**Breakout Churches Report for Voters’ Meeting**

The Congregational Assistant Program of Messiah Lutheran hosted a Leadership Conference on April 24, 2016, led by Prof. Allen Sorum of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. In preparation for the conference our group went through a Bible study on Leadership as part of the Congregational Assistant Program curriculum.

The discussion at this conference led us to further studies that might allow Messiah Lutheran to uncover a vision of our gospel ministry for our community. Prof. Sorum recommended that we study the book Breakout Churches by Thom Rainer and meet with him again at the Congregational Assessment and Leadership seminary course he will teach at Holy Trinity Lutheran July 11-13, 2016.

A “breakout church” means one that experiences significant growth when it uncovers a vision of gospel ministry that fits its community.

Our CAP group has spent the months of May and June studying through the book. We have learned many things, more than we can list in this report.

To make it simple, Prof. Sorum suggested that where three things converge we will uncover our vision. The three things are: 1. The congregation’s niche 2. The pastor’s passion or niche and 3. The needs of our community.

To discover the congregation’s niche we have asked our members over the last two months: 1. What brought you to Messiah Lutheran? 2. What keeps you at Messiah Lutheran? 3. What’s your favorite memory of Messiah?

The result of this survey leads us to believe that our congregation’s niche is continuing education in the truth of God’s Word as taught in our WELS fellowship.

The pastor has identified his passion and niche as Christian education. He enjoys learning God’s Word and has pursued his own continuing education through our seminary’s summer quarter program. He enjoys teaching God’s Word to others.

It is more difficult to identify the needs of the community because our community has many needs. A few items stand out:

1. 71% of the people in our area do not attend church (the unchurched)
2. Larger churches in our area offer many small groups and programs for all kinds of needs, self-help, and various kinds of social ministry.
3. Our area is about 75% white; the largest minority population is Hispanic (10%)
4. Almost 50% of households in our area consist of married couples living together
5. The average family size is 2.99
6. The median age in Lacey is 34 years
7. The largest age group, about 30%, are those from 25-44 years old
8. JBLM is the second largest employer in Washington and looms large in our area
9. Most people moving here come from King and Pierce Counties
10. Our area features a lower cost of living and lower crime rates than Tacoma or Seattle

**What vision does this suggest for Messiah Lutheran?**

Page 2 for Leadership Retreat

In the middle of July Pastor Nitz attended the seminary summer quarter class “Congregational Assessment and Planning” taught by Prof. Allen Sorum.

Here are some insights from that class:

**What are components of a congregational assessment?***Vision (exists, already there, but we have to uncover it. The vision discovers you.)  
Group consensus, at beginning and at end, will involve tension and conflict, not all will agree;   
Consensus in unity of faith, love, and purpose  
Motivated people, through gospel but also seeing a vision to further gospel ministry  
Ownership of the vision, permission (empowerment, excitement)  
Leadership and the team  
Tactics (use this term instead of objectives)  
Optimism, confidence in the gospel  
Trust, the most important thing, trust the gospel, trust one another  
Intended results, what we can control (goals) vs. what God controls (results)  
How this fits into God’s plan  
Target, community, audience, whom will you reach, evangelistic objective*

What’s our personality? Heritage? What defines us? Strategic plan is about change, carrying out the new vision for the congregation. Identifying our uniqueness so that we can preserve it and share it. Challenges and failures. The fact that you’re talking about the future and need for some change implies that you had a failure and needed to change to overcome it. The leader brings wisdom to the process.

*Where We Go From Here* **How would you like to help?**

**Community Profile** *Community Needs Analysis – “What are the needs of this community?”  
  
1. Demographics  
2. Results of the Ethnographic Interview (resource 16, interview with a neighbor)   
3. Talk to government officials   
4. Talk to vice principals of area schools (those dealing with discipline) (Kristi)  
5. Talk to vendors, real estate agents, hair dressers, etc. who are your customers, what are they talking about?  
6. Talk to local pastors, churches  
7. Define your parish map, ministry area (census.gov, but info is old)  
8. Signage, visibility  
9. Marketing (logo etc.)*

**Congregation Profile** Surveys #1, #2, #3 currently encouraging members to fill this out.

*Then produce a nicely printed Congregational Report that includes,  
1. 25 year graph of membership growth or decline   
2. Percentage of involvement in worship, Bible study etc.   
3. Member demographics   
4. Giving assets, budget   
5. Percentage of members in active role   
6. Visitors   
7. Tenure of called workers   
8. Current programs*