

**Richland Lutheran Church
Long Range Planning Team
November 5, 2012**

Team Members Attending: Pastor Ernst, Dave Brandes, Jim Lachut, Dave Larkin, Jenny Page, Sandy Steele, Bob Thompson.

Members Absent: Joel Sorensen

1. Pastor Ernst opened the meeting with prayer at 7:10.
2. Community Demographic Study (Dave Larkin and Sandy Steele):
 - Dave Larkin showed a map of the Tri-City area identifying the homes of our members – he is currently working in the “K’s”.
 - Sandy Steele reported that one study indicated that 42 % of the population Benton County was affiliated with a church. Another study reported that the average age of a typical Lutheran congregation is 60 years [Median age is 37.1 years].
 - Pastor Steve noted that worship this year is averaging 348 as compared to 352 for last year – very good considering that our Lead Pastor resigned. Jenny Page reported that Sunday School attendance is up 12 from 2011.
 - Pastor Steve noted that denominationalism of membership is fading in the U.S. – we are seeing more and more families joining RLC with no Lutheran background. He also reported that he is seeing a good number of new comers (seekers) coming to our worship services.
 - ACTION: Pastor Steve will contact other churches in the Richland proper (old Richland) to get as much demographic data as they wish to provide.
3. RLC Historic Study (Jim Lachut and Bob Thompson): Debbie Stankovich is pulling together some historic facts – what she can get that goes back about 12 years. Jim and Bob took a wish list of historic facts – membership, giving, worship attendance, Sunday School attendance, number in confirmation. Bob Thompson met with Loren Schmid to obtain historical information about RLC to include:
 - The Development of the Tri-City Chaplaincy 1971-1982,
 - The Development of the Good News Media Ministry,
 - Establishment of the Luther Senior Center,
 - Symbolism Features of RLC,
 - History of the RLC Vineyard,
 - some old pictures and copies of the RLC Monthly.
4. 12 Keys Planning (Pastor Steve and Joel Sorensen): They will meet and report at the next meeting.

5. MOVE Assessment (Jenny Page and Dave Brandes):

- Dave contacted three churches and is in the process of contacted two other churches to get feedback on their use of the MOVE Assessment.
 - i. Word of Life Community Church, Northeast of Spokane – 9 staff and about the same worship attendance as RLC.
 1. Conducted survey 4 years ago (for free) – very successful. Used it to support a sermon series; Targeted more specific topics for home groups – marriage enrichment, living the daily disciplines.
 2. Conducted another survey 2 years ago – was not nearly as successful. Not interested in conducting another survey at this time.
 3. I was the first person to call them about this assessment.
 - ii. Bethany Community Church, Seattle – 4 campus mega-church. 30 staff.
 1. Four years ago as a free trial.
 2. Did not use – (a) could not get raw data, (b) wanted a spiritual growth self-assessment tool for members, (c) wanted to evaluate existing and proposed programs, (d) they had some issues with some of the questions, did not want to turn the church into a social science test site, felt the tool in itself would not likely result in a material change in spiritual growth.
 3. Developed their own spiritual growth self-assessment tool.
 4. I was the first person to call them about this assessment.
 - iii. East Wind Community Church, Boise, Id – 5 full time staff.
 1. Took it for free 4 years ago as part of the trial.
 2. Based on feedback, East Wind focused on (a) improving adult education, (b) beefing up small groups, (c) increasing children’s ministries support from part-time to full-time, (d) shifting from supporting mission trips to Mexico to more local outreach → community garden, supporting migrant workers, expanding VBS, implementing *church without walls* programs.
 3. I was the first person to call them about this assessment.
 - iv. Summary: The tool does not seem to be growing in popularity – at least in the Pacific NW. We need to understand and communicate our objectives to the congregation when using the survey. We need to integrate the use of the tool/survey in our other L-P activities.

6. Other Survey Feedback Tools (Jenny Page and Dave Brandes):

The Appendix to these meeting notes includes information about additional survey tools and results that we may want to pursue.

7. Other Discussion and Directions

ACTION: Pastor Steve will send out to the team the Review of Direction of the L-R Planning Team.

ACTION: Bob will develop a straw man draft plan and timeline.

Jenny Page closed the meeting with prayer at 8:50.

Next meeting is November 19, 7:00 pm to discuss our progress in the actions above.

Appendix: Survey Feedback Tools (In process)

http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/c/church_growth.htm

Community Survey Questions

1. Are you an active member of a nearby church?
2. What do you think is the greatest need in this community?
3. Why do you think most people don't attend church?
4. If you were looking for a church in the area, what kinds of things would you look for?
5. What advice would you give me as the pastor of this church?
6. Are you interested in getting more information about our church?

90% of new members will stay in the church if:

1. They can articulate their faith (implies need for membership and evangelism classes).
2. They belong to subgroups (choir, Bible Studies, Sunday School classes)
3. They have 4-8 close friendships within the church.

Things churches can do to build greater interest in religion, according to a Gallup survey:

1. Improve communication with members (21% of respondents)
2. Concentrate more on personal spiritual matters (19% of respondents)
3. Become more involved in community matters (18% of respondents)
4. Focus more efforts on young people (14%)

<http://www.uscongregations.org/pdf/growppt.pdf>

1. Strong Congregations –
 - Welcome new people
 - Encourage participation
 - Offer excellent, meaningful worship experiences
 - Help people grow spiritually
 - Commit to a positive future
2. Open Discussion Questions –
 - What does your congregation do effectively for evangelism?
 - What is the role of the pastor/head of staff in evangelism? What roles do other staff members play? What roles do members play?
 - How does your congregation help people be effective evangelists—to issue effective invitations to your church?
 - Are there groups within your congregation who could become better evangelists?
 - What types of side door activities are most effective in your congregation (bringing people in to activities other than worship)? Are there any that don't seem to be effective?
 - How does a visitor experience coming to your church for the first time?

<http://www.healthychurch.net/gettheguide.php>

Church Surveys -- A church survey can strengthen your leadership efforts. Having a solid baseline of accurate and objective information from your entire church dramatically increases your ability to plan, strategize, and lead the ministry. CHAT gives you unlimited surveys and the ability to add your own questions. Download Our Free Guide to Church Assessment

<http://www.churchgrowth.org/cgi-cg/gifts.cgi?intro=1>

Ephesians Four Ministries. The Team Ministry Spiritual Gifts Inventory is a discovery tool that provides you with a personalized analysis. Not a test, but a simple questionnaire giving you a profile of your God given spiritual gifts.

Other Discussion Points

Retreat Center. Further checking is needed – but we think we have \$230K on the books for a Retreat Center. Concerns were expressed on being able to fund the annual operating cost of a retreat center.

Financial Opportunity. The cost of money is favorable for doing some capital project in 2013.

Jenny Page closed the meeting with prayer at 8:50.

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