



Congregational Evaluation, Planning and Reporting Tools

**Arizona-California
District**

Rev. 1.0, Oct 2011

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Preface

The 2008 Arizona-California District Convention resolved to consider “at-risk congregations” with the appointment of an ad hoc committee¹ chaired by the Second Vice President of the District. The resolution stated that “There are a significant number of at-risk congregations in the Arizona-California District.”² The committee found that there are plateaued or declining congregations with diminishing membership, changing neighborhoods, internal problems and other situations that might indicate “at-risk congregations.” The committee also concluded that this observation is not limited only to called workers, but by common observation congregational members are also troubled by this trend.

The committee did not believe that it would be advantageous to try to analyze or identify each congregation or create lists or levels of “at-risk congregations” of the district. Not all congregations with plateaued statistics or even declining membership or financial shortfalls indicate an “at-risk congregation.” There are healthy congregations that have plateaued numerically but remain healthy and strong in their ministry. In its study, the committee also assumed that congregations that have declined or are plateaued are faithful to their calling.

The committee concluded that there already exists sufficient district structure created by the District’s Constitution³ to offer assistance and counsel to help our congregations. This is the responsibility of the District President’s office, including the Presidium and Circuit Pastors. In most instances we have found the spirit and attitude to be cooperative within our common confession and fellowship around God’s Word. This fact guided the committee to the premise that the voluntary fellowship of our synodical union causes our pastors, called workers, congregations, schools and members to want to work together to build the Kingdom of God. We have a high regard for the quality of the pastors of our district and their love for Christ in ministry. This unity around God’s saving gospel encourages us to listen to one-another, to strive to improve and to help one-another. A healthy and vibrant Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod requires healthy and vibrant individual congregations.

The example of the Apostle Paul in the New Testament epistles enforces our conviction. The apostle traveled to, visited among and instructed the individual congregations of first-century Christianity. God’s purpose to save people eternally was being accomplished through the apostle by strengthening the congregations facing hostility from an unbelieving world. Yet the tone and spirit of Paul was passionate, personal and loving toward his fellow believers. From his epistles to the Thessalonian congregation we find the kind of encouragement, passion and love that is a paradigm for our situation today.⁴ Thus the committee chose the name “The Thessalonian Project” as the title for its work and report to the district.

¹ “RESOLVED a) that the Arizona-California District in convention instruct the district Presidium to form an ad hoc committee to address at-risk congregations in our District.” Resolution No. 9; Subject: At-Risk Congregations

² Resolution No. 9; Subject: At-Risk Congregations

³ “The president shall be responsible for the supervision of doctrine and practice within the district.” [Constitution for the Districts, Article VI, Rights and Duties of the Officers, Section 1]

“The district shall exercise supervision over its members in matters of doctrine and practice through circuit pastors elected by the circuits of the district for two-year terms.” [Ibid, Article VIII, Supervision of Doctrine and Practice, Section1]

[The District Council] “shall meet at least once a year to counsel together in matters pertaining to the welfare of the district. At the discretion of the president, it may meet more often.” [Ibid, Article XII, District Council, Article 2

⁴ “We always thank God for all of you.” “In spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with joy given by the Holy Spirit.” “You became a model to all the believers.” “For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.” “We also thank God continually because when you received the word of God,

Seven Characteristics of Healthy Congregations

What characterizes a healthy congregation? It is a combination of the following in various degrees:

1. It is a spiritual growing people, engaged in home devotions, Bible reading and prayer, and shown in membership statistics, not necessarily by an increase in overall numbers, but manifest in activity and effort. Most significantly, this growth begins with the pastors, called workers, and lay leaders in our congregations. Mature and spiritually growing leadership is at the heart of a healthy congregation.
2. It is a congregation with meaningful⁵ worship, willing to bring others to their worship, whose health is reflected in faithful worship attendance. Preaching is clear and convicting, forgiving and healing, with the focus on Christ alone.
3. It is a people willing to share their faith, welcoming to new people, active in Bible classes, promoting of adult confirmations and involved in the community with a loving attitude
4. It is a community of people in the church who have a sense of belonging and who willingly volunteer in and support their church's ministry through their time, talents, and offerings.
5. It is a congregation with a caring attitude toward raising their children and youth in the Lord. This is reflected in Sunday school, children's programs, Lutheran elementary school, high school support, teen and young adult ministries, etc.
6. It is a congregation that has an empowering leadership that willingly seeks to have people active in ministry within the congregation and in the community.
7. It is a congregation with direction for the future with goals, plans and priorities.

These statements do not comprise a definitive exposition of a healthy congregation, but they serve as a starting point to begin an evaluation of our congregations. We do emphasize that points 2 through 7 above all flow from point number 1, a congregation of spiritual growing people engaged in Bible study. The centrality of the Means of Grace in the life of the congregation and the sacramental life of the individual constituents is essential to the health of the congregation overall.

which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe." "You are our glory and joy." "May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else." "We instructed you how to live in order to please God." (1 Thessalonians 1:2, 6, 7; 2:11,12, 13, 20; 3:12,13 and 4:1,2)

⁵ By the word "meaningful" the committee is emphasizing worship that is relevant, significant, expressive, passionate and personal. The committee found a common criticism that some worship and especially preaching may at times appear to be unclear, lukewarm, with much sameness. As one author expressed it, "Somehow we need to recapture the wonder of God's forgiving love in Christ, be surprised; amazed all over again that God should love sinners such as us. The more we grow in appreciation of what we have, the more we will desire to give it to others." Jesus' words speak to the heart of this point, "He who has been forgiven little loves little" (Luke 7:47).

Guidelines for Congregational Assessment

A. Purpose

The purpose of a congregational assessment is to discover the opportunities that Jesus has given us to strengthen our members and to reach out to the lost in our community. By taking stock of what we have been doing and of the resources God has given us, we can move forward and plan how we will carry out the mission Jesus gave us.

B. Process

By participating in this evaluation, you have the opportunity to help build up the body of Christ. It is important to remember that we have a variety of different kinds of people in our congregation with many different gifts. Every member is important. This process involves people and is about people – people whom Jesus redeemed to be members of his body. Paul said:

12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

15 Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 28 And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongue? Do all interpret? 31 Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.

As you carry out an evaluation of your congregation and its work, remember that you are talking about your brothers and sisters in Christ. You are evaluating God’s Church, the body of Christ. Speak the truth in love. Be kind in your criticism. Be truthful in your evaluations. Be bold in your suggestions to carry out Christ’s mission.

The assessment process should invite comments from a broad spectrum of people in the congregation. A planning committee of selected leaders will analyze the comments and suggestions of the members and will work with the church council to develop a strategic plan and goals for reaching more people with the gospel. This will in turn be communicated to every committee and to every member so that everyone in the congregation can apply himself or herself to our congregation's mission.

