

**Trinity Lutheran Church
Lynnwood, WA**

**Values Direction Action (VDA)
Report**

December 2019

Contents

I. Background	p. 2
II. VDA Process	p. 4
III. Outcome	p. 6
IV: Moving Forward	p.12
V. Conclusions and Remarks	p.13

Values Direction Action Report

I. BACKGROUND

The VDA process was approved by the church council in April 2019 as a response to the congregation’s commitment to address the current realities of TLC’s ministry. The decision to enter the process was informed by the priorities identified during the pastoral call process initiated in 2017 as well as the initial assessment process completed by Pr. Hector Garfias-Toledo (PH) during his first six months of ministry. Both processes pointed to the need for an intentional step forward to identify areas of growth and priorities for the congregation. The following table summarizes the results of those two processes.

Ministry Site Profile developed by the congregation for the Pastoral Call process	Pastor Hector Garfias-Toledo's Observations during his first 6 months
<p>Top Three Mission Priorities:</p> <p>Serving our Community i.e. Neighbors in Need/Neighborhood Youth Alliance Sharing God’s love and forgiveness Children, Youth and Family</p> <p>Top Five Ministry Tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Spiritual Formation/Direction ● Children’s Ministry ● Youth and Family Ministry ● Building a Sense of Community ● Preaching/Worship/Self Care/Family Life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There are many ministries with a dwindling human capacity, not a clear plan specifically for ministry sustainability, and team members are overextended serving in multiple ministries ● Recalibrate our ministry to cope with the new realities and community dynamics ● Tendency to do more which does not necessarily mean better or stronger ● TLC needs to clarify a vision for direction ● Ministries can be prone to function in isolation and sometimes competing, leading them to be siloed ● Need to prioritize and align ministries toward a common and shared purpose

<p>Top Five Things We Want a Pastor to Focus on in Year One:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Connecting People – Re-developing Our Collective Vision ● Building a TLC Community – reaching out to people that no longer attend, being welcoming to ● all ages (to include visitation) ● Healing of Relationships – allowing people to be heard and defining the hurt ● Volunteer Leadership/Coordination/Encouragement through mentorship ● Biblically-based Preaching/Teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is a renewed sense of hope, energy, and willingness to embark on a missional adventure ● TLC needs a process that generates the priorities and a unifying purpose to align ministries and resources in order to move forward. It needs to be completed within the next 5-6 months. ● A team to lead the process is needed
---	---

Strategy

- Visioning process
- Vision team includes every layer of TLC ministry
- Implementation team
- Coaching for council, vision team, implementation team, and pastor(s)

Preferred Outcome

- A clear sense of direction that unifies ministry, and the priorities that the congregation will focus on, which will inform the call of an associate pastor
- Initial strategic plan that addresses:
 - Implementation steps and an implementation team
 - Alignment of ministries
 - Metrics that will help us assess progress and growth as congregation

The VDA process is part of the ongoing transition journey that TLC entered when the congregation decided to call a lead pastor and committed to embrace God's call to live faithfully, love boldly, and serve joyfully.

II. VDA PROCESS

The VDA process was led by Brian Zehr of Intentional Impact.

A team of 18 leaders of the congregation was formed. They are:

Pastor Hector, Pastor Jade, Norma Aamodt-Nelson, David Greenlee, Josh Judd-Herzfeldt, Kris Dudak, Sue Carlson, Deb Johnson, Mark Schmidt, Ann Ndirangu, Chuck Phillips, Sue Myers, Sheri Kasen-Kessler, Lisa Hunnewell, Jenny Louch, Michelle Reitan, Sandy Schneider, Larry Pennings

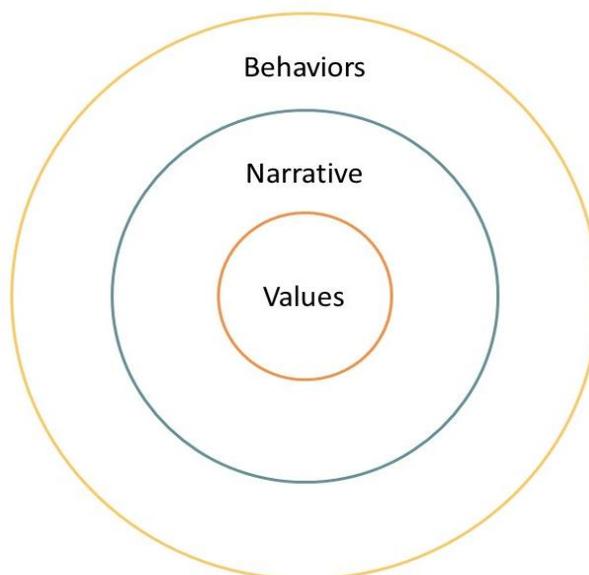
Three sessions held: September 20-21, October 27, and December 1, 2019.

