

INTRODUCTION

The contents of these pages express work that a Visionary Task Force engaged in over a period of fifteen months from February 2007 through August 2008. Members of this committee were Bob Curlen (chairperson), Karen Daubert, Carroll Granger, John Mancini, Nancy Oppedal, Christine Peck, Pastor Pensinger, and Pastor Yeiser. We also received invaluable assistance from Pastor Jack Hoffman as we were concluding this project. The intention of this task force was to study the history and traditions of St. Matthew, examine its ministry in the context of the greater Hanover area community and Lutheran church, assess St. Matthew's strengths and limitations, learn from members, staff, congregational groups, and church leaders about their hopes and concerns for the church's ministry, while always remaining open to where the Spirit might be leading us as a congregation. Consequently, much time was spent in prayer, study, reflection, conversation, and research. A prevailing question was, while utilizing the best from the past and present, how might St. Matthew Lutheran Church best move into the future in such a way that addresses and positively impacts, with the law/gospel, the reality of the world in which we live? Using the reaffirmed Vision for Mission statement we ask how can we, through the power of the Spirit, most effectively engage in "celebrating God's love, and serving in Jesus' name?"

The ensuing document is comprised of this introduction followed by four parts. Part One is a compendium statement that announces our vision for mission and lists six guiding principles that support our mission by briefly stating what it is that we are committed to doing as a body of Christ. This brief summary also includes a listing of supporting principles that may be utilized in growing the ministry and mission of our congregation. This compendium gives a helpful snapshot of what our concerns and objectives are as a congregation. Any persons who see a printed out version of it or read it on our website are treated to a capsule summary of what we are about as a Lutheran community of believers in Hanover, Pennsylvania. Part Two contains a more detailed listing of the goals of our congregation as they pertain to the six guiding principles already outlined. Part Three is a section in this report which deals with the steps to achieve the goals that have been laid out for St. Matthew Lutheran Church. Finally, in Part Four a brief description is provided which suggests responsibility and accountability to ensure that the steps to achieve these goals really are taken and the ministry and mission of our congregation are indeed enhanced.

There is a timeline in relation to the six guiding principles under the "goals" and "steps to achieve" sections of this report. In each case suggestions are made pertaining to the years 2008-2009 and then further out from 2010-2013. In this manner, while looking at the imminent future we also do not lose sight of where we might be moving in the more distant future. Of course, we remain open to the Spirit's prodding and stand ready to revise as we move ahead with our church's work. There will also be much happening in our congregation that is not suggested in this report simply because it is in effect now and does not need to be delineated here.

The Visionary Task Force wishes to thank all who contributed to this project. The committee acknowledges its utter dependence upon God for vision and mission.

PART ONE

VISION FOR MISSION

Guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit we are committed to **Celebrating God's love, Serving in Jesus' name.**

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

As a Christian community we are committed to utilizing the boundless energy, imagination, talent, and initiative of our congregation in the service of Jesus Christ:

--Through **Worship and Music** to inspire people with the joy, promise, and excitement of celebrating God's love, grace, and guidance for our lives;

--Through **Christian Education** to study God's word and the Christian tradition to equip us as disciples, serving in Jesus' name;

--Through **Evangelism** to create an outreach ministry to impact our congregation, community, and world;

--Through fellowship to nurture and grow our **Membership** with enriching and revitalizing programs for persons of all ages;

--Through fellowship to involve and empower our **Youth and Families**, as well as **Individuals**, to be current and future church leaders, serving in Jesus' name;

--Through **Social Ministry** to love our neighbor by seeking and addressing needs in our congregation, community, and world.

SUPPORTING PRINCIPLES

--Through **Finance, Stewardship, and Leadership** to use our time, talents, and treasures, striving to be good and faithful stewards;

--Through **Support Services** of communication, technology, and facilities to strive to keep the congregation, council, and staff better informed and updated;

--Through all of our **Ministries** to continually emphasize that we are a people empowered by the Holy Spirit to share God's love and grace throughout the congregation, community, and world.