1. Select the planning team. Three members with the pastor may be sufficient.
2. Set a timetable for the assessment and planning process.
3. The evaluation team gathers input from others. This may be as simple as discussions with other council or congregation members. A preferred process would be to send a simple survey to a random group of congregation members seeking their written input. Honor the confidentiality of those who provide input unless you have permission to share the comment and source.
4. Ask the pastors and other staff to also complete an assessment form.
5. The planning team gathers all the input and summarizes it. It begins to formulate objectives for the congregation.
6. The planning team presents what it has learned to the church council and with the church council adopts objectives and a timeline for the congregation.
7. Every committee will respond to the objectives by incorporating them into their work. It is important for the committees to work with goals that are specific, measurable, action oriented, realistic and time-driven (the acronym *SMART* describes such objectives).
8. It is suggested that this process be done every year. In subsequent years, the process may simply focus and readjust the objectives as necessary.
9. ***Make sure that you determine who will set this process in motion each year!***

Consider congregational assessment and planning an ongoing process. The plans we make initially may only be a beginning, and the annual review will bring focus and definition to our plans. An annual review of the plan will also help the congregation to engage more and more of its members in its ministry.

C. Summary

Keep the assessment process positive. Conduct the evaluation in Christian love. Pray that the Lord will guide you and bless your work so that He will be praised and His Kingdom advanced.

Suggested Timeline

- Month 1** A planning committee is chosen, and the committee plans its schedule and work. This should be written down and reported to the church council and/or congregation.
- Month 2** The planning committee gives surveys to a variety of members in the congregation. This may be done by direct mail, by e-mail, by surveying members of various committees, by using time in a Bible class, etc. You do not have to survey everyone in the congregation. However, it is important to survey a good cross-section of the congregation.
- Month 3** The planning committee meets to organize the information received from congregational surveys. The congregational evaluation form can be used for this. The committee can begin to build consensus on what areas of ministry need attention, and what opportunities exist for the congregation to develop.
- Everyone's ideas are important. Sometimes the comment of one person can lead the congregation in a direction that the Lord blesses.
- Depending on how the congregation is organized, the committee and council may wish to present the goals to the congregation for approval at a congregational meeting.
- Months 4-6** Every committee in the congregation studies the objectives and makes appropriate plans for its work. There may be ramifications of this planning process on the church budget. For that reason, it may be wise to begin the planning process six months before the annual budget is adopted.
- Ongoing** Once a plan is made, it is important that it not be lost in a folder. Committees and council should review the congregation's plans briefly at every meeting. Someone in the congregation should be tasked with monitoring the calendar and starting the planning process at the appropriate time each year.
- 1 / 3 / 5** There are three types of goals: short-term (1 year), medium-range (2-3 years), and long-term (3-5+ years). Short-term goals tend to be specific and easily accomplished. Long-term goals tend to be larger in scale and more challenging. It is important to include long-term planning as well as short-term planning in this process. For example, if a long-term goal is to start a preschool, this may push a decision on whether or not to buy the lot next to your church when it is put on the market. It is surprising how God blesses our plans and gives us opportunities we would not have expected.

Member Survey

In all of your responses to the questions posed below, please give prayerful consideration to your comments and please share your comments with a Christian spirit in mind.

1. List three things which you believe are strengths of our congregation.

2. List two or three things which you believe our congregation can improve upon.

3. What opportunities does our congregation have for reaching out to the people of our community?

4. What obstacles are there which stand in the way of our reaching out with the gospel?

We wish to express our appreciation for the time, thoughtfulness and prayerful consideration you have given to these questions. Please return the form in a sealed envelope addressed to:

May the Lord richly bless you!

May we use your comments? Yes No

Your name: _____

Congregational Evaluation Form

1. Worship

Some questions to help you formulate your comments:

Is the worship service planned well? Does it fulfill its purpose of proclaiming the gospel? Is the worship service clearly driven by confessional Lutheran principles? Is there variety in hymns and orders of service? Is it well led? Do the sermons present both law and gospel and apply to real life? Are we using the gifts that God has given us? Is the order of service easy to be followed by members and visitors alike? Are the needs of children being met? Are our facilities adequate and presentable?

Please share a few sentences about your overall impression and thoughts regarding worship services.

2. Christian Education

Some questions to help you formulate your comments:

Are there enough opportunities for adults to participate in Bible class? What percentage of members do not attend any Bible class? Are the Bible classes presented in a variety of ways so as to reach people with different learning styles? Is there a variety of subjects offered?

Is our Sunday school adequately staffed and trained? Do our children attend faithfully? Are our children engaged in our worship services? Do you have opportunities to use their abilities for service? Are we losing children in their mid to upper teens? Do we know why?

Is our Lutheran elementary school appropriately staffed? Does the congregation understand the purpose of its school? Gauge the level of congregational support for the school. What percentage of member children are enrolled in the elementary school? Why are some members not enrolling their children? Do we have clear enrollment policies for member and non-member families? Are we using the elementary school for both nurture and outreach?

Do we encourage our members to read their Bibles at home and to have devotions with their families?

Please share a few sentences about your overall impression and thoughts regarding our program of Christian education.

3. Outreach

Some questions to help you formulate your comments:

What is reputation of our congregation in our community? Do we identify the visitors to our congregation and follow up on them promptly? Are we regularly following up on our prospects? What do we do to advertize our congregation and its message to our community? Does every organization in our congregation see itself as an entry point to reach out to new members? Can our members confidently share their faith with their personal contacts? Is our congregation organized for outreach to our community?

Please share a few sentences about your overall impression and thoughts regarding our congregation's outreach.

4. Member nurture and retention

Some questions to help you formulate your comments:

Do we assimilate new members into our congregation? Are we recruiting them as volunteers? Do they join a Bible class for further spiritual growth? Do we connect them with other members?

How does our congregation identify those who are becoming lax in hearing God's Word? What process have we developed to reach out to them? Does anyone besides our pastor visit members at risk?

Do our members understand how to admonish one another, when necessary? Do they see that they are called upon by Christ to encourage one another? What are we doing to make them aware of this responsibility?

Please share a few sentences about your overall impression and thoughts regarding congregation's member nurture and retention programs.

5. Stewardship

Some questions to help you formulate your comments:

What percentage of income does your average member give? How do you present your church budget to your congregation? Do you teach your members how to use their envelopes? Do you offer practical training to help members manage their finances overall?

How do your members respond to opportunities for service? Is an effort made by your committees to recruit others for the tasks that need to be done? How do you determine what gifts your members have and how they want to be used?

