

Vision 2018: Discerning God's Plan

Walking Together, Fully Alive In Christ

God's Voice

"We take our lead from Christ, who is the source of everything we do. He keeps us in step with each other." Ephesians 4:16

Our Vision

Every member a **missionary**;
Every pastor and rostered leader a **mission director**;
Every Congregation and ministry a **vital center for God's mission, for the sake of the world.**

Our Journey to 2018

God calls us together to participate in God's work to serve our neighbor in the world. Our communities are in desperate need of God's love and grace, expressed and communicated through our active discipleship. Our connective tissue as congregations and communities is the gospel of Jesus Christ, and so in all that we do we strive to embody Christ through our media and message.

Our Destination

The earliest Christians were known as the "People of the Way" which identified them as people who were following something much more than their own ideas. They were following God's will as they witnessed it through Jesus Christ.

The Way of Discipleship: *Our people will be empowered to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in their communities.*

- **Goal:** Our congregations and ministries will develop a current mission plan by 12/31/2018
- **Objective:** Engage at least 30 congregations and ministries per year in mission planning
- **Responsibility:** Director for Evangelical Mission, Mission through Congregations Team, Assistants to the Bishop, interim pastors, outside consultants
- **Implementation Activities:**
 - Tools and training for mission planning will be made available through the synod website, conference meetings and the interim pastors network

- Synod Assemblies and synod website will provide examples of mission plans from other synod congregations and ministries
- Mission plans will be received and blessed annually at the Synod Assembly
- Synod Council members will meet with each congregational ministry completing a mission plan to build a relationship and bless the congregation's efforts

The Way of Communication: *Our communication will be effective and a defining characteristic of our synod.*

- **Goal:** Every congregation and ministry will identify a Synod Communicator by 12/31/2018
- **Objective:** 75 congregations will have a Synod Communicator in place by December 2015, adding 25 additional congregations each year thereafter
- **Responsibility:** Mission through Partnerships Team, Director of Communication, Assistants to the Bishop
- **Implementation Activities:**
 - Efforts will be made to increase the number of recipients and open-rate for synod communications
 - A Synod Social Media Communications Team will be formed
 - The synod office will facilitate increased use of virtual meetings

The Way of Connectedness: *Our congregations and related ministries will thrive through deeper connectedness with other congregations and communities through mutual support and sharing of resources.*

- **Goal 1:** Every Conference will hold two Conference meetings per year that include clergy as well as lay leaders beginning in 2016
- **Goal 2:** Synod Council will study and evaluate the current conference structure by 1/1/2018
- **Objective:** Pre-Assembly Conference meetings will be held prior to the 2016 Synod Assembly
- **Responsibility:** Conference Deans, Assistants to the Bishop, Synod Council
- **Implementation Activities:**
 - Conference meetings will be scheduled to encourage strong lay and rostered participation
 - Congregations will be encouraged to welcome outside speakers such as campus pastors and social ministry staff
 - Each conference will offer 'role specific' training and support, for example, for treasurers and church council members

The Way of Leadership: *Our leaders, both lay and rostered, will be energized to serve with passion, health, and effectiveness in ministry.*

- **Goal 1:** Every rostered leader will be supported by a Mutual Ministry Committee by 12/31/2018
- **Goal 2:** Identify and equip 100 lay leaders for ministry each year beginning in 2016
- **Objective:** 75% of congregations will have functioning Mutual Ministry Committees by 12/31/2018
- **Responsibility:** Office of the Bishop, Assistants to the Bishop, Conference Deans, Mission through Leadership Team
- **Implementation Activities:**
 - Call Process will put greater emphasis on the need for Mutual Ministry Committees
 - Conferences will provide support and training for Mutual Ministry Committees.
 - “Healthy Congregations” pilot project will continue and expand
 - Coaching relationships through Healthy Congregations will be expanded
 - The Annual Bishop’s Leadership Retreat will emphasize growth in personal faith practices
 - Youth, college and young adult related ministries will identify four participants per year who enter professional ministry.
 - Each conference will offer ‘role specific’ training and support, for example, for treasurers and church council members
 - Current leadership programs and training opportunities offered through Lutheran Youth Organization, Women of the ELCA, Lutheran Men in Mission, CLAIM, Mar-Lu-Ridge and the Gettysburg Seminary will continue and expand.

Measuring Effectiveness

Our Synod Council is accountable to monitor the progress in achieving the journey of the Four Ways. The Council will receive quarterly reports on the progress of each of these four strategies. The Synod Vice President will report progress at the annual Synod Assembly.