PART TWO

GOALS OF ST. MATTHEW LUTHERAN CHURCH

Worship and Music

2008-2009

1) Continue learning new worship settings and using a variety of settings

2) Create a new worship service

3) Increase lay participation in worship services

4) Incorporate Children's Sermons on a regular basis

5) Continue to utilize technology to enhance worship experiences

6) Evaluate and present organ renovation needs

7) Affirm the countless acts of caring by St. Matthew members

PART THREE

STEPS TO ACHIEVE GOALS OF ST. MATTHEW LUTHERAN CHURCH

Worship and Music

2008-2009

1) Currently the congregation knows three settings in the ELW hymnal. Learn an additional setting or service at the discretion and leadership of the Pastors, Ministers of Music, and Worship and Music Committee. Continue educating congregation about liturgical additions and changes through more inclusive bulletins, informative newsletter articles, teaching services, temple talks, and Sunday school classes and/or forums that explain worship services.

2) The Associate Pastor and Associate Minister of Music, in consultation with the Senior Pastor, to develop a new service that will be presented to the Worship and Music Committee for recommendation to the church council.

3) Pastors, Ministers of Music, and activity heads annually review and edit (if necessary) job descriptions of lay worship participants such as ushers, lay readers, and acolytes. Recommend assigning of ushers at elevator lobby and portecochere entrances before worship services. Solicit participants in newsletters, bulletins, and time and talent survey sheets. Chairperson of each activity to train recruits.

4) Children's sermons to be preached at (at least) the 10:30 worship service on the third Sunday of each month by pastors, Minister of Christian Education, and perhaps trained laypersons. Extra service elements such as baptisms, dedications, and installations will not be held on these Sundays.

5) Keep the sound system updated. Recording options for DVD's will be available. Control panel to replace front pew by windows on the organ side. Minister of Music and Worship and Music Committee solicit and train technicians to run recording system.

6) Organ renovation task force to continue its work and make recommendations to the Finance Committee, council, and congregation on the awarding of a bid for the renovation of the organ, educating the congregation as to the needs of the organ, and helping organize funding for the renovation project.

7) Annually hold a service of Affirmation of Baptism to acknowledge acts of caring during worship service.

GOALS (con't)

Worship and Music

2010-2013

1) Explore a variety of worship opportunities

2) Continue to explore technology for greater exposure of the worship life of this church

3) Continue opportunities for ministerial staff and lay participation in community worship

4) Implement organ renovation plan

STEPS TO ACHIEVE (con't)

Worship and Music

2010-2013

1) To be considered are contemplative, contemporary, family, healing, and children and youth services or expressions inserted into current worship services. Worship services for special needs and occasions to be developed and offered by the ministerial staff as deemed to be necessary (blessing of pets) or expedient (crises such as 9/11).

2) Such things to be explored by the ministerial staff and Worship and Music Committee are DVD, video, television, power point, and web page opportunities to expose persons to worship experiences.

3) Pastors, AiMs and Minister of Music to extend services to local retirement villages and nursing homes as solicited by these institutions or as initiated by one or more of our staff in consultation with the whole ministerial staff.

4) Particular constituencies entrusted with the renovation of the organ to continue organ renovation plans as needed.

GOALS

Christian Education/Discovery Place

2008-2009

1) Hold small group bible studies for all, i.e. youth, skeptics, seekers, lapsed, returning, and active members

2) Publish a monthly Christian Education newsletter for Sunday Church School children

3) Continue to solicit preschool students, necessary staff, while addressing school space needs and resources

2010-2013

1) Host a special speakers' series that pertains to discipleship formation

2) Hold targeted group retreats

3) Produce additional all-Sunday school events

4) Study other Sunday school and preschool models

5) Train more laity in Christian Education leadership, especially for catechism classes

6) Host intergenerational events for SAW and on other occasions

7) Add computers in each classroom for downloading curriculum and class use

8) Begin feasibility study of starting a primary Lutheran parochial school

STEPS TO ACHIEVE

Christian Education/Discovery Place

2008-2009

1) Associate Pastor to create two new small groups. Other recommendations for small groups to be considered by the Senior Pastor and appropriate committees as needed.

2) Minister of Christian Education to organize with counsel from Parish Education Committee.

3) Director of Discovery Place, in consultation with preschool staff and board, to advertise for new students, hire additional staff, and work on classroom spacing and resources as needed.

2010-2013

1) Small task force under the supervision of the Parish Education Committee (PEC) to set up a program involving periodically hosting guest speakers to present forums at St. Matthew. Speakers may be solicited from Gettysburg seminary and college, various Lutheran agencies in south central Pennsylvania, Christian athletes, etc.

