6:

*I realize it is important that we keep strategic planning as a priority for our church and we need to continue to discuss it.  
I agreed to this vote because I didn't realize our congregation needed to look at our procedures and figure out how to make changes for our future. (this was my only reason)*

Response #7:

*I voted for it because it is a step (admittedly, a teeny tiny little step) in the right direction.*

Response #8:

*First, having heard the dilemma that the church is facing I could not ethically vote no to a motion that would enable a small group of people to begin to work on implementing systematic changes that I believe will be of great benefit to all the members at Prince of Peace.*

Response #9:

1. *We need to find a way to share the work of the congregation more broadly than just Pastor and Marcia.*
2. *We need to begin the reorganization process now.*

6. After this Voters Meeting, based upon what you have learned, briefly describe what you expect to happen next concerning strategic ministry planning at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church?

Response #1:

*We'll begin a reorganization process of how church is organizing and continue to learn about SMP. SMP will not be executed at this time.*

Response #2:

*I expect the President or V.P. of the council to put together a planning meeting for the council.*

*Too early to tell. See what the workshop uncovers.*

Response #3:

*I expect the Council to meet, discuss the congregation's needs and then take a lead role in planning with the congregation how to meet those needs.*

Response #4:

*Nothing happens until we get our organization revamped then it will be revisited as we would be more prepared to act on any strategic plan that is formulated.*

Response #5:

*Hopefully, after the planning session, we can present the findings to the larger group of all voters and another vote can be taken to decide if we want outside training or whether doing it ourselves is an option.*

Response #6:

*I expect there to be a meeting of the church elders, leaders, and Pastor to discuss how and why things are working the way they are, and how we can change or fix them. Once things have been properly restructured, then the issue of strategic ministry planning can be brought up again with a clear path to actually embark on a plan.*

Response #7:

*It will be up to the voting members of the congregation to participate in an annual meeting to decide what steps will be taken regarding strategic planning.*

Response #8:

*I expect some major changes at POP. I think the church council, elders and voting members need to figure out how to implement changes that will take responsibilities away from Pastor and Marcia and develop policies and procedures so that committees can accomplish tasks with the knowledge of what needs to be done. I think another part time office employee needs to be hired immediately.*

Response #9:

*Great question, unfortunately I don't have a great answer. Obviously, there will be the planning meeting but it is going to take much more than a quick meeting to make things happen. I hope that one of the things that comes out of the planning meeting is the realization that a committee dedicated and focused solely on this issue is urgently required. Such a committee may be made up of Elders, Council members, etc, but I think it is clear that this issue will require more time than can be made available at Council or Elders meetings considering all of the other business that must be attended to at those times.*

Response #10:

*I believe that the church council will utilize strategic ministry planning to develop policies and procedures directed towards creating structures which will enable our congregation to nurture and support the volunteers who are currently serving at Prince of Peace. I believe that the church council will also brainstorm ways in which newcomers can become involved in the life of the congregation*

7. Finally, were you one of those interviewed by Pastor Otto before the Voters Meeting?

[Eight of the eleven respondents had been interviewed.]

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