



Grace Lutheran Church  
*Sharing God's Grace*

Council Planning Retreat  
February 19 & 20, 2010

Summary of Discussions and Key Actions

Prepared by  
Grace Lutheran Church Council Leaders  
and  
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Growth Design Corporation

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# INTRODUCTION

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## Background and History

In April of 2009, the Grace Lutheran Church Council gathered for a one and a half day planning session with Pastor Ken Gibson, who had recently been installed at Grace Lutheran Church. Retreat objectives included:

- To develop a shared vision for the future
- To design a model and structure to fulfill the congregation's identity and mission
- To determine how the council will assess the congregation's effectiveness in living into its identity (worship, education, fellowship, and stewardship) and mission (evangelism, global connections, ecumenism, and social ministry)

Key outcomes of this planning retreat included:

- Conducting active listening sessions with congregational members
- Adopting a cottage meeting format
- Establishing task force groups to meet and work intentionally on recommendations for the council's consideration.

A total of thirteen (13) separate cottage meetings were held involving more than 100 members of the congregation. These active listening sessions were helpful to informing the work of each task force group.

Five task force groups were formed: committee structure; mission and vision; staffing structure; property considerations; and education. Each of the task force groups met to assess and to provide a set of recommendations to the council for council member discussion and appropriate action.

## 2010 Planning

Grace Lutheran council members gathered on Friday evening and all day Saturday, February 19 and 20, 2010. The purpose was to have sufficient time for review, discussion and to design the appropriate action to be taken on the recommendations of each of the assigned task force groups formed as a result of the strategic planning session conducted on April 24 and 25 of 2009.

Council members included: Rick Cornell, president; Mary Beth Martin-Bellivia, vice president; Kathy Nordin, secretary; Marlene Frisbie, treasurer; Cynthia DeBerg; Tim Stumpff; Steve Young; Chuck Varys; Brian Gerloff; and Joe Pienschke. Excused were: Nan Goerlitz and Sonja Hutchens.

*Note: Some of the suggested dates for implementing the initiatives in this document will need to be changed, but the dates given provide a general sense of the timetable the Council has in mind.*

## 2010 PLANNING RETREAT AGENDA

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### Friday, February 19

- 5:30 p.m. Arrive and check-in/introduction of council members
- 5:45 p.m. Opening prayer and devotion (Pastor Ken)
- 5:50 p.m. Retreat objectives (Pastor Ken)
- 6:00 p.m. Dinner (catered) shared together
- 6:30 p.m. Opening Session – Facilitated by Jim Raffel, Growth Design Corporation
- A. Review of key committee survey results/background discussion
  - B. Format for reporting to the entire congregation
- 7:30 p.m. Session One
- A. Task Force on Committee Structure
  - B. Design a structure to take the recommendations developed by each task force forward to full implementation
- 8:30 p.m. Break
- 8:45 p.m. Session One Continued
- 9:30 p.m. Evening prayer (Pastor Ken)

*Return to our homes for a night of rest*

### Saturday, February 20

- 8:00 a.m. Coffee & Bakery
- 8:30 a.m. Session One Continued
- 9:30 a.m. Session Two
- A. Task Force on Mission and Vision
- 10:15 a.m. Break
- 10:30 a.m. Session Three (*Sr. Pastor & Council Members Only*)
- A. Staffing Evaluations
  - B. Staffing Structure Going Forward
- 12 noon Lunch – Catered
- 12:45 p.m. Session Four
- A. Property Considerations/Discussion
  - B. Action Team
- 2:15 p.m. Break
- 2:30 p.m. Session Five
- A. Task Force on Education
  - B. Action Plan
- 3:15 p.m. Next Steps/Assignments
- 3:30 p.m. Roundtable
- 3:45 p.m. Closing Prayer (Pastor Ken)
- 4:00 p.m. Adjourn

## PLANNING RETREAT OBJECTIVES

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- Process the findings and recommendations of each task force group
- Format the findings and recommendations into a formal report to be shared with the congregation
- Determine communication channel(s) to share with the congregation
- Design the appropriate structure to move toward implementation of each of the task force group recommendations
  - Charge and authority
  - Accountability
  - Time frame

## OPENING SESSION – REVIEW OF COMMITTEE SURVEY RESULTS

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An overall review of the committee surveys requested by the task force on committee structure was discussed. Common concerns voiced on the surveys included:

- Lack of formal committee charters
- Lack of clearly defined term limits for the chair of each committee
- Difficulty in attracting members to each committee
- Succession planning regarding committee chair leadership
- Policy regarding budget latitude for some committees
- Committee minutes regularly being recorded and actions of the committee being shared
- Absence of a calendar of meetings and a schedule of activities for each committee

### Survey results

- Surveys completed and returned
  - Social Ministry
  - Finance Committee
  - Nominating Committee
  - Grace Lutheran Preschool Committee
  - Worship and Music Committee
  - Stewardship Committee
- Surveys missing
  - Endowment Committee
  - Evangelism Committee
  - Fellowship Committee

This background information was helpful to reviewing the recommendations put forward by the task force on committee structure.

