

## PREFACE

### *Ecclesiology: The nature of the Church*

As a congregation, Immanuel Lutheran Church affirms the definition of church expressed in our tradition's confessional writings—specifically, the Augsburg Confession, Article VII:

The church is the assembly of saints in which the Gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly.

The “assembly of saints” includes all the baptized, who share responsibility for the whole ministry of the Church. While the congregation calls lay and ordained persons into staff positions, all members of the congregation share in its ministries in a variety of ways. For the sake of good order, this congregation expresses through its constitution those matters and powers which lie with the congregation as a whole, with its Council and Executive Committee, and its various committees and organizations.

This congregation understands itself as one expression of the Communion of Saints that extends through time and space. It affirms its close connections to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the Central States Synod (CSS) of the ELCA, Area Ministry 7 of the CSS, and the many expressions of ministry relating to those entities. Additionally, Immanuel supports, in a variety of ways, numerous ministries, agencies and activities that further the mission of the gospel in Kansas City and throughout the world.

### *Strategic Goal Areas*

Understanding ourselves as church in this way, the members of the leadership and broader congregation as represented by the Long Range Planning Committee reviewed the congregation's 1998 long range plan. The following areas were reaffirmed or newly identified for strategic consideration in the coming years to achieve our vision and desired future.

1. Spiritual Life/Stewardship ..... page 2
2. Service to God's Community..... page 5
3. Learning ..... page 7
4. Caring Ministry ..... page 9
5. Evangelism..... page 11
6. Staff..... page 12
7. Physical Plant..... page 14
8. Communication..... page 15

# 1. SPIRITUAL LIFE / STEWARDSHIP

## *Our Current Situation*

*Current goals/programs in place:*

- Improved sound, lighting, space in sanctuary
- Bulletins that include and explain the entire liturgy/service
- Training opportunities for Lay Worship Leaders
- Increased music opportunities for children (i.e., 2 seasonal choirs, Orff percussion instruments)
- *Bach Cantata Vespers* series
- Biennial special music events
- Immanuel Brass
- Service of the Word for Healing held monthly
- Special workshops, programs, and other opportunities for spiritual enrichment and structure prayer
- Committee meeting night opening devotional service

*Goals still in process:*

- Eucharistic Ministers to take communion to homebound members

## *Our Strategic Direction*

- To ensure that God's Word, our joyful expression of praise and Immanuel's loving touch provide opportunities for growth in all those who wish to be a part of this faith community.

## *Strategic Priorities: Spiritual Life / Stewardship*

*Goals for the future:*

- 1.1 **Worship:** Increase/expand accessibility to worship for those persons from non-Lutheran backgrounds.
  - 1.1.1 Provide opportunities for learning about Lutheran worship and liturgy (elements of worship, what they mean, why we practice certain rituals, the meaning of the symbols of worship, confessions of faith, and explanation of the seasons of the church year). This kind of learning opportunity could be included in lay Worship Leaders orientation/training, Adult Education classes, new member classes, children and youth classes.

- 1.1.2 Develop a brochure for the pew racks that offers expanded explanation of the liturgy including its grounding in Scripture, why the congregation stands and sits at certain times in the service, Lutheran hymnody, etc.
- 1.1.3 Following the liturgical form of Lutheran worship and maintaining the emphasis on ministry of Word and Sacrament, use more contemporary liturgical components at the 8:15 am service. The Renewing Worship materials offer resources that could be used.
- 1.1.4 Broaden member involvement in worship through music in all services. Adding another service could provide additional opportunities for members to share a variety of musical gifts (i.e., contemporary as well as traditional music, percussion, chanting, etc.). This service could also promote ecumenism and access to worship for non-Lutherans by using hymnody from other traditions (i.e., Baptist, Gregorian chanting, 16<sup>th</sup> century chorales, African congregations, an acoustic service, etc.).
- 1.1.5 Expand member involvement in worship through the arts in all services: visual arts, drama, and liturgical dance. Again, adding a service could provide opportunities for members to share a variety of creative worship arts gifts (i.e., the Word in story/drama or through visual art, scripture expressed/interpreted through liturgical dance).
- 1.1.6 Increase opportunities for worship by adding another service using a different worship format. Follow the liturgical form of Lutheran worship and maintain the emphasis on ministry of Word and Sacrament but add another service that uses formats such as Taize service, Service of Silence or Meditation, shared readings, services with cultural/ethnic emphasis, jazz, etc.
- 1.2 **Spiritual Development:** Increase/expand opportunities for spiritual development for all who participate in the life of our church.
  - 1.2.1 Offer seminars exploring recent theological issues in contemporary culture (i.e., work of the Jesus Seminar, *The DaVinci Code*, *The Passion of Christ*).
  - 1.2.2 Offer opportunities through curriculum and/or workshops for members to share their life through story and connect their story with biblical stories/metaphors. Provide opportunities for people to write or tell their spiritual autobiography.
  - 1.2.3 Provide on-going opportunities for Bible study. (See also 3.1)
  - 1.2.4 Offer opportunities for spiritual retreats in Lutheran life; if possible, bring retreat leaders to Immanuel for weekend learning opportunities.
  - 1.2.5 Provide education about spiritual development/formation and stages of faith development individuals experience; connect these stages to the life and

