

Mt. Carmel
LUTHERAN CHURCH

MOUNT CARMEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

2019 – 2022 STRATEGIC PLAN

AS OF MAY 31, 2019

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Process

Mount Carmel Lutheran Church (“Mt. Carmel”) worked with Turning West, Inc., a professional consulting firm, on creating shared Values, Mission, Vision and Strategic Plan. It is important to note that the entire congregation was invited to provide their initial and secondary input throughout this process. This was not the work of one group of people. The congregation council reviewed and refined the congregation’s input and presented proposals to the congregation for further revision and reflection. The Strategic Planning Team formed consists of the Mt. Carmel Congregation Council members.

A Norms Team was formed to assess past and current norms in the culture, discern which are contributing to healthy behaviors and which are contributing to dysfunction. The Norms Team created strategies to eliminate unhealthy norms and developed a plan to implement new healthy norms in the system. The Norms Team obtained input provided by the congregation during Congregational Gatherings. The team then performed a detailed analysis and assessment and developed a plan of implementation. The Norms Team is comprised of Marilyn Brown, Kevin Dong, John Keisler, Jackie Kinsey, and Pastor Richard Rollefson. Phil Twomey, Joan Pedersen, Kathy Towle, Karen Almas, Kathleen Gremel and Claudia Coughran have also served on the Norms Team.

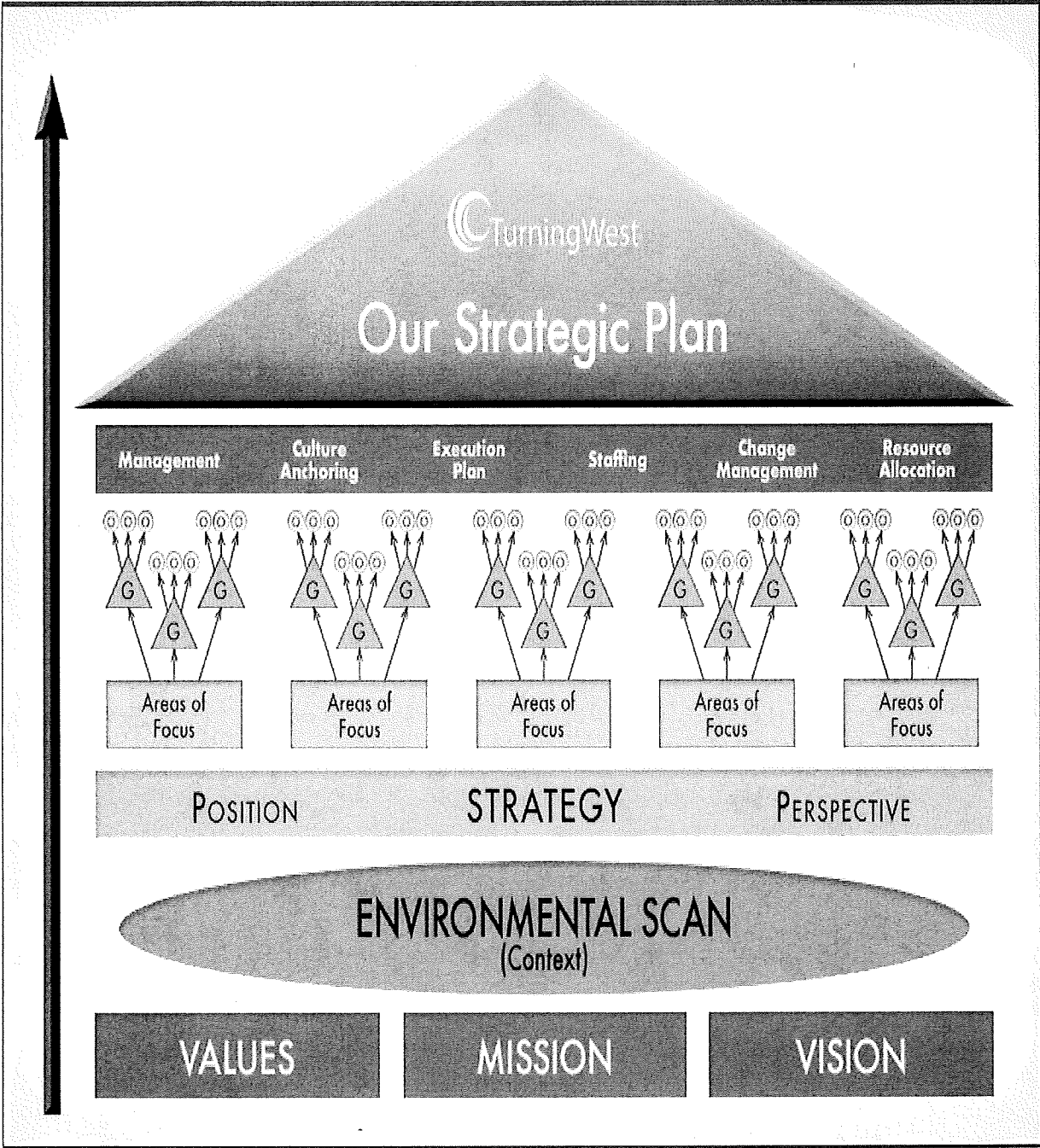
A Community Building Team was formed. It consists of Nancy Priddy, Steve Bennett, Marc Frey, Bob Grosse, Carlyn Hinds, Rebecca Keisler, Diane Mansell, Marshall Pihl, Dave Parkinson, Matt Schultze, and Jan Uder.