How does stewardship training fit into your curriculum? Does it go beyond giving into managing our households, too? Do we train our members consistently and biblically in all three areas of Christian giving – percentage, special, and deferred? How often do you talk to your people about these things?

Please share a few sentences about your overall impression and thoughts regarding our stewardship.

6. Fellowship.

Some questions to help you formulate your comments:

Do members have opportunities to interact with each other during the week? Do fellowship activities serve only the core members, or are efforts made to be more inclusive? Do we offer interaction in a variety of settings so that everyone is cared for? Are opportunities well announced and publicized? Who organizes these opportunities? What has worked in the past and what hasn't? Can you share any new ideas?

Please share a few sentences about your overall impression and thoughts regarding fellowship in our church.

7. Staff / Administration

Some questions to help you formulate your comments:

Are we currently staffed so that our pastors are able to give their time to God's Word and prayer? Do they have time to visit members and reach out to the lost? Does our staff work share a common philosophy of ministry? Are working relationships harmonious?

Would our congregation benefit from having staff that can help with music, communication, administration, volunteer coordination, or children & youth ministry? Do we have adequate support staff – secretary, accounting, maintenance?

Does our yearly budget reflect our mission? Do our members “own” our mission and our efforts to accomplish it? Are we united in our efforts?

8. Facilities

Are our facilities adequate to reflect our mission to save the lost? Are our facilities adequate to carry out our mission? Do they give a good impression to the visitor?

Do we have a plan in place for replacing appliances, roofs, parking lots, etc.? What can we do to improve our facilities?

Please share a few sentences about your overall impression and thoughts regarding our facilities and administration.

Mission and Vision Statements

Mission Statement

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."

The greatest mission ever given is the "Great Commission." There is no sense in reinventing the wheel. Use this passage and define for yourselves a mission that fits who you are and where you are (your cultural setting) in order to best serve the Lord.

Mission Statement

The mission statement is a concise and memorable definition of the reason for the existence of your ministry. It will reflect the "Great Commission." The mission statement will focus every activity and the development of all programs that will be necessary to fulfill it. Everyone who reads it will clearly understand the purpose of the church's ministry in this context.

Sample Mission Statements:

- To praise the Lord, to know His Word, and to share His Love
- To worship the Lord, win the lost, and nurture the saved
- To glorify God by growing and going
- We exist to exalt the Lord, edify his people, and evangelize the world.
- Growing in Jesus, Sharing his love
- Bring them in... Build them up... Send them out!
- Grow in Christ, Go in Christ

Insert your own Mission Statement:

Vision Statement

Acts 1:7-8: He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Jesus works in us and through us. He knows the plans he has for us and carries them out through us. Therefore, as we cast a vision, we are emphasizing what we pray God has in store for us and with us through Jesus. Jesus is the focus of all vision.

Role of the vision statement

The vision statement is a forward-looking view of the unique and special plans we pray God has for us at this time and in this place. It should involve plans that we will begin to implement this year, as well as plans that may just be a dream for ten years in the future. The vision statement will raise our sights and describe the future we ask for and are working toward under God's grace and blessing. It will reflect our mission and give specific substance to fulfilling it. Those who read it will be inspired by it and will want to be involved. They will look at the individual pieces and find ways to put those pieces in place. The vision answers, "According to God's will, where do we wish to go? By God's grace what do we hope to accomplish?"

Some benefits of vision statements:

- People give support for it through their Spirit-worked faith
- People will tolerate inconveniences for the greater cause
- People will talk. You cannot put a price tag on positive buzz.
- The ministry will take on a life of its own in Christ and through Christ.
- Opportunities for distraction will decrease.

(Note: Vision statements often vary in length and may take various forms. Some will be a single page, with details filled in as the vision is worked and clarified. Others may be as many as several pages and contain a considerable amount of detail. Some of this depends on the size of a congregation and the human resources available.)

Simple vision statement

In the name of Jesus Christ we seek to worship God wholeheartedly and faithfully, to give his Word top priority in our lives, to reach out with the good news of Jesus Christ to as many people as possible, and to pray for each other as we bear one another's burdens and encourage each other toward love and good deeds. To accomplish this, we seek to . . .

- Provide joyful, Christ-centered, weekly worship gatherings that are welcoming to both members and guests.
- Offer engaging Bible studies that meet the spiritual needs of people at all levels of maturity.
- Develop training for all to increase confidence in sharing God's Word.
- Improve our congregation's reputation in our community through service projects that reflect our Christian love.
- Increase member awareness of and participation in our ministries, both within our congregation and community.

In the sample above, specific actions and goals will be set by various committees in the congregation in order to accomplish. The following provides more of the detail.

Detailed vision statement

Evangelical Lutheran Church vision for the year

Our vision for ten years from now is ...

- based on our mission to grow in God's Word and to go with God's Word.
- developed with the understanding that all of our work and ministry will be Christ-centered, and will focus on our using and sharing the gospel in Word and Sacrament.
- dependent on God's work through the Holy Spirit to use us and to bless our labors, according to his good pleasure.

People

- We ask God that, according to his will and as he gives the increase, from our current total of 300 members, _____ may become a congregation of 400 members, 300 adults and 100 children.
- We will strive to reach out to younger families in our community by committing ourselves to excellence in Christian education at all levels.
- We will look for ways in which we can reach out to the Hispanic community in our city as well as others of different ethnic origins.

Programs

Worship: We currently have 42% of our members worship on Sunday morning. We pray that the Lord increase this to 60%. We will work toward this goal by . . .

- Training our elders and other members to visit those who have not worshiped in the last four weeks with a message from God's Word.
- Offering a third service other than on Sunday morning for those who are gone on the weekend.
- Involving more members and children in our worship services.

Outreach/Evangelism:

- We will identify visitors and follow up on them within forty-eight hours, if possible.
- We will increase our efforts to bring God's Word to prospects through repeated follow-up contact that shares law and gospel.
- Once each year we will offer an evangelism training workshop to help our members grow in the ability to share their faith with others.
- We will plan six major outreach activities per year (e.g., Christmas, school enrollment, Easter, VBS, start of Sunday school, Thanksgiving).
- We will strive to project a positive and prominent image to our neighborhood through increased involvement in our community.
- We will print weekly sermons in a convenient brochure format for members to take and share.

Adult Education: We will ask the Lord to increase our Bible class attendance from 23% to 40%. We will work toward that end by . . .

- Offering two Bible classes on Sunday.
- Planning out our adult education curriculum in advance.
- Offering a mix of study opportunities (shorter/longer series; more elementary/more advanced).
- Investigating how we might use technology to increase opportunities for Bible study.
- Personally inviting every member to attend a Bible class twice a year.