## SESSION ONE – TASK FORCE ON COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

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The council discussed each of the nine recommendations put forward by the task force.

*“The Committee Structure Task Group makes the following recommendations to the council and congregation with the goal of strengthening the service of the committees of Grace Lutheran Church in support of our ministries and visions (Worship, Evangelism, Ministry with the Poor, Discipleship, Spirituality, Youth, and Leadership). In developing these recommendations, our group compiled a list of existing committees – those mandated by the constitution and those that are actively functioning as committees of ministry; that list follows these recommendations. We polled all existing committee chairs via a survey and our recommendations reflect our interpretation of responses to those surveys as well as input from the cottage meetings held this past summer and last spring’s church council retreat. We are including copies of those surveys with this report.”*

**Recommendation One:** Establish an Education or Adult Education committee, charged with the goal of strengthening adult spiritual growth and discipleship through the establishment of educational opportunities focused on Scripture and deepening the knowledge of our faith and our faith history. This area of vision is notably deficient at the present time.

The council discussed and accepted this recommendation to create an *Adult Education Committee*.

The framework for this new committee was established as the following:

- Place an open invitation to those interested in serving on this new committee – late March
- First “New” Adult Education Committee Meeting – mid April
- Meet to develop a committee charter
- Elect a chair
- Conduct market research to determine the needs and wants of the congregation
- Create a menu of adult educational offerings, e.g., Sunday morning program; mid-week bible study; small groups, etc.

Begin offering first adult education programs by September 1, 2010

**Recommendation Two:** Establish guidelines for each existing committee to develop a charter and mission statement. The work of each committee will be reflected in these statements. This will help engage the entire congregation in understanding the mission of each committee and help potential members understand responsibilities in service on each committee.

The council discussed and accepted this recommendation.

The council will ask the task force to develop a suitable template to be followed by each committee in developing a formal committee charter and purpose statement. The task force should prepare a model/template to be shared with the council in April 2010. The council will review and refine if necessary and disseminate to each of the nine committees to be completed and shared with the congregation at the August annual meeting.

**Recommendation Three:** Provide specific expectations for each committee regarding interaction with the council, congregation, and other committees. For example, each committee should establish regular meeting dates, record meeting minutes with actions and ideas easily discernible from those minutes, and provide copies of those minutes to the council, the church office, and the congregation in a timely fashion. Effectively communicating the actions of each committee to the congregation as a whole should be a priority. A template has been developed for recording the minutes and is available for each committee. Each committee should have a recording secretary or appoint one for each meeting to record and maintain minutes. Within a reasonable time period, those minutes should be provided to the church office for maintaining an office record of each committee, and forwarding to the pastor, church council secretary, and distribution to a church bulletin board. It is also expected that when a committee undertakes actions or projects that impact another mission within the church, that those actions will be coordinated with all other appropriate committees and church council.

**Our goal as a congregation should be for each mission area, usually working through our committees, to try and advance our ministry with as much congregational involvement, inclusiveness, and transparency as possible.**

The council discussed and accepted this recommendation.

The council indicated that the task force should design a "flow chart" to indicate the distribution channel(s) of the minutes.

- Draft of meeting minutes to the council within two weeks of the committee meeting
- Within one week of formal approval, send the final approved minutes to the church secretary
- Church secretary to distribute committee minutes to each of the other committee chairs

**Recommendation Four:** Each committee should develop an annual calendar that establishes timelines for activities that occur every year. This should be posted on the church calendar.

The council discussed and accepted this recommendation and added that it too (the council) should establish a calendar specific to the annual budget preparation.

The desire was to have each committee complete and submit its calendar/schedule of meetings, activities and programs prior to November 1, 2010.

The council will complete its calendar and schedule by July 31, 2010.

**Recommendation Five:** In many areas of mission there are natural overlaps of committee responsibilities. Effectively coordinating these overlapping areas may be facilitated by effective communication between committee chairs. We recommend an assembly of all committee chairs at six month intervals.

The council discussed and accepted this recommendation.