2) Retreats to address needs of various groups in our church distinguished by age, occupation, vocation, demographics and other factors to be held as deemed to be pertinent and helpful by the ministerial staff and/or PEC.

3) At least one event per year involving the entire Sunday Church School to be organized by the Minister of Christian Education and PEC.

4) Small groups of people solicited by the Minister of Christian Education and PEC and Discovery Place Preschool to visit other schools at least once a year.

5) Seminary interns may be helpful in leading our catechism program. Lay volunteers to be solicited by PEC and trained by the Minister of Christian Education.

6) Minister of Christian Education to organize and advertise intergenerational events in which members and friends of St. Matthew may participate.

7) PEC to advise staff and council to provide computers for classrooms.

8) PEC to prepare a proposal to council asking for the formation of a task force to consider starting a primary parochial school at St. Matthew.

GOALS

Membership, Fellowship and Evangelism

2008-2009

- 1) Work towards increasing church membership
- 2) Start increasing average worship attendance by at least 4% per year
- 3) Incorporate an annual Bring-a-Friend Sunday
- 4) Develop additional methods to enhance hospitality
- 5) Foster communication and cooperation with other churches in the community

2010-2013

- 1) Begin two new small groups each year (either ongoing or of short duration)
- 2) Equip a core group in evangelism skills
- 3) Explore additional opportunities for all-inclusive church activities
- 4) Host an annual Harvest Home Dinner

STEPS TO ACHIEVE

Membership, Fellowship and Evangelism

2008-2009

- 1) Advertise life of congregation in brochures, on website, in media, by letters and layperson visits to prospective members, and hold new member instruction on Sunday mornings or other times as needed.
- 2) Staff and volunteers to provide quality and meaningful worship services in a clean, safe, and friendly atmosphere.
- 3) Invite prospective and lapsed members to attend a Bring-a-Friend Sunday service and social as scheduled annually by the Evangelism Committee.
- 4) Evangelism Committee to improve direction signs within our buildings needed to make our buildings visitor friendly and to encourage all members to be warm, welcoming, and helpful with visitors and occasional attendees, while brainstorming other ways to enhance hospitality.
- 5) Rostered staff to participate, as able, in conference and ministerium meetings and appraise St. Matthew church constituencies of Lutheran and ecumenical ministries that could involve and/or impact St. Matthew Lutheran Church.

2010-2013

- 1) Evangelism Committee, in consultation with pastors, to start small groups that address spiritual and/or secular needs of church members. Committee to identify capable group leaders. Groups to be recommended by committee to council.
- 2) Pastors and committee members to recommend persons for synodically sponsored training events pertaining to evangelism.
- 3) Fellowship Committee to plan, organize and advertise quarterly fellowship events open to the entire congregation.
- 4) Evangelism and Fellowship Committees to collaborate on a fall benefit dinner open to the community for the purpose of raising money for charitable organizations/causes.

GOALS

Youth and Families

2008-2009

- 1) Define youth ministry responsibilities
- 2) Create youth bible study opportunities
- 3) Train two or three more lay-leaders for youth ministry
- 4) Expand milestone ministries

2010-2013

- 1) Develop staff for youth and family ministry
- 2) Host weekly fellowship meal for high school students
- 3) Hold elementary school activities once or twice per month
- 4) Focus on ways to connect with 120-150 or more youth
- 5) Develop parenting classes

STEPS TO ACHIEVE

Youth and Families

2008-2009

- 1) Associate Pastor and Youth Leadership Group to define youth ministry responsibilities.
- 2) Associate Pastor and designated persons to present bible study opportunities as desired.
- 3) Leaders to be trained by Associate Pastor and possibly by specialists at youth leadership-training events for adults.
- 4) Minister of Christian Education to plan and organize the blessings of respective items, and organize and implement a ministry of faith chests given to families at baptisms.

2010-2013

- 1) Associate Pastor and Youth Leadership Team, in consultation with Senior Pastor, to develop a proposal as to how to best staff our youth ministry for the purpose of growth.
- 2) Associate Pastor and/or youth adult leaders to host a weekly fellowship meal for high school youth either on or off church property.
- 3) Ministerial staff to plan and organize monthly or bi-monthly activities for elementary school students to facilitate fellowship and formation in the Christian faith.
- 4) Associate Pastor and the Youth Leadership Team to brainstorm, suggest, and implement programs to attract and engage more youth in our youth ministry program.
- 5) Youth Leadership Team to develop and present parenting classes for young families to be held periodically as desired.