mission of the church. (This could help us understand the dynamics of change that Immanuel may experience as it moves through stages of growth—numerically and spiritually.)

- 1.2.6 Provide opportunities through retreats and workshops for members to experience other worship traditions; followed with reflection and teaching on similarities and difference with Christianity and particularly the Lutheran expression of the Christian faith.
  - 1.2.7 Encourage participation in Hollis Renewal Center's program activities and use the center as a resource for spiritual enrichment and development.
  - 1.2.8 Provide opportunities for members to discover their spiritual gifts, i.e. the spiritual gifts survey in Centered Life/Centered Work, Adult Education classes, etc.
  - 1.2.9 Provide opportunities for members to discover or affirm their vocational calling.
  - 1.2.10 Provide retreat and learning opportunities for all stages of life, i.e., marriage, parenting, retirement, aging, end of life.
- 1.3 **Stewardship:** Offer preaching, teaching and retreat opportunities to articulate and reinforce a broad congregational understanding of stewardship as:
- Beginning with God's blessing and leading to our response
  - Incorporating all facets of individual and congregational life
  - Including everything that happens after we say, "I believe"
  - A matter of gratitude in concrete form
- 1.3.1 Introduce children to stewardship as a regular and important part of a disciple's life.
  - 1.3.2 Pursue conservation as a form of stewardship (e.g., energy audit, careful maintenance of property and equipment, use energy-efficient devices and materials in renovation and construction).
  - 1.3.3 Perennially evaluate the Endowment Trust Fund as a resource for furthering the work of the church in ways the regular congregational budget or periodic fund drives cannot accommodate, such as:
    - Using earned income to extend the annual congregational budget and ministry efforts (by majority vote of the Church Council).
    - Making special withdrawals of principal if deemed necessary (by 2/3 vote margin of the Church Council) to support special or emergency improvement projects, or property and material acquisitions of a

substantial nature that advance the goals and enrich the ministries of Immanuel.

## **2. SERVICE TO GOD'S COMMUNITY**

### ***Our Current Situation***

*Current goals/programs in place:*

- Acts of love that enrich others' lives
- Establishing community service as an active and ingrained part of Immanuel's church life and culture
- An active Social Ministry Committee
- Social ministry supported and carried out by staff, individuals and other committees
- Fifteen percent of Immanuel's operating income is committed to social ministries
- Current activities through contributions include:
  1. Bethany College
  2. Bethphage Mission
  3. Budget & Financial Management Assistance
  4. Community LINC
  5. Cross-Lines
  6. ELCA and Synod Support
  7. ELCA Retirement Fund
  8. Emergency Needs
  9. Habitat for Humanity
  10. Hollis Renewal Center
  11. Inner-City Missions
  12. Lutheran House of Studies
  13. Metropolitan Lutheran Ministry
  14. Oaks Indian Center
  15. Seminarian Tuition
  16. Westport Cooperative Services
  17. World Missions
- Current activities through volunteer support efforts include:
  1. Community Blood Drive
  2. Habitat for Humanity
  3. Hollis Renewal Center
  4. Metropolitan Lutheran Ministry

- Current activities through community use of facilities include:
  1. Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings
  2. Music Recitals
  3. Scandinavian Dancers
  4. St. Luke's Childcare Center
  5. Violin Lessons

*Goals still in process:*

- Development and maintenance of neighborhood connections established by recent efforts of the Evangelism Committee
- Explore opportunities for increasing use of our facility for music recitals/events

***Our Strategic Direction***

- To identify, organize and put to use the abundant and varied gifts the members of Immanuel have to share—both with each other and with the world.