The council outlined a meeting in late April and October as target months and added the staff in these joint fellowship and planning sessions. The framework will include:

- Fellowship
- Sharing a calendar/schedule of planned activities and programs
- The spring meeting will include discussion of items with budget resource implications

**Recommendation Six:** Individuals often hesitate to volunteer in leadership positions because of a lack of prior experience. We recommend an active program of leadership development within the congregation, including specific training for committee chairs. This training can include, but not be limited to, such items as governance, Christian leadership, servant leadership, and include mentorship of committee chairs.

The council discussed and accepted this recommendation.

In relation to serving in a leadership position, several suggestions were put forward.

- Develop a "role sheet" for each committee chair to outline expectations
- Develop a "role sheet" for council members to outline expectations
- Develop a "council manual" that will contain a copy of the Grace Lutheran Constitution, minutes from the previous year, committee charters, once developed, and a master calendar.
- Develop a more proactive approach to providing leadership development support through the adult education committee, outside resources, such as the synod, and through active mentoring
- Seize opportunities to "lift-up" those volunteers who serve in leadership roles

The role sheets for the council members and committee chairs are to be developed for review and approval at the April 2010 council meeting.

**Recommendation Seven:** A list of all active Grace Lutheran Church committees and chairs should be available to the congregation.

The council discussed and accepted this recommendation.

The framework was established to include listing the council and committee chairs on the Grace Lutheran Church website. This will not include contact information, just the names and the committee.

**Recommendation Eight:** We recommend the council review our existing constitution, and establish clearer guidelines for constitutionally mandated committees. This includes establishing clear guidelines for the Executive, Audit, Finance and Nominating committees through policy statements. In addition, we recommend that periodically, perhaps every four to five years, the council establish a process for reviewing the structure of the existing committees, and assess whether it is still advancing the mission of the church.

The council discussed and accepted this recommendation.

The framework included outlining a more defined role for the executive committee. It was decided that the executive committee should:

- Develop a “role sheet” to guide members of the executive committee in relation to their function
- Meet as a committee when such an urgency or emergency prevents the full council from meeting and act on behalf of the council
- Meet to set the agenda for each council meeting

The council president and vice president will draft the role sheet for the executive, audit, finance and nominating committees for discussion and adoption at the March council meeting

**Recommendation Nine:** Per the constitution, committee chairs are limited to two terms in succession as chair. The length of a term is undefined in the constitution. We recommend each committee establish their own guidelines for selecting a chair, but terms of all chairs begin at the same time – either September, concurrent with council officers, or in January, concurrent with the church fiscal year. The chair of each committee should serve for one year at a time, but should serve for no more than two years in succession.

The council discussed this recommendation and reviewed the formal constitution.

- It is stated in the constitution that a committee chair shall serve a one-year term and shall not serve more than two successive terms as chair. The council acknowledged it had not been in compliance with the constitution and agreed that it would begin to publish and enforce the constitutional guidelines. This will be referred back to the task force for further work to establish a framework to communicate the guidelines and help the current committees to implement.

April 2010 was the time frame adopted by the council for implementation.

## SESSION TWO – TASK FORCE ON MISSION AND VISION

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The task force has met once to discuss the current mission and vision statements. The Council reviewed the task force minutes and materials and decided to ask the current task force to continue its work with the following guidelines:

- Meet in March 2010 to continue its work as a task force
- Design a process to engage the committee chairs to review and discuss the current mission and vision statements
- Research other church mission and vision statements
- Research guiding principles
- Research values
- Design a process to engage the congregation in a process of mission and vision review

The council felt it would be best for committees to engage in their own mission and visioning process before proceeding to an overall mission and visioning process for the full congregation. This would allow for a more organic process overall and would enable committees to move forward immediately with their work in this area. The council felt it would be appropriate to dedicate a year or more to reviewing and appropriately engaging the entire congregation in examining and discussing its vision. It is important not to rush the process as, together, we discern God's will and mission for our congregation.

The council will ask the task force to help facilitate this discussion to gain the benefit of broad input and ownership throughout the congregation.

## SESSION THREE – STAFFING EVALUATIONS AND STAFFING STRUCTURE

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### **Staffing Evaluations**

Pastor Ken reported that a new evaluation form had been developed for use with this year's staff evaluations. Staff members were asked to complete the form and individual meetings were held with Pastor Ken to review and discuss. He reported that the staff evaluations had been completed with the exception of the evaluations on Jay and Deb Fuller, whose daughter, Hope, is seriously ill.

Pastor Ken reported that the staff expressed a desire to gather together during the year for additional team building and fellowship. Pastor Ken agreed to host two gatherings per year to bring the entire staff together. The council affirmed the need to gather periodically and supported the objective to meet twice a year.

