

St. John Lutheran Church
Strategic Plan
Assessment of Current Practices

July 30, 2008



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Schedule A

Assessment of Current Practices

Prior to visiting other churches in search of “best practices” the team performed an assessment of current practices at St. John’s.

At Pastor Ed’s suggestion we used an article titled *“New Vitality for Your Church”* by David Claussen (see Schedule B) as a basis for creating a survey form. The work by David Claussen was based on materials created and presented originally by Kennon Callahan a nationally known church consultant. Callahan identified 12 keys to an effective, thriving church. The first six are relational characteristics (Callahan says the more of these that are ranked highly the healthier the church) and the second six are functional. Callahan recommends that churches focus on their strengths and that for planning purposes we only try to improve “a couple characteristics” at a time. Furthermore he states “Effective churches result when the pastor and key leadership motivate the congregation by focusing on compassion and community. Identifying our key strengths and matching motivation can help us build more effective and stronger churches.”

The Team believed that by surveying St. John’s Church Council and New Members it could fairly accurately determine how St. John’s was currently positioned. The general survey tool will also be used when visiting the “benchmark” churches as the Team seeks to determine if there are “best practices” performed by these churches that St. John’s should adopt to improve our performance.

The Church Characteristics Survey (Schedule C) was provided to the Council and New Members with the instructions that they should complete only those questions they believed they understood and had knowledge of by providing a rating from 1 (poor) to 5 (great). The results are presented anonymously and are summarized two ways for each group. The first method shows ratings in the sequence the questions were asked. The second method ranks the characteristics from greatest strength to weakest.

The Church Council ratings (ranked) are shown in detail in Schedule 2. In summary they are as follows:

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Rating</u>
Dynamic worship	Relational	4.2
Adequate parking	Functional	3.9
Strong leadership	Relational	3.7
Several excellent programs	Functional	3.6

Effective shepherding	Relational	3.3
Good group ministry	Relational	3.2
A concrete mission	Relational	3.1
Adequate facilities	Functional	2.8
Open accessibility	Functional	2.7
Generous giving	Functional	2.6
High visibility	Functional	2.4
Effective decision making process	Relational	2.2

The New Member ratings (ranked) are shown in detail in Schedule 4. Because only three people participated the results are questionable. In summary they are as follows:

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Rating</u>
Strong leadership	Relational	4.3
Dynamic worship	Relational	4.2
Several excellent programs	Functional	3.7
Effective decision making process	Relational	3.5
Good group ministry	Relational	3.5
Generous giving	Functional	3.5
A concrete mission	Relational	3.0
Adequate facilities	Functional	3.0
Open accessibility	Functional	2.8
Adequate parking	Functional	2.3
High visibility	Functional	2.3
Effective shepherding	Relational	not rated

Putting the two groups side by side the results are as follows:

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Church Council</u>	<u>New Members</u>
Dynamic worship	Relational	4.2	4.2
Adequate parking*	Functional*	3.9*	2.3*
Strong leadership*	Relational*	3.7*	4.3*
Several excellent programs	Functional	3.6	3.7
Effective shepherding	Relational	3.3	not rated
Good group ministry	Relational	3.2	3.5
A concrete mission	Relational	3.1	3.0
Adequate facilities	Functional	2.8	3.0
Open accessibility	Functional	2.7	2.8
Generous giving*	Functional*	2.6*	3.5*
High visibility	Functional	2.4	2.3
Effective decision making process*	Relational*	2.2*	3.5*

The characteristics with the symbol * indicate areas where the two groups differed by more than a rating of .4.

The next planned step is to visit each of the benchmarked congregations to determine what “best practices” they follow that we should consider implementing at St. John’s to improve our performance.

New Vitality for Your Church

Consultant Identifies 12 Keys to Renewal

Kennon Callahan, a nationally known church consultant, has worked - with thousands of churches and speaks to church leaders and pastors through his workshops and seminars. The author of several books, Kennon Callahan gave the 1999 NACCC Annual Meeting attendees the synthesis of his years of church research and congregational consulting. The information came in rapidfire, clear, and concise statements. Points were punctuated by the thrust of a finger to a laptop keyboard that sent a projected image to a large screen.

My pen couldn't move fast enough to put his thoughts to paper. Consequently, this relies not only upon the information Callahan presented at the Annual Meeting but also his book, *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church* (Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1983).

Claim Your Key

Kennon Callahan recommends identifying key strengths and matching them to motivation.

Strengths

Callahan identified 12 keys to an effective, thriving church. The first six are relational characteristics, while the second six are functional characteristics.