***Strategic Priorities: Service to God's Community***

*Goals for the future*

- 2.1 Continue efforts to connect with surrounding neighborhoods. (See also 4.3.)
- 2.2 Expand use of facilities for community service. (See also 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 5.2.2 and 5.2.3.)
- 2.3 Increase accessibility to and hospitality of our church structure.
  - 2.3.1 Provide a clear and welcoming point of entry.
  - 2.3.2 Provide signage and other means for making clear to visitors where they may obtain information, assistance, etc. (See also 7.3.)
  - 2.3.3 Create policies for use of facilities—fee structure, available spaces, use by non-profits, etc.
- 2.4 Continue the goal of annually increasing proportionate benevolence in our regular budget.
- 2.5 Explore the possibility of a satellite ministry in the urban core of Kansas City, Missouri.
  - 2.5.1 Provide an ELCA presence in the urban core by leading an effort to begin a new ministry. From a publication by Sally A. Johnson, there are three tasks to

beginning this ministry: Community Analysis, Congregational Support and Organizational Basis.

- 2.5.2 Conduct Community Analysis to discover both objective and intuitive information about the community—both its needs and strengths.
  - 2.5.3 Identify resources of congregational support within our church for a satellite ministry.
  - 2.5.4 Identify areas where the community needs intersect with our congregation's strengths and priorities in an effort to root the ministry in the life and witness of our congregation.
  - 2.5.5 Develop an organizational plan for proceeding with and sustaining the satellite ministry.
- 2.6 Identify and fund beneficiaries of financial resources generated by the Capital Campaign that are dedicated to community service.

### **3. LEARNING**

#### ***Our Current Situation***

*Current goals/programs in place:*

- Sunday morning learning for grades 3 to 12, September through May
- Confirmation Class grades 7 and 8
- Development of a core competency curriculum that defines the foundation students need for Christian growth
- Fellowship events for youth grades 7 to 12
- Hollis summer day camp
- Alleluia Singers through grade 6
- Young adult evening Bible study led by the Vicar
- Weekly Adult Sunday Forum
- Weekly Focus Group—current interest discussion group
- Lutheranism 101 and 102—annual classes on Lutheran beliefs
- Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (WELCA) Bible study
- Tuesday morning Bible study
- Library
- Lutheran House of Studies
- Special events/studies (i.e., *Luther*, the movie; *The Passion of Christ*; parenting classes; “Love and Logic,” stress workshop)

*Goals still in process:*

- Hire a Director of Learning, Youth and Family (LYF) Ministries staff person
- Develop long-range youth education goals in Bible study, theology and service

***Our Strategic Direction***

- To provide lifelong learning opportunities in biblical, theological, and service themes to help us understand our place in the household of God.

***Strategic Priorities: Learning***

*Goals for the future*

- 3.1 Evaluate on a on-going basis the substance and style of learning to ensure core competencies are well taught.
- 3.2 Provide appropriate biblical and theological background to students.
- 3.3 Develop small group opportunities (e.g., open, welcoming groups centered on learning topics such as Bible study, ethics, the lectionary, etc.).
- 3.4 Continue search for Director of Learning, Youth and Family (LYF) Ministries staff person; call/hire. (See also 6.1)
- 3.5 Continue development of long-range youth education goals in Bible study, theology and service.
- 3.6 Relocate library to accessible space with room for expansion; space should be available and comfortable for study by all ages.
- 3.7 Provide opportunities for response to learning through service activities or other actions.
- 3.8 Continue and expand on “life-skill” workshops like the Stephen Ministry, parenting classes, and stress workshop).
- 3.9 Offer educational opportunities that are welcoming, evangelical, well-publicized and open to all.