Children's ministry

- Expand our preschool program from a mornings-only to an afternoon program as well.
- Increase our participation in our Lutheran elementary school by personally explaining our LES program to those members not using it.
- Increase the size of our Sunday school by offering transportation to children in the community who want to come.

Teen ministry

- Engage our youth in a mission trip at least once in their high school years.
- Offer Bible class on Sunday just for teens.

Relational ministry

- Host a "get to know you" Sunday to engage members with other members that they do not know.
- Survey the congregation to determine what kinds of groups and activities are desired.
- Sponsor a "ministry fair" to expose our members to groups and opportunities that exist within the congregation.

Senior ministry

- Establish Bible studies in the three nursing homes and two assisted living complexes.
- Ask teens to visit elderly people with their parents.
- Ask our men's group to conduct four "help" days to the elderly in their homes.

Leadership development

- Use 15 minutes at every council and committee meeting to develop Christian leadership and ministry skills.
- Move from "opening prayers" at meetings to devotional studies from God's word that help leaders learn and grow in Christian doctrine.
- Foster a climate of trust for leaders to own and carry out their ministry plans.
- Host an annual "Leadership workshop" to explain how the church operates administratively and help each individual and each organization understand how it fits into the organizational structure. Use the time for communication and leadership development.

Member ministry

- Identify all individuals in the congregation who have taught Sunday school and ask them to consider being involved in some form of member ministry.
- Identify and recruit thirty families who will pray for those who are weak and hurting.
- Making audio and video recordings available to the sick and homebound.

Communications

- Find ways to regularly poll or survey members to solicit their ideas.
- Use technology in the best possible way for internal and external communication.
- Review the church database to ensure we have correct and current contact information for all our members.
- Designate a congregation webmaster to enhance the communication through our congregation's website.
- Use social networking media to communicate with our members and with the community.

Staff

- Work towards making our secretary full-time to assist our pastor and teaching staff in routine office duties.

- Hire part-time staff to coordinate our music and to do our bookkeeping.
- Recruit someone in the congregation to serve as a volunteer coordinator.

Facilities

- Explore the feasibility of providing handicap accessibility to our sanctuary.
- Promote the use of our fellowship hall for community activities such as the blood bank, voter polling, etc.
- Expand our parking capacity by purchasing the home across the street.
- Rework our sound system and make it possible to record our services for the community access station.
- Purchase video equipment to record, stream, and post video through the Internet.
- Increase our endowment fund from \$150,000 to \$1,000,000 by teaching our members generosity in “percentage” giving, “special” gifts, and “deferred” giving (estate planning).

SMART Goals

1. How to Set SMART Goals—the following are key elements of SMART Goals:

- **Specific:** Your goals need to be clear, focused, concise, and well defined. God has specifically chosen you to carry out his plan. In the challenges he has placed before you, be clear in what you seek to accomplish with God's help and guidance. Avoid the temptation to hide behind meaningless generalities. They may give the illusion of attacking the challenge, but they ultimately only leave solutions to chance. Be as detailed as you can.
- **Measurable:** Include timeframes, dates, dollar amounts, etc. to measure your progress. Throughout Scripture God tells us that he focuses intimately on details. He watches over the birds of the air and beautifies the grass of the field. He knows the number of hairs on your head. He is with you in each detail of your plan. Set measurable details in your plan. You don't have to worry about what happens if you aren't able to meet them. God is working with you. You are not alone in planning and carrying out these details. If God does not grant the specific timeframes, dates, dollar amounts, etc. that you set, know that God is still in control. God will lead you even through unsuccessful attempts into the direction that he wants us to go. Our sinful nature urges us not to take meaningful action, telling us that we can't be sure that we will reach the outcome we want. But God is in charge of the outcome. And if you never take that first step, you will never arrive at any outcome, much less the destination where God wants to take you.
- **Action-oriented:** The goal must require you to take action. Paul gave himself a goal to visit Rome. (He did not know he would go in chains.) In defining your goal, include the actions you need to take in order to achieve it. Again, you are working with God and not on your own. Take positive action. Move forward. You can always adjust.
- **Realistic:** Your goals need to be manageable, attainable, believable and your own. Letting others set your goals for you leads to low motivation and high anxiety. Setting goals that you think others expect you to set robs you of motivation and deters you from applying the unique combination of talents and experiences that God has placed in you. It gets in the way of those specific qualities that God wants you to use to attack the obstacle that he has given you.
- **Time-driven:** Your goals need to have a starting point, a timeline and an ending point. God rarely moves in immediate and massive changes. He teaches us patience. He teaches us persistence. Recognize what you can accomplish in a given timeframe. Sometimes you may need to break down large goals into smaller, more manageable parts. Goals can also be broken down into smaller objectives.

Identify:

- Short-term goals or *steps* (goals to be accomplished within the next 6 to 12 months)
- Medium-range goals (goals to be accomplished within 2 to 3 years)
- Long-range goals (goals to be accomplished within the next 3 to 5 years and beyond)

2. Critical Success Factors for SMART Goals:

- Your goals should be written down in positive terms. Focus on a positive solution, not merely on getting rid of a problem. You want a positive solution, not just an empty hole where a problem used to be.
- Your goals should be posted in a prominent place, so you can stay focused. Keep them before you so that you are consistently reminded of them. Don't let distractions from the enemy cause you to lose sight of your goals.
- The goals have to be your own. Let your goals reflect the desires that are in your heart. Don't be afraid to be passionate.
- Be flexible. Your situations and goals can and will change as life circumstances change. In other words, if your deadline becomes unrealistic, change it. God rarely brings you to a solution through the first idea that comes into your head. He leads us through unexpected paths as he disciplines us. When Phillip and Nathaniel first approached Jesus to learn from him, he told them to follow him. When they asked where he was going, Jesus replied, "Come, and you will see." He gave them no hint of the immense changes those five simple words would make in his disciples' lives. He doesn't tell us the specifics of where he plans to take us. But he holds out a remarkable adventure that will change us in ways we could never imagine. We need not be afraid of the fact that our initial plans may not succeed. God brings success in his time and in his way. He may bring it through a different path, or he may bring it in an area that is totally different from what we set out to accomplish, but he will bring about whatever he sets out for us to accomplish.

3. Sample goal: Box Tops for Education

1) Specific

The church and school will increase their box tops for education collection and funding

2) Measurable

Funding from box tops will increase:

- i) \$5,000.00 in year one
- ii) \$4,000.00 more in year two
- iii) \$3,000.00 more in year three
- iv) 2,000.00 more in year four and each subsequent year

Every WELS congregation without a school will be contacted: 10 congregations will agree to collect for our church and school in the first year, with every church without a school and not collecting for our church and school being contacted in subsequent years resulting in 3-5 more congregations enlisted each year for our church and school collections.