Outcomes of the retreats were shared with the congregation through email communication and forums which were held on October 13-20, and November 10-17, 2019 to create opportunity for broader congregational input. The total number of attendees was 66 people.

- Articulating culture components

Tending to organizational culture is an important factor in managing change and growth. Culture, in its simplest form, adds together a church's highest priorities (its values) with a distinct dialogue (an intentional narrative), supported by a clear, and consistent set of actions. It is not just a once-in-a-lifetime set of actions, but behavioral patterns that are regular and rhythmic. Culture is basically a shared understanding of "this is the way we do things around here" that will guide how we live together

One of the key components of beginning to define the culture we want was to refine TLC values and to revisit the narrative of the congregation, how we share the story.



a) What it is most important (Values)

The VALUES are what is most important to you right now and in the near-term.

The team spent time wrestling with questions that led to refining TLC's values:

What is most important NOW? What is God saying to us in this season of the church? What are TLC's values in connection with reaching people, spiritual growth, discipleship, developing volunteer leaders, nurturing people serving?

b) The story that we tell about TLC (Narrative)

Narrative is the way we talk about and consistently communicate our values in writing and verbal ways. It requires discipline and making an intentional choice of the language we use, and consistency in how we use it. How we describe our values must be understandable and relevant for people to embrace it and engage with them

Narrative also conveys the story of the ministry; it is the natural description of who TLC is and what TLC values. The stories people tell about the actions we take should always be aligned with our values. As Brian Zehr said, *"These stories are the living embodiment of who we are."*

c) Identifying actions to take (Behavioral Patterns)

This component is not just action ... it is the behavioral patterns we exhibit when living out our culture's values. What does TLC consistently do to support the values and the narrative of the organization? What is the behavior that fits?

It is crucial that we take action in ways that are congruent with what is most important to us.

In the end we want values we can live up to and aspire to. We want a narrative, stories, that support our values. And we want behaviors patterns that align with both.

III. OUTCOME

The purpose of the initial part of the VDA process was to clarify the direction that unifies ministry, the priorities that the congregation will focus on.

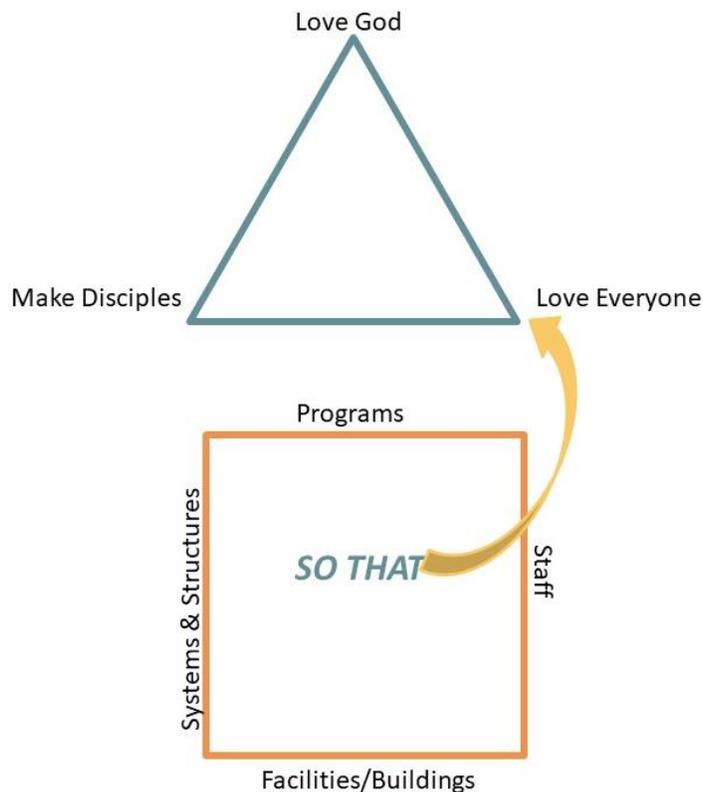
The key insights gained during the retreats are:

a) Triangle & Square (Being vs. Doing church)

The triangle/square diagram helped the team to focus on the nature and purpose of the church. The triangle depicts what it means to be the church which is about three main things: Love God, love everyone, and make disciples (the great commandment and the great commission). That is the why and the nature of the church.