## 4. CARING MINISTRIES

### *Our Current Situation*

#### *Current goals/programs in place:*

- Expressions of care take place personally and spontaneously as well as through organized ministries
- Corporate prayer for all whose needs are known
- Care Ministry Team
- Women of Immanuel and individual circles send greetings and/or make visits to those who are ill or grieving
- Blood drives
- Stephen Ministry Team provides member-to-member caring ministry

#### *Goals still in process:*

### *Our Strategic Direction*

- To organize and coordinate existing expressions of care while identifying new opportunities for caring.

### *Strategic Priorities: Caring Ministries*

#### *Goals for the future*

- 4.1 Develop formal ways to respond to the needs of our members that historically might have happened informally.
  - 4.1.1 Maintain and support a strong professional staff. Our staff is critical to this goal as they are usually the first contact in times of crises or need and are instrumental in addressing the situation or coordinating the involvement of other groups or individuals.
  - 4.1.2 Committees and care-based ministries working with staff will identify needs and create opportunities for positive caring interactions. These groups include the Care Team, Stephen Ministry, Women of the ELCA (WELCA), Phase III, Outreach Committee, Ministry Committee and others.
    - 4.1.2.1 Recruit, develop and train more members as Stephen Ministers.
    - 4.1.2.2 Communicate care available for individuals through Stephen Ministry.

- 4.1.3 Establish support groups as needed for particular areas of need (i.e., Cancer Survivor Groups, Grief Groups, and Parenting Support Groups).
- 4.1.4 Encourage establishment of special interest groups that promote fellowship (i.e., Friends of Literature book discussion group, Knitting Group).
- 4.1.5 Provide opportunities to learn how to extend care (i.e., through prayer, visitation, telephone contact and cards).
- 4.2 Provide opportunities and activities to foster familiarity and interaction between participants /members of all worship services.
  - 4.2.1 The Outreach Committee will develop strategies for welcoming visitors and incorporating new members into the life and culture of our church community.
  - 4.2.2 The Outreach Committee will evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies for welcoming visitors and connecting old and new members.
- 4.3 Explore opportunities to connect with our surrounding neighborhood through caring ministries.
  - 4.3.1 Provide space for meetings such as Volker Neighborhood organization. (See also 2.2.)
  - 4.3.2 Provide space for community learning opportunities such as workshops, health fairs, spirituality retreats/courses that are open to the community, literacy groups, English as a Second Language classes, participation in a “Safe Place” program (identified place for children to go when frightened or in need). (See also 2.2.)
  - 4.3.3 Provide space for community recreation activities particularly for youth. (See also 2.2.)
  - 4.3.4 Review staffing needs—paid or volunteer—resulting from providing space for community activities (i.e., coordination of community recreation activities, scheduling, building supervision). (See also 6.4 and 7.5.3.)
- 4.4 Discuss and explore development of future caring ministries as a way to address the expanded and diverse needs of our growing congregation.
  - 4.4.1 Explore the creation of a columbarium.
  - 4.4.2 Explore the need for and potential role of a Parish Nurse for our church.

## 5. EVANGELISM

### ***Our Current Situation***

#### *Current goals/programs in place:*

- Being a presence in the neighborhood through relationships/networking with our neighbors
- Being a presence at our current location through our building program and exploring ways to serve the community with our facilities
- Outdoor Nativity display is a tradition seasonal witness on Westport Road

#### *Goals still in process:*

- Encourage leaders of informal educational and social groups to extend personal invitations to new members
- Periodic teaching/preaching directed at helping members become personal evangelists through individual contact and invitation, special congregational events, and “points of entry” welcoming

### ***Our Strategic Direction***

- To become a church community that challenges and empowers its people to share the Good News in word and deed.

### ***Strategic Priorities: Evangelism***

#### *Goals for the future:*

- 5.1 Meet the people; Immanuel should get acquainted with people in the community.
  - 5.1.1 Publicize activities through postcards, newspaper ads and local community talk shows.
- 5.2 Be aware of the needs of the community and gain members’ support for new programs; potential programs may include:
  - Methods/forums for talking and listening to people in the community, focusing on issues and difficulties they may be experiencing
  - Babysitting service for single parents
  - Drop-in center for youth or help support a program already in service
- 5.3 Connect people to our church by integrating visitors in smaller groups outside of worship to share similar interests and care for one another.
- 5.4 Offer discipleship opportunities to help people grow deeper in their faith (i.e., the ELCA developed “A Call to Discipleship” which focuses on seven faith practices:

prayer, Christian education, worship, evangelism, teaching, mentoring, service and stewardship.)