Congregational Gatherings were held at Mt. Carmel

Congregational gatherings were held at Mt. Carmel on November 2, 2018, January 12, 2019, and February 2, 2019, and April 14, 2019. All Mt. Carmel congregation members were invited and encouraged to participate in these gatherings to give their input on creating our Values, Mission, Vision and the Strategic Plan.

Council was available during Adult Forum time on September 30, 2018 and October 14, 2018 for open discussion about Mt. Carmel’s plan to re-engage with Turning West, and to answer questions and address concerns.

Turning West Strategic Plan Diagram:



Organization Culture: Our Shared Values, Mission, and Vision as Created and Revised by the Congregation

OUR SHARED VALUES

1. **Fellowship:** Building a respectful, inclusive community that embraces Christ.
2. **Grace:** Just as God has loved us unconditionally, we strive to treat one another with unconditional positive regard.
3. **Service:** God's work, our hands: ecumenical action in addition to donating funds.
4. **Lifelong Learning:** Deepening our relationship with Jesus Christ and understanding how we can actively live our faith.
5. **Loving Accountability:** Speaking the truth in love in all things and listening to each other with love.
6. **Christ-centered:** Striving to have our behaviors and decisions reflect what Jesus would do.
7. **Loving/Caring:** Heartfelt, genuine kindness and concern toward one another.

OUR SHARED MISSION

Celebrating God's grace through worship, learning and service

OUR SHARED VISION

A Lutheran community, rejoicing in Christ, growing in faith, active in love

Our Strategic Plan as created by the Congregation

The Congregation members gave their input and ideas for the Strategic Plan to the Strategic Planning Team (Council). The Strategic Planning Team worked with that input from the Congregation and made some refinements to develop the Strategic Plan.

Environmental Scan

As discussed at our February 2, 2019 Congregational gathering, your Congregation Council performed an environmental scan in order to take stock of our internal and external environment, as part of the strategic planning process.

Who or what was reviewed?

Members of your Council interviewed people throughout our community and synod regarding children of all ages including preschool, teens, and adults including seniors. Additionally, review of the ELCA website and a conversation with Pr. Marj Funk-Pihl regarding trends evident in thriving congregations were conducted.

What are the most important things we heard in the interviews/reviews?

- *Thriving congregations intentionally focus on **relationships**, not programs. “No one comes to a church because of a program. They come because of a relationship.”*
- *Thriving congregations have strong **relationships** with God, strong **relationships** with each other, and strong **relationships** with community.*
- *Thriving congregations recognize the way they manage disagreement impacts how change will be accepted and intentionally plan accordingly.*
- *A solid Lutheran/Christian education and foundation, provided by qualified leaders, teachers, and mentors, is so important in the development of our youth as we guide them along on their faith journey.*
- *Developing strong interpersonal **relationships** is so important. Communication, listening, empathy, caring, trust, and seeking to understand one another are important in the development of **relationships**.*
- *The youth of today will eventually become the future of the church. If properly nurtured in Christian faith and education, the youth will grow up to be the adult members/ministry leaders/lay leaders of our church in the future.*
- *“Rebuilding” their children and teen programs seems to be a common theme through all the denominations interviewed. (Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Methodist)*

- *A local thriving preschool is interested in partnering with Mt. Carmel to provide music, special interest, and volunteering opportunities to their children.*
- *By 2040, over 25% of the U. S. population will be over 65. Currently, the average age within an ELCA congregation is 55.*
- *In SLO County, 38% of all seniors (65+) do not have enough income to meet their most basic needs. 27% of these seniors do not qualify for assistance or support programs.*
- *SLO County ranks 8th in CA counties for the number of “hidden poor”, many of whom are seniors.*
- *Many seniors, even those who are financially secure, suffer from isolation and depression.*
- *When creating a balanced program for a senior adult ministry, use the 5 S’s – Spiritual, Study, Service, Social, and Self.*
- *SLO County has a resource guide for seniors that is very comprehensive.*

Why are these important?