The square depicts all that is needed for ministry: staff, facilities, building, systems & structures, and programs.

The point is that over time, we tend to focus on the square, losing sight of the “why” we are church. The process led the team to remain focused on the triangle and make sure all the square supports the triangle, which means *being* the church rather than only *doing* church.



b) Focus

The process helped the team to realize the importance of focus, relationships, commitment, and trust in order to overcome obstacles that might prevent TLC from moving forward.

The outcomes will be attainable as we intentionally instill strategies that promote making things simple, releasing gifts and gifted people, generate passion, and opportunities to not only have faith in Jesus, but have the faith of Jesus.

VDA Desired Outcomes

<u>Obstacle</u>	<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
Complexity	Simple	Focus
Control	Releasing	Relationships
Complacency	Passion	Commitment
Concern (fear & anxiety)	Faith	Trust

- Values

The values articulated after discussion with the congregation at the forums were:

- **Christ-inspired service** in our community (local and global).
- **Inclusion** of all people.
- **Impactful relationships** with one another that provide support for life's journey.
- Faith-based communal experience of **worshipping** and **learning** together.
- **Multi-generational ministry** relevant to all ages and promoting relationships across generations.

a) Umbrella/focus statement

The VDA team generated the following focus statement and a tagline:

“Building up and joining in God’s mission as one
to nurture, love, and serve all”

Building. Belonging. Becoming.

The focus statement was the result of looking at the values identified by VDA Team. The goal was to capture the essence of the identified values creating a sense of movement forward.

Then, by breaking the statement into shorter sub-statements as follows,

“Building up and joining in God’s mission as one
to nurture, love, and serve all”

We identified the values that fall under each part of the statement, which led us to the three words for the tagline: “Building. Belonging. Becoming.”

We believe that the three words are basically the narrative of the ministry of the congregation which can lead TLC and its ministries. For instance, “*building a context/environment where people belong to a community, where people grow into becoming God’s people in the world.*”

b) Tagline - description of the three words

Building. This word conveys building up one another, building a community, building spaces for growth, building trust

Belonging. Developing relationships that connect, include, and embrace people as we accompany, serve, and care for all people

Becoming. As we journey together, we all are growing into the people that God called us to be by engaging with the community with words and actions

c) Telling our story

As mentioned above how we tell TLC’s stories is crucial. These stories are the living embodiment of who we are. We need to be able to tell our story in a clear and consistent way that describes what we do to further God’s work in the world.

We believe that being able to articulate our narrative in a consistent way is the most important and powerful result of the process.

Below you will find some examples of how the “tagline” can help TLC’s members to tell a story of who we are as a congregation.

	Building	Belonging	Becoming
Youth ministry	Safe, inviting relational space	Where youth not otherwise connected find peers and adults who	Help every participant develop the spiritual dimension of their lives
Neighbors in Need NIN	Welcoming, non-judgmental, safe environment	Where often isolated individuals find an oasis of acceptance, support, and care	Experience some basic human dignity, healing
Living Water	Building wells in countries experiencing poverty	Through well projects we develop relationships with other communities	Through relationships with others around the world we all learn and grow in faith, and understanding of other cultures
Music	Creating a space for the community at large to connect	Developing relationships with neighbors and other organizations fostering collaboration	Partnering to celebrate the gifts of people both TLC and the community at large

d) Areas of focus

Based on the multiple conversations, feedback from the forums, and prayer, the VDA team concluded that the areas of focus for TLC during the next year are:

Top Ranked

- We want to work to define and implement a strategy for equipping people for ministry so that many people feel empowered to play their role in our community of faith.
- We want to seek clarity in the skills and abilities needed in an associate pastor so that we have the capacity to support lay-driven ministry.