## **6. STAFF**

### ***Our Current Situation***

Currently (2004), Immanuel's staff includes a full-time Pastor, Ministry Coordinator and Administrative Secretary, a half-time Organist/Choir Director, and a Vicar (full-time seminary intern). A search process is in place to bring a full-time Director of Learning, Youth and Family (LYF) Ministries. The addition of this staff position will permit a redefinition of the job description for the Ministry Coordinator and relieve the Pastor of some tasks, both of which will help address areas currently in need of more attention from paid staff, including (but not limited to) new member assimilation, volunteer recruitment and training, and Christian Education/Confirmation administration.

There have been numerous conversations and proposals for adding administrative staff, including a plan recently adopted for outsourcing a significant share of the financial administration. Further administrative support might be sought in the form of expanded volunteer support for receptionist, basic paperwork processing (folding, stuffing envelopes, etc.) and other duties that can be performed without adding paid staff.

The expansion and renovation of Immanuel's facilities will require extensive review of current and future means of providing custodial and maintenance care. Needs may be met through added or alternate use of outside cleaning services such as those employed now, or by adding staff. Any option will need to make provision not only for day-to-day cleaning, but for light maintenance (minor repairs, light bulb replacement, etc.). Review of volunteer services to address some of these needs is also an important part of the process.

The commissioning of Immanuel's first Stephen Ministers later this year will expand the effectiveness of the ministry staff by enhancing pastoral care throughout the congregation.

Overall, the actions planned at Immanuel for 2004 relating to staffing needs should address most concerns in this area for the near term. Ongoing participation in the seminary internship (Vicar) program will continue to be reviewed annually.

#### *Current goals/programs in place:*

- Full-time Pastor, Ministry Coordinator, and Administrative Secretary
- Half-time Organist/Choir Director
- Vicar (full-time seminary intern)
- Commissioning of Stephen Ministers to enhance pastoral care
- Outsourcing financial administration

*Goals still in process:*

- Full-time Director of Learning, Youth and Family (LYF) Ministries
- Establishing policies and procedures for human resources
- Expanding volunteer administrative support
- Reviewing current and future means of providing custodial and maintenance care

***Our Strategic Direction***

- To help all members—new and old alike—find meaningful ways to contribute their talents and connect with one another; widespread volunteer support and involvement is essential to maintain Immanuel’s strong sense of community and warmth as it grows, whether or not additional staff is also needed.

***Strategic Priorities: Staff***

*Goals for the future:*

- 6.1 Hire a full-time Director of Learning, Youth and Family (LYF) Ministries staff member. (See also 3.4)
  - 6.1.1 Redefine job description for Ministry Coordinator.
  - 6.1.2 Review and relieve Pastor of tasks that can be filled by Director of LYF including (but not limited to) new member assimilation, volunteer recruitment and training, and Christian Education/Confirmation administration.
- 6.2 Expand volunteer administrative support for receptionist, basic paperwork processing (folding, stuffing envelopes, etc.) and other duties.
- 6.3 Review current and future custodial and maintenance care needs.
  - 6.3.1 Explore using outside cleaning services or adding staff to meet current and future custodial/maintenance needs for day-to-day cleaning.
  - 6.3.2 Review and develop a plan to provide for light maintenance (minor repairs, light bulb replacement, etc.).
  - 6.3.3 Review volunteer services available to address current and future custodial/maintenance needs.
- 6.4 Pursue creation of policies and procedures for human resources at Immanuel.

- 6.4.1 Provide support for staff and oversight for the congregation through implementation and compliance with policies and procedures for human resources.
- 6.4.2 Regularly review compliance with policies and procedures for human resources making recommendations for changes as needed.
- 6.5 Annually review Immanuel's participation in the seminary internship (Vicar) program to insure budgetary concerns are addressed and that the program remains a valuable part of Immanuel's ministry by providing benefit to the congregation as well as a rich and healthy learning environment for the interns.

