

Faithfully Living Crossroads Team

Recommendations

to the
Graciously Delivering Crossroads Team

November 20, 2016



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Report from Faithfully Living Crossroads Team to Graciously Delivering Crossroads Team

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Introduction

Our charge: The Faithfully Living Crossroads team convened in early June 2016. Our assignment, as stated in the leaflet *TLC Crossroads—An Overview*, was:

- » “to consider our vision and values as they are made real through our ministries and worship life. As a result, we will discern and affirm our sense of what God desires from us and for us now.” (*front page*)
- » to “review and assess how the congregation of Trinity Lutheran Church (TLC) is living God’s mission in our worship, ministries, and values.” (*“Purpose”, page 3*)
- » to “prepare a report on TLC’s spiritual and operative practices, strengths, and needs, including descriptions of their review and assessment of:
 - › “the stated vision and values of TLC as we live God’s mission”;
 - › “the worship life of TLC as it is practiced through or multiple worship locations”; and
 - › “the ministries of TLC as they relate to children, youth, families, and adults, in the church, our neighborhoods, and beyond.” (*“What Will the Work Group Be Doing?”, page 3*)

Our actions: The Faithfully Living team began with prayer and scripture study, times of sharing about ourselves and analysis and evaluation of Trinity Lutheran Church vision materials.

- » We researched what “vision and mission” mean and sampled how they are actualized in church and business contexts.
- » We invited a wider circle of people to comment on the standard TLC vision materials printed, for example, at the front of the annual *Who We Are & What We Are Doing* report to the congregation; 34 people responded in writing.
- » We summarized what we learned from this in a late-August report to the joint Crossroads teams and council (Appendix A).
- » Our work culminated in a ten-question inventory we prepared and administered to TLC services on September 25 with some follow-up through October 2, 2016. *The inventory provided a kind of snapshot of people on a typical Sunday—270 of our 325 respondents were reporting from our four primary worship services on a Sunday when combined attendance was recorded at 379, so we heard from about 71% of worshipers that day. We are grateful to TLC member Janet Bobo for professionally analyzing the inventory data (full 11-page report .pdf attachment; narrative summary Appendix B). We depended on her work for the conclusions and recommendations that follow.*

Recommendations from Faithfully Living Team–Summary

*This page includes only brief statements of our recommendations.
Be sure to consult the supporting material from the inventories
and further details about our recommendations
that are presented on the following pages.*

- 1. Recommendations based on the ages of inventory respondents:**
 - 1a. New leadership must be committed to shifting the congregation’s culture so that we innovate and change to engage younger people.
 - 1b. The in-house pastoral care ministry should be expanded in two directions to meet growing demand from persons over 60 years old and from the underserved persons 18-59 years old.

- 2. Recommendations based on the levels of support for current experiences:**
 - 2a. Things are perceived as going well, so new leadership should preserve that and build on it.
 - 2b. New leadership should be educated and expert in organizational structure and management.

- 3. Recommendations based on assessment of vision statements:**
 - 3a. The vision statement should be rewritten for several reasons.
 - 3b. The rewritten statement should be explicitly Christian, strong, clear, concise, and general.

- 4. Recommendations based on support for current worship services:**
 - 4a. The variety of worship services is currently appreciated and effective and should be continued.

Recommendations from Faithfully Living Team

1. Recommendations based on the ages of respondents

Background supporting these recommendations:

- The inventory showed that participants in Trinity Lutheran Church worship services are predominantly over 60 years old. 315 respondents (out of 325) answered the age question, with the following results:

0-19 years	43 respondents (<i>targeted at WAY student ministries events</i>)
20-29 years	3 respondents
30-39 years	11 respondents
40-49 years	27 respondents
50-59 years	45 respondents
60-69 years	71 respondents
70-79 years	65 respondents
80-89 years	44 respondents
90+ years	6 respondents
- *In sum, 14% of respondents were 19 or younger; 27% of respondents were between ages 20-59; and 59% of respondents were over 60.*
- *The most dissatisfied respondents to every question were the individuals between ages 20-59.*