1. A Concrete Mission

Discover what your church is called to do; find a hurt and meet it. A church needs a focus; it can't be all things to all people. Callahan suggests churches identify no more than three major mission objectives. Don't adopt a negatively stated mission such as simply surviving. Like a sports team, Callahan says, **"Don't play to avoid losing, play to win."**

2. Effective Shepherding

Callahan believes that visitation by both pastor and laity with members, newcomers, the sick, shut-ins, and the unchurched is essential for a church to be healthy. When there's effective shepherding by the pastor, Callahan says, the congregation will even give the preaching a higher mark than it deserves!

3. Dynamic Worship

Sermons that are easily followed, provide humor and drama, and share something hopeful and helpful are key. There needs to be connected movement in the service that strings together one theme. Quality music by a gifted volunteer or staff person is essential for good worship.

4. Good Group Ministry

People are looking for a place to belong. They want to be in community, not on a committee, Callahan states. People, not programs, need to be the focus of a church, and this largely happens through groups.

5. Strong Leadership

Effective leaders are not simply enablers, responding to the congregation's wishes. Instead, leaders must be proactive, visionary, and willing to lead the congregation forward.

6. An Effective Decision Making Process

Streamlined organizational structure keeps leaders from wasting time in too many committee meetings. The congregation should perceive the decision-making process as reasonable in length and effective at reaching decisions and achieving established goals.

7. Several Excellent Programs

Too many programs exhaust a church. Choose a few in which the church can be competent.

8. Open Accessibility

This includes location accessibility-is the church easy to find? Are there sufficient green space and visible parking? It also includes ministry accessibility-is there ministry that attracts people and draws them in?

9. High Visibility

Can the church facility be easily seen? Are the pastor, people, and ministries visible to the community? Is there a good church sign? In the final analysis, however, it's people who attract people.

10. Adequate Parking

There should be a parking space, Callahan says, for every 1.75 people. Twenty percent of the parking should be empty, an invitation for seekers to stop in. A full parking lot communicates "there's no room for you."

11 Adequate Facilities

There should be a balance between size and usage. The condition of the church property communicates what the congregation thinks of itself.

12. Generous Giving

Income goes up in relation to increased participation in ministries. **It's also important to remember that money follows mission.** A great ministry inspires greater giving.

Callahan suggests identifying six from the list of 12 that are current strengths. The more strengths that are relational rather than functional, the healthier the church. He suggests focusing on strengths rather than weaknesses, because when we claim God's strengths we claim God's gifts. Callahan cautions that no church is going to be strong in all 12 areas. He encourages churches to establish a long-range plan to improve a couple of the characteristics at a time.

Matching Motivations

Callahan also described five major motivations used in churches.

Compassion - sharing, caring, loving, service

Community- fun, fellowship, belonging, a sense of family

Challenge - accomplishment, achievement, attainment

Reasonability - data, analysis, logic

Commitment - dedication, faithfulness, duty, loyalty

Weak churches experience a motivational gap because the pastor and lay leadership usually employ challenge and the need for commitment to motivate the congregation. The congregation, on the other hand, is most frequently motivated by the opportunity to experience and express compassion and community. Effective churches result when the pastor and key leadership motivate the congregation by focusing on compassion and community. , As I understand Callahan's analysis, a church bulletin announcement about a need would be written by leadership focusing on challenge and commitment this way: "only have \$5,000 to go to meet the budget. Have you given sacrificially?" The same announcement written to address the congregation's sense of compassion and community would read this way: "Raising our last \$5,000 means we will be able to implement the seniors' program that will give them a weekly outing and a Bible study that addresses their unique needs."

Identifying our church's key strengths and matching motivation, Callahan insisted, can help us build more effective and stronger churches. It's a message the NACCC family of churches would do well to implement.

The Rev. David J. Claassen, pastor of Mayflower-Plymouth Congregational Church, Toledo, Ohio, has contributed several articles on church renewal, including one on church consultant George Barna (The Congregationalist, Oct./Nov. 1998, p. 13).

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

(The author and publisher give permission to photocopy this article for use with church boards and

small groups.

The discussion should only take 20 minutes)

A. Take turns reading the article.

B. Individually and privately list what you think are your church's six greatest strengths out of Callahan's list of 12.

C. To get a better picture of where God has gifted your church, have each person list their top six without comment. Have someone tabulate the totals and report which three of the 12 ranked highest for your church and identify which are relational and which are functional.