## **7. PHYSICAL PLANT**

### ***Our Current Situation***

#### *Current goals/programs in place:*

- Property improvements/renovation
- Increased accessibility
- More effective worship environment
- Visual arts acquisitions
- Additional parking
- Improved signage
- Property maintenance, work days, maintenance staff and/or use of local contractors

#### *Goals still in process:*

- Property expansion
- The "Building a Legacy" Capital Campaign concluding in 2005
- Master plan for the grounds and facility in the current location

### ***Our Strategic Direction***

- To develop a long-term master plan for the facility and grounds at our current location, including expansion objectives and uses, and overall preservation of the existing facility. Achieving full accessibility and preserving the character of the building are of the utmost importance in the overall plan.

## ***Strategic Priorities: Physical Plant***

### *Goals for the future*

- 7.1 Continue property improvements and renovation.
  - 7.1.1 Continue improvements to existing church building to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), such as:
    - Automatic/push button openers at main entrance
    - Handicap accessible bathrooms with clearance at fixtures and grab bars
    - Additional handicap parking spaces with signage
- 7.2 Continue to work with the Worship and Arts Committee on maintaining, procuring and placing Immanuel's pieces of art.
- 7.3 Provide better signage both inside and outside the building.
- 7.4 Maintain a master plan for expansion in our existing location that would include property acquisition for building expansion and parking.
- 7.5 Continue property workdays through the leadership of the Property Committee as a strategy for maintaining church property and grounds.
  - 7.5.1 Provide broad invitations to property workdays through e-mail reminders, Microsoft calendar invitations, phone tree invitations, etc.
  - 7.5.2 Encourage "member garden areas" to improve landscaped areas/curb appeal.
  - 7.5.3 Provide on-staff personnel to maintain property and provide access to Immanuel.
  - 7.5.4 Maintain Immanuel's Nativity Scene, store, repair and setup.
- 7.6 Provide adequate and prominent space for a library.

## **8. COMMUNICATIONS**

### ***Our Current Situation***

#### *Current goals/programs in place:*

- Regular printed communications (e.g., weekly bulletins, the bi-weekly *Parish News*, the Annual Report, and specialized mailings)

- Creative use of bulletin boards, specialized displays, and posting Church Council minutes
- Web site

*Goals still in process:*

- Maintain and enhance Web site
- Develop ways to maintain excellence and efficiency in communicating with members and non-members alike

***Our Strategic Direction***

- To encourage regular evaluation of Immanuel's communications tools, and of the technology available to enhance them, so that changes or improvements can be made.

***Strategic Priorities: Communications***

*Goals for the future:*

- 8.1 Since members are indeed the most effective evangelism tool, one focus of the communications plan should be on informing and educating members to make them even more effective (and willing) ambassadors for Christ and the church.
- 8.2 Whether for the sake of more effective evangelism, or simply for all the benefits accruing from improved communication, the future of Immanuel's communications plan could include broader and more effective use of electronic communications.
  - 8.2.1 E-mail notifications and reminders.
  - 8.2.2 Electronically disseminate the Parish news, Committee/Council reports, etc.
  - 8.2.3 Electronically disseminate devotional messages.
  - 8.2.4 Develop a new logo reflective of Immanuel's identity for signage, letterhead and other uses.
  - 8.2.5 Develop a structured process for evaluating and improving all print and electronic communications.
  - 8.2.6 Recruit and train a team of volunteers for "telephone/reception duty" at peak times to increase the likelihood of callers/visitors connecting with a human being.
- 8.3 Create a technology plan to ensure adequate and appropriate technology is available for efficient and effective communication.

- 8.4 Explore recording/archiving worship services, sermons, classes, special events, etc. for posting to website, use in broadcasting, etc.
- 8.5 Coordinate with the Capital Campaign and Property Committees to underscore and make most effective use of the communications capacity of building and grounds (i.e., What does its appearance say to the community? How does it express welcome? Solace? Vibrancy?)
- 8.6 Explore effective advertising and marketing strategies. (See also 5.1.1.)