3) Action-oriented

- i) Phone calls will be made to every WELS congregation without a school, requesting that congregation members collect box tops for our ministry (October through December)
 - (1) 5 people split the congregations for the phone calling (team established by September 10)
 - (2) A script will be written for these phone calls (September)
 - (3) A plan for collection by the congregation will be shared in these phone calls and will be emailed or mailed (September plan developed, mailing or emailing within one week after contact and agreement has been reached)

- Collection
 - Mailing
 - Note for what to collect
 - Etc.
- ii) The calling team will develop amongst itself a very specific plan for internal collection and counting purposes at our school and church (October through December)
 - iii) Phone calls will be made each subsequent year during October through December to churches not having schools and not already collecting for our church and school

4) Realistic

- i) The time frames are reachable with people working diligently for the betterment of the kingdom
- ii) Team members will follow-up on each other bi-weekly to ensure the plan is completed
- iii) God blesses our faithful efforts

5) Time-driven

- i) Team of 5 for phone calling developed by September 10
- ii) Script for phone calls developed by September
- iii) Collection plan developed by September for sharing with congregations within 1 week of collection agreement
- iv) Internal collection plan developed during October through December
- v) Follow-up phone calls made each year during October through December to congregations still without schools and not collecting for our church and school

Your SMART Goals

Specific:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Measurable:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Action-oriented:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Realistic:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Time-driven (short, medium, and long-term):

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

General comments and notes:

Assessing Our Ministry in Action

The body of Christ is made up of many different members. Each one has God-given gifts that will benefit the rest of the body. Every member is important. As every member of Christ's body fulfills his or her calling, the potential of the congregation is realized, and people find true contentment. Leadership and organizational development takes into consideration that every believer is important and everyone's gifts have value.

1 Corinthians 12: "There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines. Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. And yet I will show you the most excellent way."

Being a part of the body, understanding your role in the body, and fully maximizing that role in the body are great blessings from God. It is the same for each person in our church, school, and overall organization, as we work within the roles that God has determined for us.

Imagine a family visiting your church. Who influences that family the most? The pastor who preaches? The organist? The usher? The person who sits next to them in the pew? The Sunday school teacher who has their children? Each person is important.

Cultural ramifications are also important – ethnic, rural, city, rich, poor, educated, uneducated, etc. Jesus reached out to a Samaritan woman, invited himself into a tax collector's home, and blessed little children. One size does not fit all. We work with the cultures in which we serve and not against them. Paul reminds us in *1 Corinthians 9:22*: "To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some."

Some examples to think through

1. A congregation holds a Vacation Bible School every summer. The Outreach Committee has found someone who can canvass Hispanic homes to invite children to come to VBS. Thirty children come, and are more than a little “unruly,” making it difficult for the VBS teachers. The congregation decides not to follow through and invite Hispanic children the following year. How could this have been avoided? What is the next step?
2. The secretary is in charge of organizing the congregation’s bulletin boxes. There are several boxes that never get emptied and it makes inserting new bulletins impossible. She eliminates those boxes. One of those families shows up in church and asks, “Pastor, why don’t I have a box anymore?” How could this have been avoided?
3. A family is going through Bible Information class with the pastor. He encourages them to bring their children to Sunday School and to come to Bible Class on Sunday morning. When they come, the Sunday School teacher doesn’t have materials for the children – and the children in class aren’t particularly friendly. How could this have been avoided?

5. What would you change in the current programs?

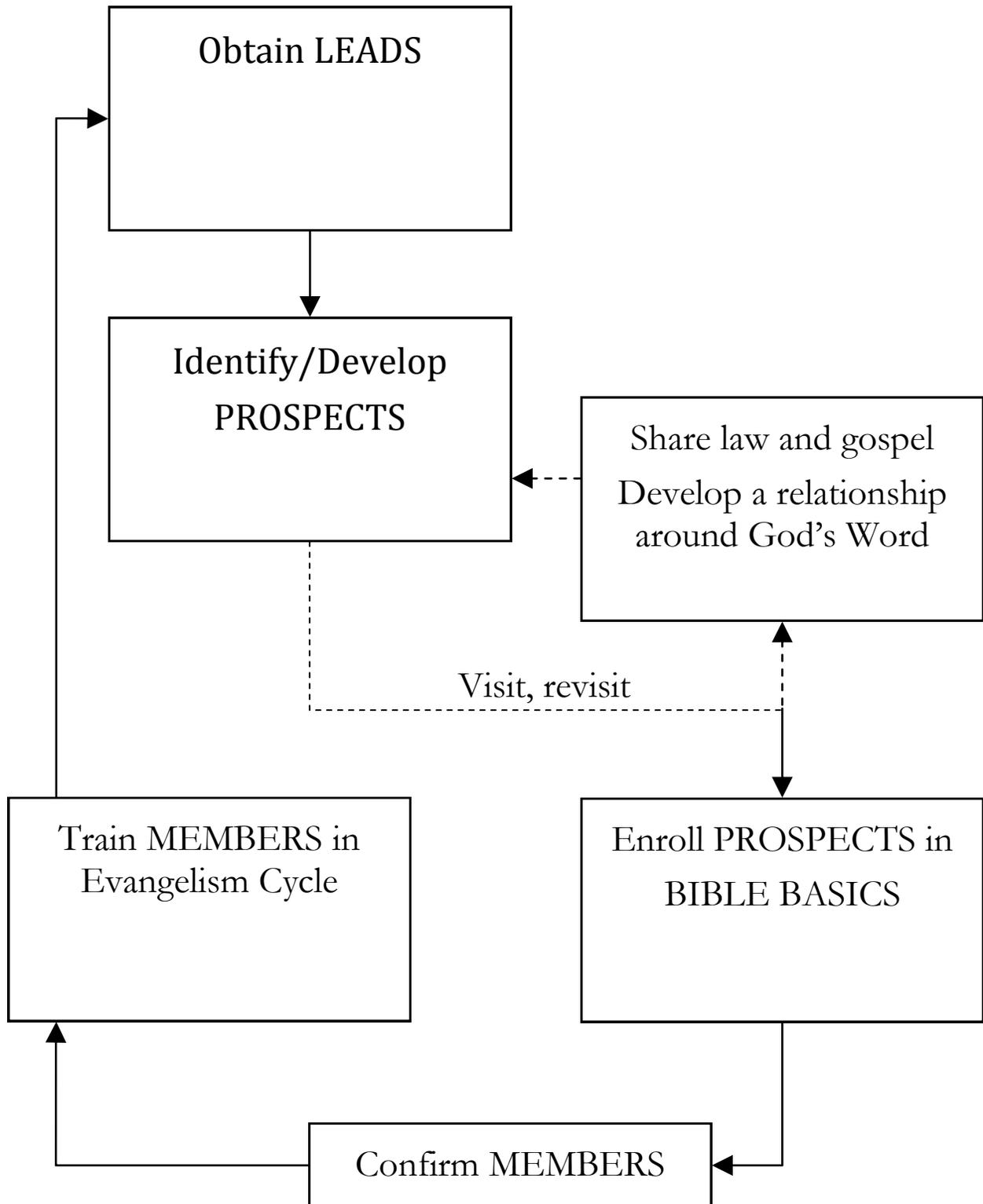
6. What new ideas might be tried during the next program years? (Keep in mind such things as member nurture, outreach, and assimilation.)