D. Why do you think Callahan insists that relational characteristics are more important than functional characteristics?

E. Number Callahan's five forms of motivation in the order in which you think your church utilizes them, one being most frequently used and five being least frequently used.

The Congregationalist, October/November 1999

Church Characteristics Survey

Relational and Functional Characteristics	Rating				
	1 (Poor)	2	3 (Ave.)	4	5 (Great)
1. A Concrete Mission Is it clear what the church is called to do?					
2. Effective Shepherding Do visitations occur by both pastor and laity with members, newcomers, the sick, shut-ins, and the unchurched?					
3. Dynamic Worship Are sermons easily followed, providing humor and drama, and sharing something hopeful and helpful? Is there a connected movement in the service that strings together one theme? Is quality music provided by a gifted volunteer or staff person?					
4. Good Group Ministry Is there evidence of small group ministry?					
5. Strong Leadership Are the church leaders proactive, visionary, and willing to lead the congregation forward?					

Church Characteristics Survey

Relational and Functional Characteristics	Rating				
	1 (Poor)	2	3 (Ave.)	4	5 (Great)
<p>6. An Effective Decision Making Process Is the organizational structure streamlined to keep leaders from wasting time in too many committee meetings?</p> <p>Does the congregation perceive the decision-making process as reasonable in length and effective at reaching decisions and achieving established goals?</p>					
<p>7. Several Excellent Programs Does the church have a reasonable number of programs?</p>					
<p>8. Open Accessibility Is the church easy to find?</p> <p>Are there sufficient green spaces and visible parking?</p> <p>Is there ministry that attracts people and draws them in?</p>					
<p>9. High Visibility Can the church facility be easily seen?</p> <p>Are the pastor, people, and ministries visible to the community?</p> <p>Is there a good church sign?</p>					

Church Characteristics Survey

Relational and Functional Characteristics	Rating				
	1 (Poor)	2	3 (Ave.)	4	5 (Great)
10. Adequate Parking Is there a parking space for every 1.75 people? Is twenty percent of the parking empty on Sunday?					
11 Adequate Facilities Is there an appropriate balance between size and usage? What is the condition of the church property?					
12. Generous Giving Is there a great ministry inspiring greater giving?					

**St. John's Lutheran Church
Strategic Plan
1. Assessments-Church Council**

Relational and Functional Characteristics	Individual Ratings										Total	Ave.
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I			
1. A Concrete Mission Is it clear what the church is called to do?	5	2	2	3	3	4	3	3	3		28	3.1
2. Effective Shepherding Do visitations occur by both pastor and laity with members, newcomers, the sick, shut-ins, and the unchurched?	5	3	4	2	3		4	3	2		26	3.3
3. Dynamic Worship Are sermons easily followed, providing humor and drama, and sharing something hopeful and helpful?	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	3	5		38	4.2
Is there a connected movement in the service that strings together one theme?	5	4	5	4	3	3	4	3	4		35	3.9
Is quality music provided by a gifted volunteer or staff person?	5	4	5	5	4	5	4	5	4		41	4.6
Average	5.0	4.0	5.0	4.3	3.7	4.0	4.0	3.7	4.3		114	4.2
4. Good Group Ministry Is there evidence of small group ministry?	5	3	5	1	3	3	2	5	2		29	3.2
5. Strong Leadership Are the church leaders proactive, visionary, and willing to lead the congregation forward?	5	2	4	3	4	4	4	3	4		33	3.7

**St. John's Lutheran Church
Strategic Plan
1. Assessments-Church Council**

Relational and Functional Characteristics	Individual Ratings										Total	Ave.
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I			
6. An Effective Decision Making Process												
Is the organizational structure streamlined to keep leaders from wasting time in too many committee meetings?	3	1	2	2	2	3	3	1	2		19	2.1
Does the congregation perceive the decision-making process as reasonable in length and effective at reaching decisions and achieving established goals?	3	1	2	2.5	3	3	3	1	2		20.5	2.3
Average	3.0	1.0	2.0	2.3	2.5	3.0	3.0	1.0	2.0		39.5	2.2
7. Several Excellent Programs												
Does the church have a reasonable number of programs?	5	3	4	2	3	4	3	5	3		32	3.6
8. Open Accessibility												
Is the church easy to find?	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	5	2		20	2.2
Are there sufficient green spaces and visible parking?	5	1	2	4	3	3	2	5	3		28	3.1
Is there ministry that attracts people and draws them in?	2	2	2	3.5		3	2	4	3		21.5	2.7
Average	3.0	1.3	2.0	3.2	2.5	2.7	2.0	4.7	2.7		69.5	2.7
9. High Visibility												
Can the church facility be easily seen?	4	1	2	2	2	2	4	4	2		23	2.6
Are the pastor, people, and ministries visible to the community?	5	2	2	3	2	3	4	5	3		29	3.2
Is there a good church sign?	1	1		1	1	1		2	2		9	1.3
Average	3.3	1.3	2.0	2.0	1.7	2.0	4.0	3.7	2.3		61	2.4