The need for ongoing staff education and additional training was acknowledged. The council supported seeing to it that budget resources are made available to invest in ongoing staff development.

### **Staffing Structure Going Forward**

Discussion was held regarding the need for an associate pastor. The council affirmed that adding this new position should remain a priority for 2011. It was discussed that this should be a "called position" and follow a customary call process.

## SESSION FOUR – PROPERTY CONSIDERATIONS

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The council discussed immediate facility needs of the present physical plant. They included:

- Additional Sunday school classrooms
- Preschool classrooms
- Sr. high meeting space
- A possible reconfiguration of the present fellowship space and possibly of the current library

This resulted in a discussion of the status of the overall physical plant with regard to scheduled maintenance and replacement. An assessment of the entire facility was conducted. A formal plan needs to be developed to address the priority needs of the present physical plant.

The council discussed the need to establish a process and procedures for accessing funds set aside by the council into a capital reserve. A balance in the capital fund reserve exists and the property and grounds committee should be invited to submit a prioritized list of recommended expenditures to the council for review, discussion and action.

The council discussed the need to examine possibilities for further campus development. Several possibilities were brought forward, including senior housing.

The council acknowledged Grace Lutheran Church will need to partner with an experienced developer to:

- Conduct the necessary market research to determine if there is sufficient market demand to sustain a development project
- Provide the required expertise with regard to project development
- Have its own, or access to the required capital for development
- Have experience with property/project management

It was decided that a separate “action team” should be established to:

- Develop a master campus plan with the consideration of near-term facility/parking lot expansion and appropriate green space
- Identify potential partners and further explore viable possibilities for the remaining Grace Lutheran acreage
- Explore senior housing as a priority given the present interest expressed by many congregational members
- Consider renewable and sustainable energy options in accord with the present activities of the “green team”

## SESSION FIVE – TASK FORCE ON EDUCATION

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The council received and discussed the report and recommendations of the task force on education. A key set of recommendations centered on establishing an adult education committee and initiating a variety of small affinity groups.

The council affirmed establishing an adult education committee.

After careful review of the required staffing structure to start and sustain a number of small affinity groups, the council elected to defer acting on implementing this recommendation until an associate pastor is on staff.

# APPENDIX

## TASK FORCE COMMITTEES & MEMBERS

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(Boldface - Assigned Council Leadership)

### Property Task

**Joe Pienschke**

Bill Kreznor  
Chris Ethridge  
Critch Judd  
Dick Boehmke  
Frank Bunch  
Gretchen Hutchens  
Jim Davis  
Joe Pienschke  
Joeseph Evanoff  
Ken Zank  
Marlene Frisbie  
Rich Knowles  
Terese Paulson  
Tim Buhrow  
Tom Meyer

### Staffing Considerations

**Ila Randolph**

**Kent Frisbie**

Billie Cornell  
Cindy Meyer  
Donna Marie  
Jim Roberts  
Karen Reinhard  
Ken Hansing  
Ralph Cervantes  
Roger Oberman

### Committee Structure

**Brian Gerloff**

**Rick Cornell**

Beth & Mark Miller  
Bill Nattress  
Claude Hutchens  
Erich and Kristin Thurow  
Frank Olson  
Ken Hansing  
Ralph Cervantes

### Educational Needs

**Steve Young**

**Mary Beth Martin-Bellavia**

Barb Hahn  
Byron Peterson  
Carole Gerloff  
Cathy Tell  
Gretchen Hutchens  
Judy Rooney  
Mary Noe  
Kathy Nordin  
Pam Richards  
Ric Larson  
Roger Oberman  
Terese Paulson

### Mission/Vision

**Chuck Varys**

**Kathy Nordin**

Pamela Gerloff  
Adele Petersen  
Joe Pienschke  
Frank Bunch  
Jim Ingemanson  
Tim Stumpff

## COTTAGE MEETING HOSTS AND DATES

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Vern & Borgie Stenoien  
Thursday, July 16<sup>th</sup> Noon

Rick & Billie Cornell  
Sunday, July 19<sup>th</sup>, 1 PM

Jim & Pam Roberts  
Monday, July 20, 6:30 PM

Brian & Carle Gerloff  
Sunday, July 26, 2:00 PM

Paul & Cindy  
Monday, July 27, 7:00 PM

Jim & Audrey Haager  
Sunday, August 2, 2 PM

Luke & Ellen Lohmeyer  
Thursday, August 6, 7:00 PM

Bill & Marlene Botts  
Saturday, August 22, 1 PM

Paul & Diane Lockwood  
Sunday, August 30, 1:30 PM