We are starting to get a better picture of what is working in our community and what is not. Traditional church programs are not meeting the community needs in terms of children, youth, young adults, and seniors. Continuing to provide the same programs without building strong relationships inside and outside our building will continue to yield the same results, regardless of the denomination. The most effective churches in our community, from website analysis, are building relationships first, and then creating programs connected to the people they serve rather than the other way around. As Pr. Marj Funk-Pihl said, “No one comes to a church for a program; they come because of a relationship.”

How might Mt. Carmel utilize this information?

Collaboration and relationship are central themes throughout these interviews. The strategic planning process currently taking place is the right time to shift priorities and rethink how we do things. We want to seek collaborative dialogue with the congregation and welcome divergent ideas regarding our ministry teams. Consideration to reworking the ministry teams to better connect with the current realities in our community is highly recommended. This might entail considering how the current teams can be reworked in light of these findings, including the possible elimination of some teams and the creation of new teams. It may include collaborating with other churches in town in both program and activities so that the children and youth of San Luis Obispo have opportunity to learn about God’s love through multid denominational perspectives. It most definitely will mean looking “outside the box” at what we do and how we do it so that we can take on this reformation with fresh eyes.

In order to provide a thorough view of our community, interviews connected to college ministry, large non-denominational churches with thriving kids programs (such as Mountainbrook, Grace, and Agape), and social action needs are recommended. Further research is needed as we move forward.

Our Strategy

Sharing God's unconditional love by partnering with the community to serve the community

Our position is "Sharing God's unconditional love".

Our perspective is "by partnering with the community to service the community".

Strategic Areas of Focus

Worship - Goals

1. Create opportunities to worship with others

- Continue Holy Week service with Methodists
- Interfaith worship- create several opportunities - one opportunity in 2019 and at least two opportunities in each year 2020 & 2021.

2. Take worship outside our walls

- Ecumenical worship during Holy Week
- Worship service for the homeless
- Service at the shore in summer
- Blessing of the animals service – October

3. Invite people from the outside congregation inside

- Invite preschool children to make decorations
- Explore possibilities for special music & other events and report back to council.
- Music outreach through musicians –explore possibilities for special music and report back to council by end of 2019

Adult Ministry- Goals

- 1. Promote interfaith education/dialogue**
 - Advertise adult forum on interfaith issues
 - Education/dialogue – interfaith series
 - Research other faith groups & determine with whom we may want to create partnerships
- 2. Create a solution for a specific challenge for local seniors**
 - Assemble team to research senior needs & services
 - Transportation needs here at Mt. Carmel
- 3. Provide opportunities for honest conversation about sensitive topics**
 - Create team to address and implement this.
(Parking lot of possible topics: Talking to kids about sex, legal marijuana, transgender, racism, abortion, immigration, how do we have a conversation with a politically different neighbor, and other topics.)
 - Possibly partner with others
- 4. Create music concert series**
 - Bring in outside musicians, invite the community -September 2019, January 2020 & March 2020

CAT & LCM – Youth/Children, Teens & College - Goals

- 1. LCM Team Researching Pathway Forward. Partnership possibilities?**
(LCM is Lutheran Campus Ministry)
- 2. VBS –Vacation Bible School - Look into opportunities for VBS partnerships for future**
- 3. Parents' Night Out**
 - Hold at least one parents' night out in 2019 and one to two events in each year 2020 and 2021.
- 4. Launch Sunday School in Fall 2019.**
 - Explore possibilities of partnering with the community in future.
- 5. Ask CAT Team (CAT is Children and Teens) to look at creating intentional partnerships that have regularity.**
- 6. Continue doing service projects - Do 3 activities in a year, partnering with a community organization to meet a need.**

Financial - Goals

- 1. Create a fundraising calendar – for purpose of balance**
 - Explore Thrivent opportunities for raising funds
- 2. Create partnership opportunities – shared funding. Maximize impact of program and minimize costs.**
 - LCM (Lutheran Campus/College Ministry)
 - Youth ministry
- 3. Create 3 external fundraisers with other groups**
 - Do research and then determine what to pursue
- 4. Consider annual budget needs for next year by June**
- 5. Do a robust stewardship campaign in Fall 2019 to focus on the mission, vision, values and strategic plan**

Volunteer Leadership – Goals

- 1. Identification and recruitment of volunteers**
 - Do asset mapping & discern volunteer leadership needs & present finding to Council.
 - Education
 - Review our written procedures in context of our strategic planning
 - Recognition and appreciation of volunteers
 - Seek a volunteer coordinator