Step 2: Develop your outreach goals by brainstorming the possibilities with the membership in a planning day and then refining the list of ideas. List all plans and activities involved in finding and nurturing prospects. The Word works! (Isaiah 55:10-11; 2 Corinthians 2:14-17) Set goals for activities, law and gospel presentations, number of names added to the prospect list, Bible Information Classes, etc.

Step 3: Do an action plan worksheet for each major project.

Step 4: In mid-year or at year-end, check your progress and make adjustments using the mid-year / year-end evaluation tool.

The Evangelism Cycle



Stewardship Assessment

Step 1: Begin by reviewing and evaluating the current-year program.

For our congregation		Outside our congregation
Budget presentation Newsletter Stewardship program Program participation by all members Joyfulness of service Time/Talent volunteerism Prayer chain Greeters	New-member sponsors Utilization of volunteers New-member assimilation New-member involvement Member spiritual growth Finance Committee reports Youth stewardship training	Interest in missions Missions (SMO & Spec) giving WELS Kingdom Workers LWMS participation WELS Connection

1. List the strengths of the current ministry program.

2. List the weaknesses of the current ministry program.

3. How can we build on our strengths?

4. How can we improve in those areas where we are weak?

5. What would you change in the current programs?

6. What new ideas might be tried during the next program years? (Keep in mind such things as member nurture, outreach, and assimilation.)

Step 2: Develop your stewardship goals by brainstorming the possibilities with the membership in a planning day and then refining the list of ideas. List all education plans and activities which will help members evaluate and dedicate their time, talents and treasure to the Lord and his service in loving response to the Gospel. "Growing in Grace" is to be the general them of all of our stewardship training.

Step 3: Do an action plan worksheet for each major project.

Step 4: In mid-year or at year-end, check your progress and make adjustments using the mid-year / year-end evaluation tool.

Education Assessment

Step 1: Begin by reviewing and evaluating the current-year program.

Youth		Adult
Cradle roll Sunday School Youth Bible Class Youth Confirmation Class Teen activities Boy & Girl Pioneers Pre-school Day care Christmas for Kids Vacation Bible School	Sunday Adult Bible Class Week day Adult Bible Class Bible study curriculum Singles Bible Study Leadership Training Small Group Bible Study Parenting classes	Community Bible studies Bible Information Classes Personal Bible study: - by leaders - by all members Synod school promotions Church library Retreats: - Teens - Adults - Council

1. List the strengths of the current ministry program.

2. List the weaknesses of the current ministry program.

3. How can we build on our strengths?

4. How can we improve in those areas where we are weak?

5. What would you change in the current programs?

6. What new ideas might be tried during the next program years? (Keep in mind such things as member nurture, outreach, and assimilation.)

Step 2: Develop your objectives for Christian education by brainstorming the possibilities with the membership in a planning day and then refining the list of ideas. Think in terms of the categories of children, youth and adults. For children, include Sunday School, VBS and other special activities. For youth (if they are a separate entity) and adults be specific in determining the curriculum of study. A goal should be to make each weekly lesson a unit to itself so that new people may enter the study at any time.

Step 3: Do an action plan worksheet for each major project.

Step 4: In mid-year or at year-end, check your progress and make adjustments using the mid-year / year-end evaluation tool.

Worship Assessment

Step 1: Begin by reviewing and evaluating the current-year program.

Program efforts	Individual efforts
Sharing goals with congregation Care Committee for Called Workers (CCCW) New-member welcome New-member tracking Taped / streamed services Prayer chain New-member info packet Name tags Picture directory Marriage renewal day Openness to new members	Monitoring attendances at: - Worship - Communion - Bible classes - Sunday school Telephone calls by: - Pastor - Lay members Visits on inactive members by: - Pastor - Elders - other lay members Bereavement ministry Shut-in ministry Birthday or Anniversary greetings

1. List the strengths of the current ministry program.

2. List the weaknesses of the current ministry program.

3. How can we build on our strengths?

4. How can we improve in those areas where we are weak?

5. What would you change in the current programs?

6. What new ideas might be tried during the next program years? (Keep in mind such things as member nurture, outreach, and assimilation.)

Step 2: Develop your worship objectives by brainstorming the possibilities with the membership in a planning day and then refining this by the leadership team or committee. The Means of Grace is the focus in worship. Music is the setting for the gospel. Since worship is a common entry point for new people, strive to make your worship user- and visitor- friendly.

Step 3: Do an action plan worksheet for each major project.

Step 4: In mid-year or at year-end, check your progress and make adjustments using the mid-year / year-end evaluation tool.

Member Nurture and Fellowship Assessment

Step 1: Begin by reviewing and evaluating the current program year.

Some areas to consider		
Organizational activity of . . . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men's groups • Women's groups • Seniors' groups • Sports groups • Youth groups Theology & practice of fellowship Oktoberfest Reformation celebration Christmas gatherings Children's Christmas events Easter breakfast	Mission festival Mother/daughter banquets Father/son banquets Sunday school picnic Church picnic Marriage vow renewal event Friendship Sundays Welcoming "coffees" Publicizing of events Pictorial directory Newsletter profiles Game nights	New-member welcomes Birthday contact Christmas decorating Group tours Thanksgiving dinner Talent nights Potluck dinners Congregational map Fellowship clubs Sports days Shepherding / Befriending program

1. List the strengths of the current ministry program.

2. List the weaknesses of the current ministry program.

3. How can we build on our strengths?

4. How can we improve in those areas where we are weak?

5. What would you change in the current programs?

6. What new ideas might be tried during the next program years? (Keep in mind such things as member nurture, outreach, and assimilation.)

