

MISSION/VISION/PLANNING 101

We understand the need for planning and visioning in the church.

There are many different styles and titles for planning.

I seek here to help clarify terms and steps toward creating an effective Mission/Vision/Strategic Plan

Mission Statement

Some congregations have a mission statement; a few sentences that talk about the mission of the church.

I like to think that God has a mission.

God's Mission statement is John 3:16-17

¹⁶“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”¹⁷“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

God's mission is to love and save the world. And God began that work in Jesus, continues that work in the world today, and calls us to be a part.

A congregation can have a mission statement, or a congregation can affirm God's mission in the world and be a partner to what God is up to.

Purpose Statement

A better way to think about who the church is can be to spend time thinking, praying, and studying the scripture to cultivate the purpose of the church, the purpose of this church. This idea is flushed out in Dave Daubert's Living Lutheran: Renewing Your Church.

It may sound simplistic to spend time studying and discussing the purpose of the church. We may assume that everyone know what the purpose of the church is. What we find out is that some people have no idea, some people have wrong ideas, and there are many ideas of the purpose of the church.

It is essential for every congregation to spend time looking at the work of the early church, especially in Acts, and think about the purpose of the church in today's world.

Purpose may change. Not often, but it could be generational, or reflect community.

Many congregation in the U.S, started with various purposes:

The purpose of the congregation is to be a community of faith and welcome to immigrating Germans, Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, Slovaks, etc

The purpose of this congregation is to be a gathering of Christians from a variety of backgrounds who are looking for a place to belong and have fellowship as they are along on the prairie.

And others: The purpose of this church is to be the religious and social center of the community.

Dave Daubert Questions

What is your congregation's current purpose?

How does your congregation's purpose relate to and differ from the purpose of the early Christian Church in Acts?

- 3) How has your purpose changed from generation to generation?
- 4) What is God's purpose for your congregation now?
- 5) How do we feel when it appears that the purpose of the congregation is changing from what we are comfortable with?

Guiding Principals

These are the core values that the congregation holds. These guide decision making. Often there are conflicting values and guiding principals. There are God's guiding principals, what God is doing and what God dreams we could be about AND what we are comfortable with and want to be doing. Guiding principals developed and agreed upon by the whole congregation, help give direction and facilitate decision making.

Guiding Principals hold true for a long period of time. They need to be revisited from time to time, but do not change much from year to year. They need to be tested when developed to see if they are true and accurate. Such is Dave Daubert's example of "everyone welcome".

Strategic Goals

Strategic Goals are for a shorter period of time, maybe yearly or for bigger plans a multi-year. They are to be more specific and in SMART Goal format.
SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE, ATTAINABLE, REALISTIC, TIMELY

Examples:

- 1) Goal - increase attendance by 5% in the next year
Test - SMART
Now plans have to be set in place with specific steps to meet the goal
Vs - stop people from leaving

- 2) Goal - Improve building environmental efficiency by 4% in the next Year
Test - SMART
Plans for—example
Vs - cut the heat bill

- 3) Goal - develop 3 new programs: one for children in the community – meeting at least once a month with a goal of ten, one for teenagers in the community - , and one for single parents, etc.
Test - SMART
Plans
Vs - we need new members