**St. John's Lutheran Church
Strategic Plan
1. Assessments-Church Council**

Relational and Functional Characteristics	Individual Ratings										Total	Ave.
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I			
10. Adequate Parking												
Is there a parking space for every 1.75 people?	5	3	4	4	4	3	4	5	5	37	4.1	
Is twenty percent of the parking empty on Sunday?	3	3	4	4	4	3	4		5	30	3.8	
Average	4.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	5.0	67	3.9	
11 Adequate Facilities												
Is there an appropriate balance between size and usage?	5	3	2	3	3	3	4	3	3	29	3.2	
What is the condition of the church property?	3	2	2	2	2	2	4	3	2	22	2.4	
Average	4.0	2.5	2.0	2.5	2.5	2.5	4.0	3.0	2.5	51	2.8	
12. Generous Giving												
Is there a great ministry inspiring greater giving?	5	2	1	3	2	3	2	2	3	23	2.6	
Total	52	28	37	32	35	35	39	42	36	337		
Average	4.4	2.3	3.1	2.7	2.9	2.9	3.3	3.5	3.0		3.1	

**St. John's Lutheran Church
Strategic Plan
2. Assessments-Church Council-Ranked**

Relational and Functional Characteristics	Individual Ratings										Total	Ave.
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I			
3. Dynamic Worship Are sermons easily followed, providing humor and drama, and sharing something hopeful and helpful?	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	3	5		38	4.2
Is there a connected movement in the service that strings together one theme?	5	4	5	4	3	3	4	3	4		35	3.9
Is quality music provided by a gifted volunteer or staff person?	5	4	5	5	4	5	4	5	4		41	4.6
Average	5.0	4.0	5.0	4.3	3.7	4.0	4.0	3.7	4.3		114	4.2
10. Adequate Parking Is there a parking space for every 1.75 people?	5	3	4	4	4	3	4	5	5		37	4.1
Is twenty percent of the parking empty on Sunday?	3	3	4	4	4	3	4		5		30	3.8
Average	4.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	5.0		67	3.9
5. Strong Leadership Are the church leaders proactive, visionary, and willing to lead the congregation forward?	5	2	4	3	4	4	4	3	4		33	3.7
7. Several Excellent Programs Does the church have a reasonable number of programs?	5	3	4	2	3	4	3	5	3		32	3.6

**St. John's Lutheran Church
Strategic Plan
2. Assessments-Church Council-Ranked**

Relational and Functional Characteristics	Individual Ratings									Total	Ave.
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I		
2. Effective Shepherding Do visitations occur by both pastor and laity with members, newcomers, the sick, shut-ins, and the unchurched?	5	3	4	2	3		4	3	2	26	3.3
4. Good Group Ministry Is there evidence of small group ministry?	5	3	5	1	3	3	2	5	2	29	3.2
1. A Concrete Mission Is it clear what the church is called to do?	5	2	2	3	3	4	3	3	3	28	3.1
11 Adequate Facilities Is there an appropriate balance between size and usage?	5	3	2	3	3	3	4	3	3	29	3.2
What is the condition of the church property?	3	2	2	2	2	2	4	3	2	22	2.4
Average	4.0	2.5	2.0	2.5	2.5	2.5	4.0	3.0	2.5	51	2.8
8. Open Accessibility Is the church easy to find?	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	5	2	20	2.2
Are there sufficient green spaces and visible parking?	5	1	2	4	3	3	2	5	3	28	3.1
Is there ministry that attracts people and draws them in?	2	2	2	3.5		3	2	4	3	21.5	2.7
Average	3.0	1.3	2.0	3.2	2.5	2.7	2.0	4.7	2.7	69.5	2.7