Step 2: Develop your nurture and fellowship objectives by brainstorming the possibilities with the membership in a planning day and then refining the list of ideas. Fellowship activities give us the opportunity to share care and concern for our fellow Christians and to witness our Christian love in action to prospects/guests.

Step 3: Do an action plan worksheet for each major project.

Step 4: In mid-year or at year-end, check your progress and make adjustments using the mid-year / year-end evaluation tool.

Staffing and Administration Assessment

Step 1: Begin by reviewing and evaluating the current program year.

Some areas to consider ...		
<p>Called and hired staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral staff • Work descriptions, division of duties • Classroom size, extra duties for teachers • Care Committee for Called Workers • Part-time staff or program ministry, music, youth, etc. • Secretarial support • Bookkeeping support • Office management 	<p>Program ministry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part-time staff • Volunteer recruitment <p>Constitution and Bylaws Council, committees Consent agendas for meetings Communication Productive use of technology Website management</p>	<p>Preparing annual budgets Financial record keeping Statistical information Membership records Archives, history Annual audits Attendance and Communion records</p>

1. List the strengths of the current ministry program.

2. List the weaknesses of the current ministry program.

3. How can we build on our strengths?

4. How can we improve in those areas where we are weak?

5. What would you change in the current programs?

6. What new ideas might be tried during the next program years? (Keep in mind such things as member nurture, outreach, and assimilation.)

Step 2: Have a member or members of the planning committee meet with the staff of the congregation to brainstorm on what steps can be taken to make division of duties more clear, open lines of communication, and unite the efforts of the staff to fulfill the congregation's mission. Identify your staffing and administrative goals.

Step 3: Do an action plan worksheet for each major project.

Step 4: In mid-year or at year-end, check your progress and make adjustments using the mid-year / year-end evaluation tool.

Facility and Maintenance Assessment

Step 1: Begin by reviewing and evaluating the current program year.

Some areas to consider		
<p>Handbook development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property policies • Furnishings policies • Maintenance schedules • Owner's manuals • Suppliers • Equipment list • Wiring map • Network map • Underground line map <p>Update handbook Insurance</p>	<p>Property care Work-day projects Fire code compliance: Smoke detectors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon monoxide detectors • Emergency lighting maintenance • Fire extinguisher maintenance <p>Parking lot care Landscaping and lawn care Storage facility Legal document file Kitchen committee</p>	<p>Supplies lists Parsonage Painting Future construction</p> <p>Schedule of replacements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office equipment • Outdoor equipment • Appliances • Computer equipment • Air conditioning units • Chancel furnishings • Hymnals

1. List the strengths of the current ministry program.

2. List the weaknesses of the current ministry program.

3. How can we build on our strengths?

4. How can we improve in those areas where we are weak?

5. What would you change in the current programs?

6. What new ideas might be tried during the next program years? (Keep in mind such things as member nurture, outreach, and assimilation.)

Step 2: Include all plans and activities with regard to the congregation's property, facilities, equipment, new construction, schedule workdays, inventory, etc.

Step 3: Do an action plan worksheet for each major project.

Step 4: In mid-year or at year-end, check your progress and make adjustments using the mid-year / year-end evaluation tool.

Program Plans for _____

Month	Program plans for 20__ - 20 __	Cost
January		
February		
March		
April		
May		
June		

July		
August		
September		
October		
November		
December		

Action Plan Worksheet

Goal:

Specific

Measurable

Action Oriented

Realistic

Time Oriented

Who is in charge?	What we will do?	Who will help?	What will we need?	When will we finish?

Mid-Year / Year-End Evaluation

This page may be used for some mid-course and end-of-year evaluation and correction. When we repeat a program, our goal is to do it better next time. Build on what is done well. Correct weaknesses. File this evaluation for future reference and make use of it for future improvement.

1. What mid-course corrections might we have made?
2. What elements in this plan were completed well?
3. What elements in this plan needed more attention?
4. What were the factors in numbers 2 and 3 above?
5. Were action plans completed for each major project?
6. Was enough lead time scheduled for planning and implementing each major effort or project?
7. Other thoughts or ideas:

Pastoral Feedback and Encouragement

A. Purpose

The main purpose for providing feedback to the pastor is to have a discussion that focuses on performance with the ultimate goal of improving the ministry. The evaluation is one part of a process to keep focus on continually improving ministry.

B. Process

The evaluation form should be administered in Christian love. Keep the following Bible verses in mind during the evaluation process:

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen” (Ephesians 4:29).

“Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work” (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

People will perform according to the messages you give them. The discussion during the evaluation process should focus on performance and use examples whenever possible. Keep the tone of the discussion positive. Compliment the individual in the appropriate areas, and provide suggestions for improvement in a manner that will build up and not tear down.

The evaluation form and discussion should be completed by the leaders of the congregation. The evaluation team should be a small group of one or two people, who will write the evaluation summary and then conduct the evaluation discussion. In most congregations this team will be the President, Vice President, an elder, a member with experience in the process, or a combination of them. Steps in the evaluation process include the following:

1. Select the evaluation team.
2. Set a timetable for the evaluation process.
3. The evaluation team gathers input from others. This can be as simple as discussions with other council or congregation members. A preferred process is to send a simple survey to a random group of congregation members seeking their written input to the process. Honor the confidentiality of those who provide input, unless you have permission to share the comment and source.
4. Ask the pastor also to complete an evaluation form.
5. The evaluation team gathers all the input, including the pastor’s evaluation, and then writes the evaluation.
6. Set up a private meeting with the pastor to discuss the results of the evaluation. The results should be kept confidential.
7. It is suggested that this process be done every year.

C. Annual Ministry Goals

In addition to completing the evaluation form, the annual pastoral evaluation process should include the setting of ministry goals for the next year and a review of progress on the ministry goals from the prior year. The pastor should establish 4-8 ministry goals. The goals would be discussed and agreed upon during the evaluation process. However, unlike the confidential evaluation, the goals may be shared with the church council or, in some cases, the entire congregation.

The goals should be:

1. To advance the ministry and improve performance
2. Measurable
3. Realistic/achievable
4. Controllable
5. Not routine things that will be done anyway

For example, an appropriate goal would be to make 20 neighborhood cold calls. This is measurable, controllable, realistic, and has the potential to advance the ministry. A goal to increase membership by 20 families would not be controllable. A goal to preach every Sunday would not be appropriate since that is done routinely anyway.

Goals may be carried over from one year to the next. The goal-setting process should be done every year to keep focus on continually improving the ministry and to be sure the called worker is adapting to changing conditions..

D. Summary

Keep the evaluation process positive. Conduct the evaluation in Christian love. Pray that the Lord will guide you and bless your work so that he will be praised and his kingdom advanced.