Second Ranked

- We want to define and implement a sustainable strategy for the education of children and families so that so that they have the resources available for spiritual development.
- We want to define and implement an intentional strategy to reach out to our community so that more people find a spiritual home in relationship with God and with one another.
- We want to see an increased percentage of people participating meaningfully in small groups so that people can grow spiritually through relationship with others and find support on their life journey.

Third Ranked

- We want to identify ways to diversify worship so that more people can experience collective encounter with God

Fourth Ranked

- We want to agree upon a strategy for stewardship development so that we have the resources to support the work to which we believe God calls us.

Unranked

- We want to establish process for inviting, welcoming, and informing newcomers into the life of the congregation so that

everyone experiences their own sense of belonging to our community of faith. (In progress)

- We want to increase opportunities for people of all generations to participate meaningfully in the spiritual life of the congregation so that our community can be enriched by people of all ages. (In progress)
- We want to increase coordination of multiple ministries so that leaders and teams work collaboratively to maximize impact.
- We want to develop a strategy for how to relate to the population who will access the community center so that we can interact and develop meaningful relationships

e) Pastor's reflections

In addition to the VDA Teamwork, I have spent time in conversation with people during the past year. Also, I have been observing behavioral patterns in ministry.

I am humbled and encouraged by the level of commitment of the leaders of the congregation. However, I have identified patterns that can affect the growth, health, and vitality of the congregation. Here are some of my observations.

- Conversations with TLC members indicate that there has been a strong history of service to the community and self-initiated ministries that have led TLC to a list of nearly 80 ministries related to the congregation. Although the pursuing of individual interest-based ministries is a strength, we have not been able to develop a leadership pipeline that can provide sustainability for ministries. Many of the leaders of the current teams are over-extended and ministries do not have a clear plan to develop and equip others, i.e. 'doers' not 'disciple-makers.'
- Many of the key result areas identified through the VDA process indicate a desire to balance these historic strengths with focus on quality of collective life in order to have a vibrant, sustainable support structure to inspire and support individual ministries.
- It has often been the role of staff to maintain the structures and activities of collective congregational life. I believe that we need to make a decision about how the key results that we identified will serve as guide to redefine roles and staff configuration as ministries focus and expectations.

- Trinity is not currently in a financial position to hire adequate staff to fill that role (not even if an associate is called).
- It seems that TLC is still functioning as if it was the congregation of several years ago. We do not have the critical mass, the human capacity, and the financial capability to be what we were with the current size of the congregation. Our behavioral patterns in many cases do not fit who we are now. There needs to be a change in the way we understand ourselves as a congregation and how we function and make decisions that align with the current reality.

IV. MOVING FORWARD

Short/medium term strategy

The action steps that emerged from the process are listed below.

Each action step responds to the areas of focus identified. The action steps are intended to generate key results.

The action steps listed are not the goal but “start-up” actions that will lead TLC and its ministries to focus and alignment. The by-products will be the strengthening of relationships, commitment, and collaboration.

Implementation of full scale of action steps will require intentionality, time, and energy to move on, both from staff and church lay leadership. We need to develop indicators (metrics) that will help us to measure progress or the need for adjustments, and proactive planning to move forward.

- Develop a comprehensive communication and formation plan to help everyone identify/experience the congregational story of *Building. Belonging. Becoming.*
- Begin pilot process of equipping people for ministry in existing ministries areas. Process steps will include:
 - Noticing, celebrating, calling out people's gifts to be put into practice
 - Mentoring/apprenticing (Reproducing discipleship)
 - Aligning ministries with *Building. Belonging. Becoming.*
- Reflect on and document the equipping process so that it can be replicated in other contexts
- Identify existing core groups/stakeholders around result areas (children and families; outreach; small group formation; worship; stewardship, welcoming)

- Facilitate those core groups to identify:
 - Observable indicators of progress in each area
 - Initial activities that will support progress
- Apply pilot equipping process to these core groups so they are able to take on increasing responsibility for strengthening our collective ministry.
- Define an associate pastor role in light of these priorities
- Conduct an inventory of existing ministries and map out relationships and connection to core narrative (building/belonging/becoming) so that everyone is “pulling in the same direction”
- Convene a task force to create an intentional strategy for how we will address the opportunities for community engagement afforded by the Lynnwood Community Center so that we are prepared to take advantage of opportunities for ministry and growth in this new relationship.