Thus, based on age findings, the Faithfully Living Crossroads Team recommends:

- 1a. New leadership must be committed to shifting the congregation's culture so that we innovate and change to engage younger people.** The ministry position description would include the following recommended requirements:
 - » personality and training similar to what mission developers receive ("mission developer" is an ELCA program category);
 - » communication skills in technology/social media; and
 - » commitment to developmental faith formation for ages 18-59.
 - » We do not think community organizing training is as necessary as these other dimensions because TLC ministries that serve the community already exist and flourish.
- 1b. The in-house pastoral care ministry should be expanded in two directions.** The Pastoral Care Ministers provide a unique and precious ministry at TLC, along with the cadre of Stephen Ministers. Leadership should help these ministries focus on increasing the number of both PCMs and Stephen Ministers to better serve:
 - » growing demand from the growing number of persons over 60; and
 - » the underserved needs of the 18-59 year-olds.

2. Recommendations based on the levels of support for current experiences

Background supporting these recommendations:

- » All ten statements on the inventory received high levels of agreement and strong agreement.
- » In order of most strongly supported to less strongly-supported, the statements are:
 - › Overall, our church serves the community well—36% strongly agree, 57% agree.
 - › Worship at our church inspires responses of love and gratitude toward God, other people, and creation—42% strongly agree, 48% agree.
 - › Our church is welcoming and open to all—39% strongly agree, 48% agree.
 - › Overall, the pastors, staff, and lay leaders of our church are responsive—36% strongly agree, 50% agree.
 - › There is a group of people at church with whom I belong, where I feel safe and loved—38% strongly agree, 43% agree.
 - › Overall, we offer effective Christian faith formation for all ages—18% strongly agree, 59% agree.
 - › Our church organization has an accountable structure that effectively develops and empowers ministries—19% strongly agree, 50% agree.
 - ▶ *However, only 30% of the congregation council—who, it might be maintained, have special insight into this area—agreed with this statement; no council members agreed strongly; 10% were neutral; 40% disagreed; and 20% strongly disagreed.*
 - › Our church helps me recognize my gifts and invites me to use them—19% strongly agree, 44% agree.

Thus, based on current support, the Faithfully Living Crossroads Team recommends:

- 2a. **Things are perceived as going well, so new leadership should preserve that and build on it.** The new leadership cannot be a complete change agent. They should be willing to move forward while embracing the status quo.
- 2b. **The new leadership should be educated and expert in organizational structure and management.** They will embrace what's working well and do strategic planning for resources and staffing, on behalf of both the younger population (now missing) and the older (currently present). They will need to carry out details on the ground not singlehandedly but through collaboration with staff and volunteers. They will offer and make use of goals, accountability, and strategic planning. They will be able to coordinate multiple aspects of TLC under a unifying statement that resonates with a large group of participants; for example, they will tie stewardship to the vision of the church, the good work of the status quo, and the new ministries going forward.

3. Recommendation based on assessment of vision statement

Background supporting these recommendations:

- The statistical analysis from the inventories indicates that the majority of people are satisfied or more than satisfied with the vision statement(s) (77% strongly agree/agree with the current vision statement, "We manifest God's dream..." and 66% strongly agree/agree that the Crossroads Logo expresses their experience, "Unique Journeys + Traveled Together + Immersed in Grace.)
- However, with deeper, prayerful analysis and discernment the team believes the statements as written are cumbersome and difficult to apply, therefore not an accurate reflection of current practices and future hopes. If a new guest or someone from the community at large or a different congregation read these statements, they probably would think they were beautiful, but not have a clear, accurate portrayal of life on the ground at Trinity; they wouldn't fully grasp Trinity's beliefs and practices from them.
- Moreover, the data show that, alongside the satisfaction of most respondents, some respondents expressed misunderstandings of and serious disagreements with the vision statements. For example, some parts were obscure to people who weren't aware of TLC's history (such as words describing the comeback after the fire). See especially Appendix A that reports themes from the lengthy comments made on the vision statements in August 2016.
- The most consistently-mentioned critique of existing statements was the lack of reference to God and Jesus the Christ.

Thus, based on assessment of the vision statement, the Faithfully Living Crossroads Team recommends:

3a. The vision statement should be rewritten for the following reasons:

- » to name the Triune God as our center;
- » to more accurately reflect our current values and lived faith;
- » to become something that can be shared easily with people searching for a faith community or even just a place to rest and recharge in a lonely, chaotic world;
- » to become something people can embrace, memorize, and repeat for their own growth in faith and in order to share their hearts with others.
- » to provide clear direction for calling pastor(s) and other ministers, hiring staff, recruiting volunteers;
- » to focus on the strong center and dynamic freedom of TLC ministries in a way that speaks to new guests and seasoned ministry participants.

3b. The rewritten statement should be explicitly Christian, strong, clear, concise, and general (the more specific it is, the more it brings in some and excludes others).

4. Recommendation based on support for current worship services

Background supporting these recommendations:

Levels of agreement for the statement, "Worship at our church inspires responses of love and gratitude toward God, other people, and creation," range as follows:

At 7:45 AM at Trinity-Lynnwood:

84% strongly agree/agree; 16% are neutral; and 0% disagree/strongly disagree.

At 9:00 AM at Trinity-Lynnwood:

89% strongly agree/agree; 10% are neutral; and 1% disagree/strongly disagree.

At 10:30 AM at Trinity-Lynnwood:

95% strongly agree/agree; 5% are neutral; and 0% disagree/strongly disagree.

At Pointe of Grace:

100% strongly agree/agree.

At Fairwinds:

100% strongly agree.

At the WAY student ministries:

85% strongly agree/agree; 8% are neutral; and 8% disagree/strongly disagree.

Thus, based on satisfaction with current worship services, the Faithfully Living Crossroads Team recommends:

- 4a. The variety of worship services is currently appreciated and effective and should be continued.**

Closing

We are at the “Crossroads” and as such can choose many different directions reflecting the many different viewpoints in our diverse, energetic community. Informed by the Holy Spirit, humbled by knowing that at times we will falter, we submit our report as a living, organic document, in the prayerful hope that this is only the initial stop on a longer journey of review, reevaluation, and discernment.

We continue our openness to new data and viewpoints from all. We are encouraged to reflect further on complex issues. One of these may be the seeming paradox of the statistical outcomes regarding the vision statements vis-à-vis the discerned need for changing the vision statements.

Thank you for your prayerful attention to the above and your faith filled work going forward on behalf of this beloved community and God, our true guide.

Appendix A

From: Faithfully Living Team (Laura Crawford and Marilyn Hall, primary researchers in this phase; report written largely by Laura Crawford)

To: Joint Crossroads teams and council

Re: What we have learned to date (August 27, 2016) from written responses to TLC printed vision materials

As we enter into this time of "Crossroads," the Faithfully Living team is in part tasked with discerning and evaluating whether our current mission statement and values and likes currently and accurately reflect the mission of Trinity and Pointe of Grace.

In other words, do the values, likes, and mission statement clearly and cogently express what is actually happening on the ground, and equally as important, do they reflect what is in the heart of the congregation as a future mission of the church?

A preliminary and critical step in this process is to assess what the congregation currently believes. Moreover, does the congregation think/believe that the current mission statement as written and the values are clear, cogent and tell the true narrative of Trinity and Pointe of Grace?

In order to assess this question in an unbiased fashion a survey was written and distributed. Some general themes emerged from the survey as well as some specific ideas and concerns.

Without ignoring the value of the specifics, the general themes shall be expressed below:

- 1) The current values and mission statement need to be re-written to more accurately reflect the congregations today and they are confusing as written. This is however, not unanimous. A **minority** view is not to change a thing.
- 2) A second theme is that there is no consensus. There are many divergent and diverse views on the same topic.
- 3) A third theme that emerged centered on the statement that "we have all that we need." Several individuals disagreed with this statement and it speaks to people's feelings of lack; lack of resources, finances, as well as spiritual lack.
- 4) A fourth theme referred to by several people was the lack of reference to the God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit in the vision statement, or values.
- 5) The final theme is more work needs to be done gathering ideas.
 - a. The survey only represents 32 (eventually 34) people's views.
 - b. A second survey could capture the views of more people and more accurately represent the congregations' views.

- c. A second survey would be more narrow and concrete in order to be more measurable and address twofold:
 - i. What is the current pulse of Trinity/Pointe of Grace? We are in the role of doctors checking on and measuring the status quo.
 - ii. The second survey would capture the role of mission and vision for Trinity/Pointe of Grace. What is the big picture? Who do we strive to be and why? How do we define ourselves currently and going forward as a living, changing, growing people of God?

Some of the demographics and statistics about those who responded:

1. Out of 32, only 2 from Pointe of Grace responded (we don't know how many of them got the survey).
2. Worship time:
7:45 was 7 9am, 16 10:30, 7 Pointe of Grace, 2
3. Age Range: Maybe new survey could be on line, and emailed?
0-19: 0
20-29: 0
30-39: 0
40-49: 2
50-59: 3
60-69: 10
70-79: 11
80-89: 5 with others not noting age
4. In our Values:
We are not afraid of your pain: 5 disagree, 3 ? (question it)
Give it away: 4 disagree, 2 ?
Permission given...take initiative: 5 disagree, 2 ?
It's just a building: 11 disagree, 3 question

In the end, we want to give voice to comments that people wrote. We want to give you the sense of their concerns. We did not repeat ones that we heard repeatedly, and will give a number for the times we read that type of comment. (*Ed. note: Numbers were not always given.*)

1. I'm increasingly thinking of our congregations in terms of "teams" with each of us having a responsibility to find our individual gifts and using those gifts to strengthen our congregation's ability to achieve its "team goals" of carrying out God's work. We learn from each other, and at the same time teach each other the benefits of being communities of faith.
2. Jesus Christ is not mentioned at all. Some would think it strange since seeing Jesus behind/in these words is like seeing Jesus behind all I am/do. (8xs)
3. We need more fellowship.

4. Where do we ask our questions? (repeated 4xs in others)
5. Where are children/teens integrated or are they siloed?
6. Overall, if we care about something, we need to put it into action.
7. We fail to connect with children/teens. (Need more technology to connect. Blogs? Info on the website?)
8. We agree with diversity, but we are not diverse in our people.
9. People need a clear invitation to participate.
10. We are a people that need a building to function.
11. Love needs to be the core value.
12. How do we identify/equip/integrate members into our "teams"?
13. Our approach does not naturally follow from the vision.
14. How, where, when do we carry out the vision?
15. We are clear about the vision and on the right track.
16. "God has already given us what we need" leaves too much to interpretation.

Appendix B

Memo to: Trinity Lutheran Church Council at their Oct. 11, 2016, meeting

From: Faithfully Living Crossroads Team

Re: Themes from the 10-Question Inventories completed Sept. 25-Oct. 2, 2016

We received 325 questionnaires with useable responses to 3 or more questions. 275 (85%) of the 325 respondents completed all ten questions without selecting the "Don't Understand/Lack Information" option. The real, illustrative interpretations of the data are provided by Janet Bobo through her thoughtful, hard work. Janet is a Trinity-Lynnwood member, a professional statistician who volunteered to interpret the data once she saw the inventory—she called it "elegant." Without her the inventory would be just that—an inventory, without any expert analysis and applied professional skill. Janet's compilations speak for themselves and are available as a separate 11-page handout.

The team hopes that the inventories will be used as a work in progress, or living document, and that the council meeting is just the first of many times where the inventories are used (1) to deepen our understanding of life at Trinity and (2) to help us move forward with an openness to change as new interpretative analysis unfolds.

For purposes of this summary, "Trinity" refers to the respondents from all worship services on both campuses, Fairwinds Brighton Court, and the youth groups.

The Faithfully Living team was charged with taking the pulse of Trinity— assessing how things are going now and what, if anything, needs to change. As a part of our evaluation, we wanted to examine the vision statement(s) and whether they represent Trinity accurately and how they find expression in our faith life "on the ground."

Here are some general themes that emerged for us:

1. The majority of Trinity are people over 60. The number of people between 20-29 taking the inventory was very small, just 3. The number of people between 30-39 taking the inventory was just 11.
Because we targeted the NET and ZOE student ministries, we heard from 43 people ages 0-19 (students) (14% of respondents). There were 86 people ages 20-59 (employed and/or parenting) (27% of respondents). But there were 186 people over 60 (retired or approaching retirement) (59% of respondents).
This raises questions about what initiatives we could take to increase the full participation of younger people as church.
2. The statements most-supported to least-supported were:
 - 1) Overall, our church serves the community well. (Question 2)
(93% strongly agree/agree, 5% neutral, 3% disagree/strongly disagree)
 - 2) Worship at our church inspires responses of love and gratitude toward God, other people, and creation. (Question 5)
(90% strongly agree/agree, 8% neutral, 1% disagree/strongly disagree)

- 3) Our church is welcoming and open to all. (Question 1)
(87% strongly agree/agree, 8% neutral, 5% disagree/strongly disagree)
- 4) Overall, the pastors, staff, and lay leaders of our church are responsive.
(86% strongly agree/agree, 12% neutral, 3% disagree/strongly disagree)
- 5) There is a group of people at church with whom I belong, where I feel safe and loved.
(Question 3)
(81% strongly agree/agree, 15% neutral, 4% disagree/strongly disagree)
- 6) As our current vision statement says, "We manifest God's dream as a community that makes space for people to recognize what God is doing to meet the deep needs of the world, and discover and assume their unique roles in partnership with God." (Question 9)
(77% strongly agree/agree, 20% neutral, 3% disagree/strongly disagree)
- 7) Overall, we offer effective Christian faith formation for all ages. (Question 8)
(77% strongly agree/agree, 14% neutral, 9% disagree/strongly disagree)
- 8) Our church organization has an accountable structure that effectively develops and empowers ministries. (Question 7)
(69% strongly agree/agree, 21% neutral, 10% disagree/strongly disagree)
- 9) The Crossroads logo expresses my experience of this church: "Unique Journeys + Traveled Together + Immersed in Grace" (Question 10)
(66% strongly agree/agree, 30% neutral, 4% disagree/strongly disagree)
- 10) Our church helps me recognize my gifts and invites me to use them. (Question 4)
(63% strongly agree/agree, 31% neutral, 5% disagree/strongly disagree)

The inventory responses give us a basis to look at what's going well and what needs attention for improvement. The most dissatisfied respondents, in every category, were the individuals between 20-59.

3. In the judgement of the Faithfully Living team, there is a disconnect between the results of the inventory, reflecting the life and culture of the church, and what is stated in the vision statement(s). We believe the vision statement needs to be reconceived.
4. There were not many examples given or comments made on the inventories; leaving examples was clearly marked "optional." The examples that were given are not reflected in the statistical results. We want to assure every respondent that every comment has been read and considered by several team members.

Thank you to Council for prayerfully considering the inventory results.

Faithfully Living Team: Branda Anderson, Laura Crawford, Marti Derickson, Colleen Farrell, Liz Gimmestad, Marilyn Hall, Joan Beck