GOALS

Social Ministry

2008-2009

- 1) Continue to strengthen St. Matthew's downtown program

- 2) Equip and send members to visit local retirement and nursing homes

- 3) Develop a crisis response plan for local and national disasters

- 4) Engage in cooperative efforts with other congregations and agencies for projects such as Habitat for Humanity/Thrivent and Hanover Area Council of Churches (HACC)

2010-2013

- 1) Explore the feasibility of starting and hosting an afterschool program

- 2) Consider hiring a parish nurse

- 3) Encourage mission trips

STEPS TO ACHIEVE

Social Ministry

2008-2009

- 1) Social Ministry Committee to explore outreach to Hispanic ministries, Changing Lives Shelter, and the Hanover Area Council of Churches.

- 2) Social Ministry Committee, in conjunction with the Ministerial staff, to solicit persons feeling called to minister to residents in local retirement and nursing homes, and to offer forums on how and what to do when visiting these facilities.

- 3) Social Ministry Committee to appoint a task force which will, in conjunction with the American Red Cross and other appropriate constituencies, develop a plan to have our facilities ready and prepared to house victims of local and national disasters, and to train willing church members to respond to needs in times of crises.

- 4) St. Matthew Thrivent leaders to advise Senior Pastor, Social Ministry Committee, and Church Council as to upcoming Habitat for Humanity/Thrivent work projects that our congregation might respond to through the stewardship of time, talents, and possessions. Opportunities to serve to be advertised in bulletins and newsletters.

2010-2013

- 1) Social Ministry Committee and Senior Pastor to appoint a task force to explore the feasibility of St. Matthew hosting an afterschool program. Task force to study other churches and the YWCA's efforts to hold such programs in our area. The program may be held on site or possibly off site at a community room at the Hanover Shoe apartment complex.

- 2) Social Ministry Committee to form a health and wellness task force to address possible health and wellness programs for St. Matthew Lutheran Church.

- 3) Social Ministry Committee to encourage and organize mission trips to areas of need.

GOALS

Finance, Stewardship, and Leadership

2008-2009

1) Emphasize that spiritual health leads to financial health

2) Implement organ renovation plans

3) Emphasize the annual fall stewardship campaign

4) Enhance use of time and talent survey sheets

5) Hold an annual volunteer recognition event

2010-2013

1) Develop a year-round stewardship emphasis

2) Reduce church debt

3) Staff our church for growth

STEPS TO ACHIEVE

Finance, Stewardship, and Leadership

2008-2009

1) Stewardship Committee and pastors to stress that spiritual health leads to financial health through temple talks, sermons, newsletter articles, and forums.

2) Proper constituencies to do legwork leading to potential congregational decision to renovate the organ. A systematic funding drive to pay for the renovation to be organized and implemented by council appointed task force suggesting three to five-year financing.

3) Stewardship Committee to study different annual stewardship drive campaigns and to lead the congregation in a challenging and positive campaign each fall.

4) Stewardship Committee to make certain that time and talent surveys are sent out and collected in an efficient manner (even with online accessibility), and that timely follow up occurs with persons who desire to get involved in ministries in which they are not currently scheduled.

5) Stewardship Committee to organize an annual event to be held in Fellowship Hall to honor church volunteers. This event may include food and entertainment.

2010-2013

1) Stewardship Committee to develop a program by which the lifting up of church members time, talents, and possessions occurs throughout the year in bulletins, newsletters, temple talks, bible study classes, and sermons.

2) Finance Committee to work towards developing an annual budget with only ten percent of the church's expenses being supported by the endowment. This committee is also to continue to stress accelerating mortgage reduction payments.

3) Church Council and Personnel Committee, in consultation with the pastors, to recommend calling a third pastor or other rostered staff with gifts and interest in evangelism.