Member Survey for Pastor _____

In all of your responses to the questions posed below, please give prayerful consideration to your comments and please share your comments with a Christian spirit in mind.

1. Please list up to three (3) areas that you believe to be positives or strengths for Pastor. Please provide a short explanation for each strength that you have listed.
2. Please list 1 or 2 areas that you believe that Pastor could improve upon. Please provide a brief example or explanation for each suggestion. Please share this with the best interest of the kingdom and the worker in mind.
3. Please provide a brief summary of what you perceive as the strengths and/or weaknesses of your pastor's preaching.
4. Please briefly explain how Pastor relates to you and others of our congregation.
5. If you have any other comments or opinions you wish to express regarding how Pastor performs his duties, please do so at this time.
6. Please comment on how you perceive Pastor relates and works with other members of the staff. Please be brief.

We wish to express our appreciation for the time, thoughtfulness and prayerful consideration you have given to these questions. Please return the form in a sealed envelope addressed to:

May the Lord richly bless you!

May we use your comments? Yes No

Your name: _____

Pastoral Evaluation Form

Based on your experience, please evaluate Pastor _____ in the following areas:

1. Worship/Sermon

Some questions to help you formulate your comments:

Is the worship service planned well? Does it fulfill its purpose of proclaiming the gospel? Is the worship service clearly driven by confessional Lutheran principles? Is there variety in hymns and orders of service? Is it well led? Do the sermons present both law and gospel and apply to real life? Are they appropriate in length and delivered well? Do they leave the listener with an overall impression of God's love and forgiveness in Christ?

Please share a few sentences about your overall impression and thoughts regarding Worship/Sermon:

2. Bible Class/Instruction

Some questions to help you formulate your comments:

Are classes well prepared and organized? Are topics timely? Are questions and discussion handled well? Is material age- and audience-appropriate? Is it primarily spiritual in focus? Does it engage people?

Please share a few sentences about your overall impression and thoughts regarding Bible Class/Instruction:

3. Team/Leadership Skills

Some questions to help you formulate your comments:

Does he provide constructive input, listen to input from others, collaborate well with leaders, committees and staff, and follow through on action items? Does he hold himself accountable to the appropriate people, lead by example, exhibit judgment guided by the Scriptures? Does he promote the goals and missions of the congregation and synod? Can he adapt to change appropriately?

Please share a few sentences about your overall impression and thoughts regarding Team Leadership/Skills:

4. Social Skills/Personality

Some questions to help you formulate your comments:

Does he exhibit concern for others, express an evangelical approach, and maintain confidentiality? Does he dress/behave in ways that are appropriate to the situation? Is he approachable? Does he involve himself in the entire community that the congregation serves? Does he actively seek contact with members and prospects? Does he maintain an appropriate balance between “administrative time” and “people time”?

Please share a few sentences about your overall impression and thoughts regarding Social Skills/Personality:

5. Other

Some questions to help you formulate your comments:

Does he “manage his own household well” and is he a good husband/father example? Is there appropriate balance between personal, family, and professional priorities? Does he continue to grow in knowledge and skills for ministry and seek to be a better servant of Christ?

Please share a few sentences about your overall impression and thoughts:

Pastor: _____

Reviewer: _____

Date: _____

Review of Ministry Goals

Last year's goals:

- 1. **Outcomes**

- 2. **Outcomes**

- 3. **Outcomes**

- 4. **Outcomes**

- 5. **Outcomes**

Next year's goals:

- 1.

- 2.

- 3.

- 4.

- 5.

Guidelines for Congregational Reporting

From pastors to elders, church council, voters, and circuit pastor

Scriptural basis

We are accountable primarily to God for our actions and activities. This is a matter between the pastor and his Lord. See **Matthew 13:52; 1 Corinthians 4:2; 1 Timothy 4:15; 1 Peter 5:2,3.**

We are accountable to ourselves, to our families, and to our fellow pastors. We express this accountability individually as needs and opportunities arise. See **Acts 20:27; 2 Timothy 2:2 and 4:5.**

We are accountable to our calling body. See **Matthew 7:16, 17; 1 Corinthians 3:2; 2 Corinthians 6:3.**

Purpose and attitude in reporting

We understand and recognize that numbers in and of themselves are not the final measure of faithfulness or of success. Numbers should never to be used in an improper or unscriptural manner.

Numbers and statistics do give us the opportunity to celebrate God's blessings and to identify areas where improvement may be needed. Reports are delivered by pastors to their congregational members and leaders in the interest of transparency and full disclosure.

Reports are not cause for pride or boasting. Neither are they cause for defensiveness, negativity or cynicism. Reports are simply servant communication from a shepherd to his flock

Reports are a good way to seek encouragement, to strive for improvement in our ministries, to share joys and difficulties, to build support in the congregation, and to foster a transparent working relationship with the people served by the ministry.

Content

The following items are included in the congregation report:

- **Attendance information.** This includes totals or averages in worship and educational programs.
- **Offering and financial information.**
- **Pastoral duties.** Reported information includes visits, administrative time, time spent developing resources (bulletin, newsletter, flyers, etc.), and time spent preparing for sermons and Bible studies.
- **Official parish acts.** Include baptisms, weddings, funerals, members in and out, and members communed.
- **Space for comments and/or questions.**

Frequency

Congregation reports should be delivered monthly to elders, council, and other church leadership groups. Quarterly reports may be delivered to the voters' assembly and to the circuit pastor. A comprehensive annual report should be presented to the congregation and to the circuit pastor.

Congregation Report

Name of congregation _____

Month and Year _____

Vital statistics

(Report averages)

Weekend worship attendance: _____

Special service attendance: _____

Total weekly adult Bible study attendance: _____

Sunday school attendance: _____

Weekly offerings: _____

Official acts

(Report totals)

Members received

Child baptisms: _____

Adult baptisms: _____

Youth confirmations: _____

Adult confirmations: _____

Professions of faith: _____

Transfers in: _____

Members removed

Transfers out: _____

Releases: _____

Excommunications: _____

Deaths: _____

Net change in membership: _____

Weddings: _____

Christian funerals: _____

Current membership

Baptized members: _____

Communicant members: _____

Pastoral duties

Hospital visits: _____

Homebound (shut-in) visits: _____

Inactive member visits: _____

Other member visits: _____

Outreach visits to member prospects: _____

Cold-call outreach (canvassing) visits: _____

Total pastoral contacts: _____

Vacation

Vacation time taken this month: _____

Vacation time used year-to-date: _____

Vacation time remaining this year: _____

Notes and observations

Circuit matters:

District matters:

Synod matters:

Personal growth and development

Books I'm reading:

Courses I'm taking:

Devotional materials I'm using: