

Strategic Plan 2025 – Refreshed and Renewed

Vision Statement

"Stronger and better together, proclaiming Jesus and joining Him in the restoration of the world. Anchored in grace and scripture, we live boldly to share faith, embody generosity, and respond to God's love in all we do."

Guiding Principles

1. **Centered on Christ:** Ensure everything we do reflects Jesus' mission and ministry, clarifying His role as the heart of our faith.
 2. **Lutheran Identity:** Stay rooted in the rich traditions of Word and Sacrament, grounded in grace and the promises of God. *love grace forgiveness*
 3. **Collaboration and Connection:** Break down silos, fostering teamwork among congregations, communities, and leaders.
 4. **Innovative and Practical:** Embrace new ways of sharing the Gospel while holding fast to unchanging truths.
 5. **Generosity and Evangelism:** Actively live out and share our faith as a response to God's boundless love.
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Core Values

1. Scripture and Grace-Focused

- The Word is central to worship, teaching, and discipleship.
- We are saved by grace, not works, and empowered by God's love to serve others.

2. Sacramental and Worship-Centered

- Holy Communion and Baptism are vital signs of God's presence and promises in our lives.

3. Compassionate Outreach

- We share the love of Jesus with no strings attached, extending hospitality, care, and support to all people.

4. Unified Yet Diverse Community

- We honor differences in age, race, culture, sexuality, and opinion, while celebrating our shared faith in Christ.

5. Evangelism and Generosity

- We embrace boldness in sharing the Gospel, inviting others to know Jesus.
- Stewardship of time, talents, and resources reflects our gratitude for God's abundant grace.

6. Faith Formation and Leadership Development

- We equip the People of God to lead and live as disciples of Christ.
- Lay and rostered leaders receive ongoing education to inspire and sustain their ministries.

7. Excellence for God's Glory

- We strive for innovation and impact, trusting God to guide us as we respond to God's call.

Strategic Goals and Initiatives

1. Proclaim Jesus Boldly

Goal: Clarify the message of Jesus and ensure His Gospel is at the heart of everything we do.

Initiatives:

- Develop a Synod-wide campaign focused on sharing the message of salvation by grace through faith.
- Host workshops on faith-sharing and personal evangelism for congregations.
- Produce accessible resources to help members articulate their faith with confidence.

2. Leadership Development

Goal: Expand leadership programs to include continuing education for both rostered and lay leaders.

Initiatives:

- Broaden the current Leadership Academy to include mentorships, advanced ministry training, and resources for lifelong learning.

- Develop partnerships with seminaries and universities to train future leaders and emphasize Lutheran identity.
- Offer specialized training in evangelism, generosity, and discipleship to energize leaders and congregations.

3. Cultivate Discipleship and Generosity

Goal: Equip congregations and individuals to live as active disciples of Jesus who share faith and practice generosity.

Initiatives:

- Develop a "Generosity Toolkit" to help congregations integrate stewardship and gratitude into their culture.
- Launch a Synod-wide discipleship initiative focused on living out and sharing the Gospel.
- Provide small-group resources for exploring topics like evangelism, generosity, and Christian living. *all ages*

4. Strengthen Collaboration

Goal: Foster connections among congregations to break down silos and share resources for greater impact.

Initiatives:

- Create regional "Mission Hubs" where congregations work together on shared outreach projects.
- Organize an annual "Together in Christ" Synod gathering to share best practices and build relationships. *no assembly next yr*
- Launch an online platform for congregations to share ideas, ministry models, and resources.
- Coach Leaders, both ordained and lay.

5. Re-Imagine the Church for Today

Goal: Explore new models of ministry to meet the needs of a changing world while rooted in Lutheran identity.

Initiatives:

- Pilot creative worship experiences (e.g., house churches, online ministries) to reach diverse groups.
- Encourage congregations to use their spaces for community impact, such as food banks or counseling services.
- Train leaders to adapt to cultural changes while staying rooted in Scripture and grace.

Implementation Framework

1. Timeline

- **Year 1:** Launch key initiatives like the leadership academy expansion and faith-sharing workshops.
- **Year 2:** Evaluate impact, refine strategies, and expand collaboration initiatives.
- **Year 3:** Fully integrate programs Synod-wide and share success stories to inspire future growth.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Synod Staff:** Develop resources, facilitate training, and provide ongoing support.
- **Congregations:** Actively participate, implement new strategies, and share feedback.
- **Leaders:** Commit to growing in faith and skills, mentoring others, coaching resource, and fostering collaboration.

3. Evaluation Metrics

- Increased engagement in evangelism and generosity programs.
- Growth in leader participation in continuing education.
- Greater collaboration among congregations, reducing duplication of efforts.
- Measurable community impact through new ministry models.

Conclusion

By keeping Jesus at the center, living out our Lutheran identity, and responding to God's love with boldness, the Southern Ohio Synod will equip leaders, build disciples, and foster connections to make Jesus known and share the grace that saves. Together, we will embody our vision: "**Stronger and better together, joining Jesus in the restoration of the world.**"