GOALS

Communications and Technology

2008-2009

- 1) Foster a congregational atmosphere of open, honest, and loving communication between and among our members
- 2) Continue a technology review
- 3) Consider how current technology resources can best be provided

2010-2013

- 1) Continue an ongoing review of technology to enhance communication
- 2) Consider creating an internal/external publicity position

STEPS TO ACHIEVE

Communication and Technology

2008-2009

- 1) Pastors and Church Council through newsletter articles, temple talks, and other means of communication to encourage constructive goodwill communication throughout the congregation.
- 2) Staff and a Communications Systems Committee to recommend ways to evaluate and upgrade internet services, computers, software, and A/V equipment while remaining cognizant that this church needs to be about telling a story that makes our purpose for being a Christian community clear and specific while inspiring and challenging people.
- 3) Staff to consider merit of technological resources, and staff and Personnel Committee to ponder potential technology positions (volunteer or paid) at St. Matthew.

2010-2013

- 1) Staff to make more church communications available online, increase use of website and e-mail resources, and offer podcast services.
- 2) Staff and Personnel Committee to consider an internal/external publicity position filled by a volunteer, consultant, or reconfiguration of staff.

GOALS

Facilities

2008-2009

- 1) Paint and decorate classrooms

- 2) Develop and implement security plans

- 3) Develop and implement energy efficiency plans

2010-2013

- 1) Add an automatic door opener at the lobby elevator door entrance

- 2) Pursue the rose window renovation

- 3) Increase available parking places

- 4) Develop and begin implementing a master plan for facility repairs

STEPS TO ACHIEVE

Facilities

2008-2009

- 1) Minister of Christian Education and PEC to plan for the painting of two classrooms per year. Committee to advise Building Administrator and Property Committee on which rooms to be painted,

- 2) Property Committee, in conjunction with the Building Administrator, to improve outside lighting and add motion detectors.

- 3) Property Committee and Building Administrator to develop and recommend to council energy efficiency plans.

2010-2013

- 1) Property Committee and Building Administrator to explore the possibilities and recommend to council the purchase of an automatic door opener for the elevator lobby entrance.

- 2) Property Committee, in conjunction with Building Administrator, to secure bids for the renovation of the Rose Window and present them to Church Council with recommendations.

- 3) Property Committee and Building Administrator to explore additional parking options including the possibility of building an onsite parking garage.

- 4) Property Committee and Building Administrator to continue to develop and implement a master plan for short-term and long-term facility repairs.

PART FOUR

A concern expressed to the Visionary Task Force pertains to the implementation of this visionary project. Will the work of the committee and input of the congregation simply remain no more than mere words on paper?

To insure that this is not the case, the pastors, staff, and council are committed to carrying out the goals as listed in this report. Much of the work will be done by the standing committees of the church council. Note how the eight committees are all mentioned in this report as having key roles in helping the congregation achieve its goals. These committees are Christian Fellowship, Evangelism, Finance, Parish Education, Property, Social Ministry, Stewardship, and Worship and Music. Later this year each of these standing committees will develop ministry profiles listing the committee's needs, goals in relation to those needs, and steps to achieve the goals. The work of the VTF will be incorporated into these profiles as it pertains to each committee's ministry. In other words, there is a standing committee that relates to each of the "guiding principles" listed in this report and each of these committees will have built into its profile the goals and steps to achieve those goals that are listed in these pages. The Finance, Stewardship, and Property Committees will address the goals/steps that pertain to them listed under Supporting Principles. Some of our special committees such as the Discovery Place Preschool Board and Personnel will also play a role in the implementation of steps to achieve goals. Also, task forces will be created as mentioned above in regard to specific items in this report. Then, too, the Senior Pastor is committed to overseeing the whole process and making sure that the congregation moves along the suggested ways of "celebrating God's love, serving in Jesus' name." Finally, a Futures Committee will be appointed by the church council to help the senior pastor oversee the process and make sure that the above-mentioned goals are being achieved and within the time frame suggested. The Futures Committee will report to the congregation regularly throughout the year, including in the annual report. Staff, committees, and task forces will all be keeping the Futures Committee updated on progress that is being made or obstacles being encountered. The Futures Committee will also probe appropriate constituencies to make sure that they are keeping on task and/or receiving the help and resources they need to achieve their goals.

It is the hope and prayer of the Visionary Task Force that the goals in this report are met through the efforts of the entire St. Matthew church family. Many persons will come into play in helping to implement much that lies in this report. Together St. Matthew may find itself growing in ministry and mission while addressing the needs of its members, community, and world. We remember that through the Spirit all things are possible.