

Updated

**2016**

Our Guide for Today, Our Vision  
for Tomorrow



Richland Lutheran Church

Long Range Plan

September 2013

# Our Guide for Today, Our Vision for Tomorrow

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Matthew 28:19

*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

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## **I. Introduction**

The Congregation Council, at their July 2012 meeting, decided to put together a Long Range Planning Team (the "LRPT"). Consequently, seven members from the Richland Lutheran Church congregation came together with Pastor Ernst to develop the Long Range Plan ("Guide and Vision") that follows. The LRPT studied many aspects of Richland Lutheran Church (the results of which are captured in the appendices to this plan), they sought input from the congregation and, most of all, they prayed for clear guidance from God. The result is a plan that is unlike previous long range plans in that it establishes objectives that refocus the role of Richland Lutheran Church in members' lives and in the lives of those around us. This plan is not about buildings or programs or organizational growth; rather it is about refining who we are- a Christ-focused body of believers working to accomplish the great commandment to "*Go and make disciples of all men...*". In short, it re-establishes the fundamental objectives of the role of the church in our lives and provides a set of objectives for all of us to work to accomplish.

The core of the plan is short, just six primary objectives which are found in Section IV. This was intentional. Christ's expectations of us are not complicated and do not require a great deal of discussion.

Once adopted, the Guide and Vision defines a vision that will serve to inform and guide plans and programs developed by Richland Lutheran Church, including annual Ministry Plans. It is intended to be a living document to be reviewed, updated and revised as needed.

## II. Mission and Focus

In developing the Guide and Vision, the LRPT used two primary resources, “The Twelve Keys to an Effective Church” (“12 Keys”)<sup>1</sup> and “Move: What 1,000 Churches Reveal About Spiritual Growth” (“REVEAL”)<sup>2</sup> to evaluate Richland Lutheran Church’s previous Long Range Plan, identify current church strengths to develop further, and assess current community needs. The process involved the staff and the congregation as a whole, seeking ideas and suggestions. The LRPT focused on the following to guide their work:

- 1) Discerning where God is headed and what He is doing at Richland Lutheran Church with the intent to join Him;
- 2) Looking beyond the local congregation to the neighborhood, the broader community and the world around us;
- 3) Identifying the strengths, gifts and competencies of the congregation where God has already been lifting and moving for many years; and
- 4) Serving in mission by asking the question... “whom is God inviting us to serve?”

Based on these foci, the LRPT developed the following:

***“The objective of the Richland Lutheran Church Guide and Vision is to evaluate the spiritual, relational, and physical needs of the congregation and the citizens of the Tri-Cities and provide recommendations to the congregation regarding the future direction of Richland Lutheran Church.”***

## III. Approach: Developing the Long Range Plan

The LRPT read, listened, discussed, asked many questions, gathered facts, engaged the congregation and prayed for guidance. As noted above, two primary books provided helpful guides for the team’s work.

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<sup>1</sup> Callahan, Kennon L. *Twelve keys to an Effective Church: Strong, Healthy Congregations Living in the Grace of God*. 2010 Jossey-Bass

<sup>2</sup> Greg L. Hawkins & Cally Parkinson. *MOVE: What 1,000 Churches Reveal About Spiritual Growth*, Zondervan, 2011, Willow Creek Association. Also, see <http://spirituallifesurvey.com/>

Input from the congregation was obtained from two surveys based on the two resources - 12 KEYS and REVEAL - and from focus group sessions. The focus group sessions, which were facilitated by David Brenchley, PhD, helped identify the areas of most value in our journey with Christ.

The following additional resources<sup>3</sup> (including but not limited to) were used:

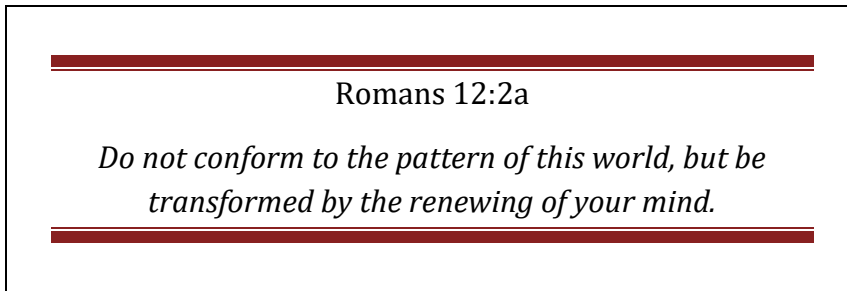
- The 2008 Richland Lutheran Church Long Range Plan
- Pew Research Report, “*Nones’ on the Rise: One-in-Five Adults Have No Religious Affiliation*”, October 9, 2012
- Home location map of Richland Lutheran Church members
- Experience from other congregations taking the REVEAL Survey
- Richland Lutheran Church history references
- Various demographic studies -- primarily of the Tri-City area
- A survey of trends at selected north Richland churches
- Richland Lutheran Church records – membership, attendance, annual giving statistics
- A Richland Lutheran Church Facilities Needs Assessment
- A REVEAL Survey Workshop to better understand our results of the Spiritual Growth Survey facilitated by Dennis Blevins, Portland, Oregon, a member of the National Leadership Team for The Navigators Church Discipleship Ministry. Dennis has served with the Billy Graham Association, Promise Keepers, and the Luis Palau Evangelistic Association.

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<sup>3</sup> Additional Resources available in the church library in the “Richland Lutheran Church 2013 Long Range Plan and Appendix”

## IV. Objectives

### OBJECTIVE 1 – Provide Opportunities for Spiritual Transformation



**“Richland Lutheran Church is a congregation where God’s Word is the authority in faith and life and where people grow in their love for God.”**

#### **Provide teaching, spiritual mentoring, programs, and events that help individuals grow in faith and obedience to Christ**

- Provide doctrinal teaching, preaching, and Bible study that increase our knowledge of God and His will;
- Help everyone know Jesus Christ has died for their sins and welcomes them into the Kingdom of God - to know God’s story throughout history and understand their place in that history of salvation which includes them;
- Help everyone become true followers of Jesus by heeding His call and surrendering to Him;
- Help everyone do all God has for them in faith and life, by God’s grace and power and live lives in ministry and service worthy of Christ’s calling upon them.

#### **Nurture and enhance small groups**

- Leverage existing small groups to maximize relationships and mission and ministry to one another;
- Develop new small groups to encourage and foster spiritual transformation through encouraging daily Bible reading and prayer;
- Provide more choices for adult Sunday school classes.

#### **Promote and partner with ministries that assist individuals in their spiritual transformation**

- Highlight existing and promote new internal Richland Lutheran Church spiritual transformation ministries. (e.g., adult Bible studies, youth and children’s programs, Trinity Living);
- Highlight existing and promote new external spiritual transformation programs, events, and opportunities. (e.g., Bible Study Fellowship, Walk with Christ, Renovaré).

**OBJECTIVE 2 - Develop Christ-Centered Leaders <sup>4</sup>**

1 Peter 2:9 & 10

*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,  
God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of  
Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.  
Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God;  
once you had not received mercy, but now you have received  
mercy.*

**“Richland Lutheran Church is a congregation that nurtures Christ-centered leaders  
who are called by the Holy Spirit to serve His Church.”**

**Develop and implement a “Gifts Based” approach to Christian leadership**

- Help everyone discover their spiritual gifts and use those gifts in mission and ministry;
- Arrange and structure leadership and ministry teams around spiritual gifts.

**Develop and implement an “Equipping Culture” of ministry and mission**

- Staff, especially Ministry Leads, will seek to equip, empower, and encourage everyone in mission and ministry;
- Deliberately focus on teaching and training all believers to serve God in mission and ministry;
- Enhance team ministry church wide;
- Publically appreciate those who are serving in mission and ministry;
- Make a deliberate effort, such as internships, to train and encourage our next generation of leaders.

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<sup>4</sup> “A leader is a worker in God's vineyard. Therefore, the agendas, goals, objectives and principles of our leadership should have a spiritual tone and value. Our motives, passion and actions should reflect that of the Lord's, not simply our own.”  
Mekonnen, Alex (April 6, 2009) Denver Seminary Blog

### OBJECTIVE 3 - Extend Missions

Matthew 22:37

*Jesus said: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

**"Richland Lutheran Church is a congregation where every person loves others as Christ loves us."**

**Treat all people with love and support them in their joys, trials, and needs through prayer, fellowship, and generous sharing of our material possessions for their material needs**

- Enhance our visitation to the sick and shut-ins in our congregation;
- Provide training in visitation and a supporting infrastructure for lay visitation ministers;
- Develop a program to visit every member annually;
- Link the Helping Hands ministry to the visitation programs for matching capabilities to needs;
- Build on current visitation programs to assist in meeting physical, emotional and spiritual needs:
  - Prayer team and prayer chain,
  - Grapevine to keep people informed, and
  - The Helping Hands ministry.

**Provide opportunities for everyone to use their time, talents, spiritual gifts, and material possessions to love others in our community and around the world by meeting their needs and seeking social justice**

- Expand the capabilities and capacities of the Richland Lutheran Church food pantry;
- Expand our relationships with community agencies and local churches to meet human needs to include, but not limited to, Union Gospel Mission, Grace Clinic, Shalom Ecumenical Center, Jubilee Leadership Academy, Habitat for Humanity, 2<sup>nd</sup> Harvest Food Bank, Tri-City Chaplaincy, and Ignite Youth Mentoring;
- Provide financial, spiritual, and emotional support to those serving in missions from Richland Lutheran Church;
- Provide tutoring in reading and math at Jefferson Elementary School and other local schools;
- Evaluate the potential for establishing an after school youth center offering a variety of programs, such as: recreation, tutoring, and English as a second language support;



- Seek opportunities to improve social inequities and offer programs to support the selected areas (e.g., reduction in human trafficking, more accessible education, and more accessible health care).

## **OBJECTIVE 4 – Worship God with Praise and Thanks**

Psalm 95:1-2 and 6-7

*Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before Him with thanksgiving and extol Him with music and song. Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for He is our God and we are the people of His pasture, the flock under His care.*

**“Richland Lutheran Church is a congregation that praises and glorifies the Triune God through worship services that proclaim the love of Christ through Word and The Sacraments.”**

### **Further develop and enhance our worship services**

- Build a strong worship team for leading the congregation in all worship services;
- Tastefully incorporate technology that enhances worship;
- Develop the laity as assisting ministers (e.g. liturgists, cantors, witnesses).

### **Expand worship opportunities to the broader community**

- Enhance the Luther Senior Center and the Union Gospel Mission worship experiences;
- Enhance the worship experience provided through the Good News Media Ministry;
- Intentionally seek new opportunities to offer worship to and with the community.

## **OBJECTIVE 5 - Expand Evangelism Efforts**

Matthew 28:18-20

*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

**"Richland Lutheran Church is a welcoming congregation that is purposeful and deliberate in sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ."**

**Encourage everyone at Richland Lutheran Church to intentionally seek involvement in their community to develop relationships with the un-churched**

- Develop neighbor relationships;
- Support schools through active participation by volunteering in the classroom, etc.;
- Encourage community volunteerism.

**Train everyone at Richland Lutheran Church to lead people to Christ by sharing their faith with others.**

**Provide opportunities that welcome the un-churched to church concerts, breakfasts, dinners, etc.**

- Enhance the Block Party by improving communication to our neighbors and adding a variety of entertainment (e.g., Gospel-song revival);
- Host periodic family breakfasts, lunches or dinners such as those supported by the Men's Ministry;
- Build on the Wednesday family dinners already in place.

**Implement an Alpha course or similar program to provide ways for seekers to understand Christianity**

- Identify and empower a lay leader to staff and implement the Alpha program;
- Evaluate the potential of having a youth Alpha and/or student Alpha program targeting WSU Tri-Cities and Columbia Basin College students.

**Increase the use of electronic media to improve Richland Lutheran Church's evangelism reach in the Tri-City area and beyond**

- Enhance the Good News Media Ministry program. (e.g., include a one-minute "what RLC members are doing around the world" or "what others could do in support of local, regional, and international social services");
- Take advantage of the Internet to broadcast anywhere, anytime;
- Improve the lighting and setting for this ministry;
- Ensure our church's website meets the ongoing ministry needs of our congregation.

**Encourage participation in global mission trips (e.g., Mafraq, Jordan; Eastern European Missions Network; Lodge Grass, Montana)**

## OBJECTIVE 6 - Use Our Resources to Advance God's Kingdom

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Romans 12:5-8

*So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.*

Luke 6:38

*Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*

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**“Richland Lutheran Church is a congregation that makes effective use of the resources provided by God to support His work.”**

### **Financial – Allocate a greater portion of the operating budget to benevolent and lay ministries**

- Increase the percentage of the annual operating budget delegated to benevolence<sup>5</sup> as an act of faith, with a goal to return to at least 12% by 2018;
- Communicate with the congregation the impact Richland Lutheran Church's benevolent gifts have in the community;
- Regularly increase the percentage of the annual operating budget delegated towards lay ministries, to encourage, equip and empower the missional and spiritual growth of the congregation.

### **Time and Talents - Increase the time and talents that are donated by individuals to support the ministry and missions of Richland Lutheran Church**

- Encourage everyone to discover and use their spiritual gifts;
- Establish a “needs” program to communicate those areas where they may serve;

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<sup>5</sup> 10% of the 2013 operating budget is so allocated.

- Encourage everyone to tithe their time in addition to their financial resources in worship, ministry and spiritual transformation.

**Facilities - Ensure the church facilities meet the ongoing ministry needs of our congregation**

- If a Facilities Strategic Plan is approved by the Congregation, develop necessary activities to implement provisions included therein.

## 5. Implementation and the Future

1 Peter 2:4-9

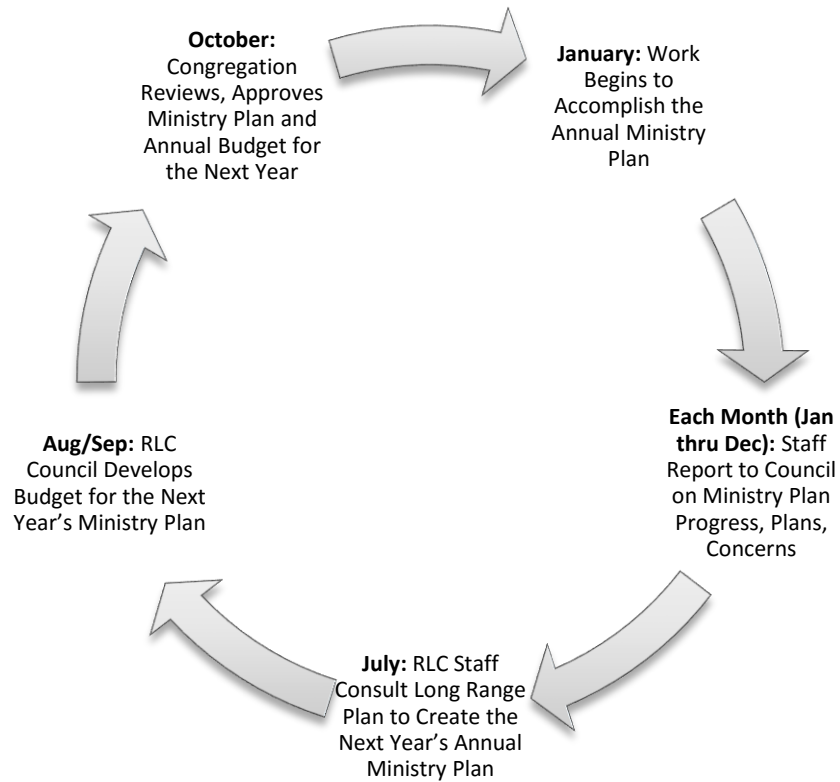
*As you come to Him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to Him— you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in Him will never be put to shame.” Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,” and, “A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.*

This document presents visions of how we believe God would want Richland Lutheran Church and His people to change over the next five years. It emphasizes much more the character of how we believe God would want us to be than specific programs and activities.

To realize our vision will require intentional definitions of activities, responsibilities and dates. It is intended this level of planning will be incorporated into the Annual Ministry Plan. To ensure this happens is the responsibility of the Congregational Council, as they work with the staff, to ensure appropriate tasks and programs are included in the Annual Ministry Plan. The congregation has the responsibility to review and approve the Annual Ministry Plan. Figure 1 illustrates this process.