V. CONCLUSION AND REMARKS

Based on the leadership audit and the outcomes listed above we can conclude that TLC has many strengths on which to build a foundation for the future. For instance,

1. Trinity is a healthy church with a long and influential history of ministry to and for the community.
2. High caliber and commitment of people, both staff and lay leaders, with high enthusiasm for the church.
3. Many people who contribute to and love the church, who roll up their sleeves and execute well, and are ready to do the work needed to realize and practice shared core values.

Also, TLC is facing some challenges, which are opportunities for growth.

1. Trinity is in need of a **concise picture** (unifying) of where the church is headed which is centered around and focused on **shared core values**.
2. This picture will help individual and/or ministry passions to an **overall strategy**, creating alignment and opening avenues of communication and collaboration.
3. To support the values and implement the strategies, we need to **build and maintain relationships** with an eye toward **leadership development** (disciple making!) allowing for relationally-driven, rather than programmatically-driven engagement.

As Brain Zehr of Intentional Impact puts it: *“As Trinity defines core values, with clarity, the strategic strengths of staff and leadership volunteers will quickly allow the church to align priorities and resources with core values and experience growth.”* By

strengthening a unifying culture among members, TLC will be in a better position to equip leaders for outward ministry.

The VDA process led us to identify equipping leaders as the top ranked areas of focus, which reflects the values of the congregation. Equipping the saints for the work of ministry, requires intentional investment in people. Developing a pathway that identifies, equips, and releases highly motivated leaders/disciples will pave the way for a transformational experience across TLC's array of ministries. TLC needs a systematic path for leadership development.

The value of leadership development (vs. finding volunteers to get involved) must be defined or prioritized. Investing in and engaging with new people needs to be relationally-driven.

Therefore, one critical factor in the implementation of the action steps is to have clarity about the role of the staff and lay leadership. Innovation is possible only when the collective imagination (Spirit's inspiration) is coupled with implementation. The questions are, who will lead the implementation of the plan? Church staff? Lay leaders? On the one hand, the answers to the question has implications related to job description for church staff and possible budget implications. On the other hand, church staff and lay leaders will need to shift patterns and fully embrace the process, possibly causing a sense of taking away their ministries. Defining who leads the implementation, and to what degree leaders lead from the front, from within, or from behind, will clarify how we answer the questions.

Since we cannot wait to implement the action steps listed above, it will make sense for us to begin working in areas of the ministry where lay leaders have emerged. For instance, the First Impressions team has already developed a pathway to identify, equip, and release leaders. Pastoral staff started leading from the front. As new lay leaders emerge, the pastoral leadership is done from within the team, then church staff supports the team from behind. The goal is that lay leaders will emulate the process using the apprenticeship model for reproducing leadership/discipleship.

The VDA process is a journey which will continue evolving and unfolding. My hope is that as we continue developing action steps and pathways to align our ministries and unify our efforts, we will grow spiritually (depth), and we will grow in number of committed and transformed leaders/disciples who make disciples (breadth).

We celebrate and acknowledge the congregation's commitment to the VDA process, which led TLC to clarify values and priorities as we move forward participating in the unfolding reign of God. The VDA process has been an opportunity for all of us to make a pause and discern how we will respond to God's call to be a congregation that propagates the gospel in word and in action.

One of the aspects of TLC's ministry that captivated me when I interviewed with the call committee last year was TLC's boldness to take risks, and to look beyond the walls of the congregation. TLC was raised from the ashes and reinvented itself to continue to be a mission post in Lynnwood.

It is my belief that, TLC has all that's needed to carry out the work that God has given us. This report is a summary of what I believe the Spirit is calling us to be and to do. My hope is that TLC's community will embrace the process and that together we will do together what we cannot do on our own as individuals.

This report is not a final document, but a journal that describes our quest in this mission field.

The VDA process was accepted by the church council in April, therefore, the next step is to submit this report to the council in December 2019. The council will affirm and recommend presenting the Focus statement, areas of focus, and short and mid-term strategies to the congregation at the congregational meeting in January 2020.

If accepted/affirmed by the council and congregation, the short- and medium-term strategies listed above (See section IV) will begin implementation in February 2020.

Thanks be to God for the ministry of TLC and each leader of the past and present.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Héctor Garfias-Toledo', written over a circular stamp or seal that is partially obscured by the ink.

Rev. Héctor Garfias-Toledo, Lead Pastor