**St. John's Lutheran Church
Strategic Plan
2. Assessments-Church Council-Ranked**

Relational and Functional Characteristics	Individual Ratings									Total	Ave.
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I		
12. Generous Giving Is there a great ministry inspiring greater giving?	5	2	1	3	2	3	2	2	3	23	2.6
9. High Visibility Can the church facility be easily seen?	4	1	2	2	2	2	4	4	2	23	2.6
Are the pastor, people, and ministries visible to the community?	5	2	2	3	2	3	4	5	3	29	3.2
Is there a good church sign?	1	1		1	1	1		2	2	9	1.3
Average	3.3	1.3	2.0	2.0	1.7	2.0	4.0	3.7	2.3	61	2.4
6. An Effective Decision Making Process Is the organizational structure streamlined to keep leaders from wasting time in too many committee meetings?	3	1	2	2	2	3	3	1	2	19	2.1
Does the congregation perceive the decision-making process as reasonable in length and effective at reaching decisions and achieving established goals?	3	1	2	2.5	3	3	3	1	2	20.5	2.3
Average	3.0	1.0	2.0	2.3	2.5	3.0	3.0	1.0	2.0	39.5	2.2

**St. John's Lutheran Church
Strategic Plan
3. Assessments-New Members**

Relational and Functional Characteristics	A	B	C	Tot.	Ave.
1. A Concrete Mission Is it clear what the church is called to do?	3	3	3	9	3.0
2. Effective Shepherding Do visitations occur by both pastor and laity with members, newcomers, the sick, shut-ins, and the unchurched?				0	0.0
3. Dynamic Worship Are sermons easily followed, providing humor and drama, and sharing something hopeful and helpful and is quality music provided?	4	3.5	5	12.5	4.2
4. Good Group Ministry Is there evidence of small group ministry?	3		4	7	3.5
5. Strong Leadership Are the church leaders proactive, visionary, and willing to lead the congregation forward?	4	5	4	13	4.3
6. An Effective Decision Making Process Do you perceive the decision-making process as reasonable in length and effective at reaching decisions and achieving established goals?	3	4		7	3.5

**St. John's Lutheran Church
Strategic Plan
3. Assessments-New Members**

Relational and Functional Characteristics	A	B	C	Tot.	Ave.
7. Several Excellent Programs Does the church have a reasonable number of programs?	4	3	4	11	3.7
8. Open Accessibility Is the church easy to find with sufficient green space and visible parking? Is there a ministry here that attracted you and drew you in?	3	2	3.5	8.5	2.8
9. High Visibility Can the church facility be easily seen and is there a good sign? Are the pastor, people, and ministries visible to the community?	2	2	3	7	2.3
10. Adequate Parking Is twenty percent of the parking empty on Sunday?	3	2	2	7	2.3
11 Adequate Facilities Is there an appropriate balance between size and usage? Is the church property in adequate condition?	3	2	4	9	3.0
12. Generous Giving Is there a great ministry inspiring greater giving?	3		4	7	3.5
Total	35.0	26.5	36.5	98.0	3.3

St. John's Lutheran Church
Strategic Plan
4. Assessments-New Members-Ranked

Relational and Functional Characteristics	A	B	C	Tot.	Ave
5. Strong Leadership Are the church leaders proactive, visionary, and willing to lead the congregation forward?	4	5	4	13	4.3
3. Dynamic Worship Are sermons easily followed, providing humor and drama, and sharing something hopeful and helpful and is quality music provided?	4	3.5	5	12.5	4.2
7. Several Excellent Programs Does the church have a reasonable number of programs?	4	3	4	11	3.7
6. An Effective Decision Making Process Do you perceive the decision-making process as reasonable in length and effective at reaching decisions and achieving established goals?	3	4		7	3.5
4. Good Group Ministry Is there evidence of small group ministry?	3		4	7	3.5
12. Generous Giving Is there a great ministry inspiring greater giving?	3		4	7	3.5

St. John's Lutheran Church
Strategic Plan
4. Assessments-New Members-Ranked

Relational and Functional Characteristics	A	B	C	Tot.	Ave
1. A Concrete Mission Is it clear what the church is called to do?	3	3	3	9	3.0
11 Adequate Facilities Is there an appropriate balance between size and usage? Is the church property in adequate condition?	3	2	4	9	3.0
8. Open Accessibility Is the church easy to find with sufficient green space and visible parking? Is there a ministry here that attracted you and drew you in?	3	2	3.5	8.5	2.8
10. Adequate Parking Is twenty percent of the parking empty on Sunday?	3	2	2	7	2.3
9. High Visibility Can the church facility be easily seen and is there a good sign? Are the pastor, people, and ministries visible to the community?	2	2	3	7	2.3
2. Effective Shepherding Do visitations occur by both pastor and laity with members, newcomers, the sick, shut-ins, and the unchurched?				0	0.0
Total	35.0	26.5	36.5	98.0	3.3