The Guide and Vision is intended to be a living document to be revised as objectives are achieved or new directions from God are discerned. At a minimum, the Congregational Council will review the plan annually and revise it as appropriate for the following rolling five years. Figure 2 illustrates this process.

The visions incorporated in this document represent where the current Long Range Planning team believes God is calling us. Its success relies on each member's support and willingness to intentionally give of his or her time, talent, and resources to make it happen.



**Figure 1: The Richland Lutheran Church  
Annual Planning Cycle**



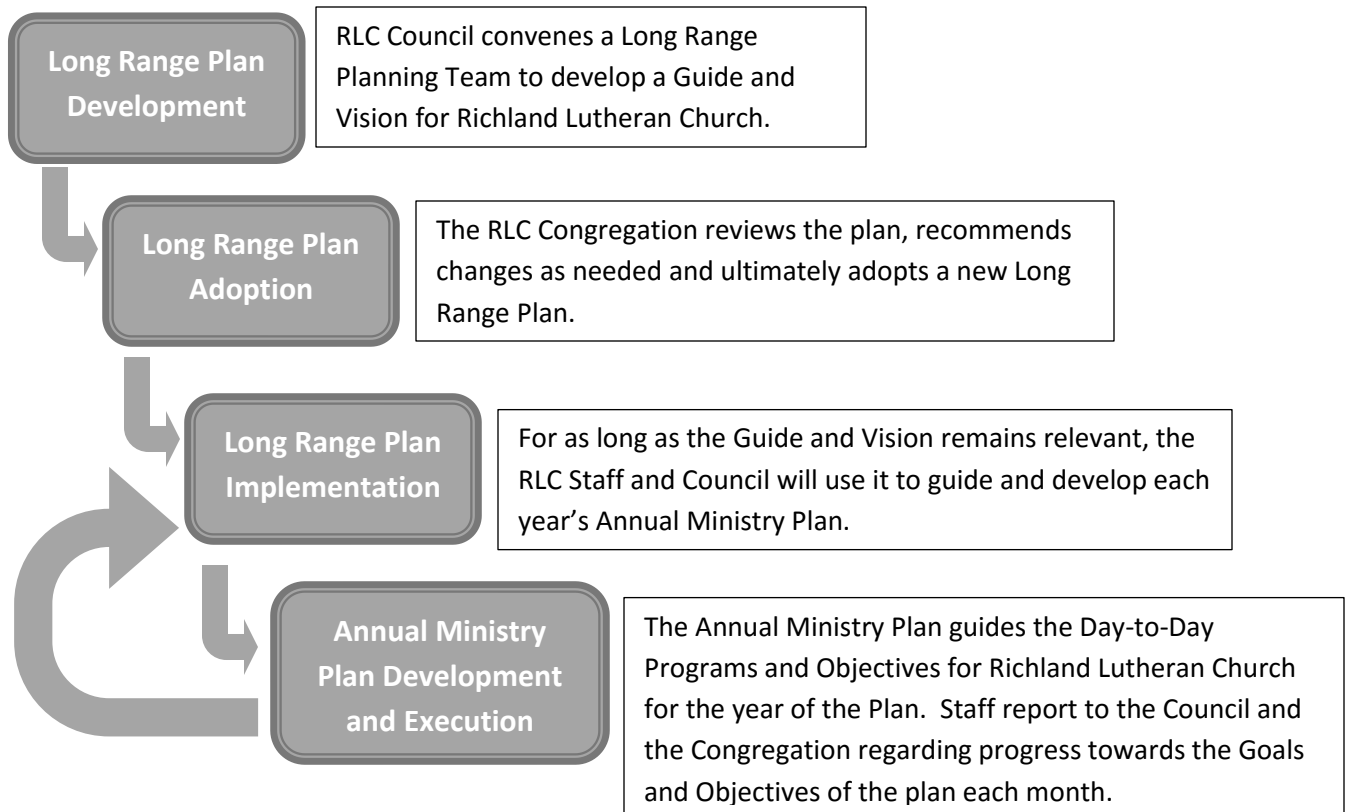


Figure 2 – The Long Range Planning Process