

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH
WACONIA, MINNESOTA
JULY 23, 2018

This Report and Recommendations is an executive summary of information gathered from two resources and will speak to the vitality, energy, impact and potential of the Faith Lutheran congregation. The two sources of information are the Missional Assessment Profile (MAP) online survey and a series of individual interviews.

The MAP was open for input from June 3 - 17, 2018. All Faith Lutheran people, confirmation age and older, were invited to take this survey. A total of 230 surveys were completed. A good representative sample from a congregation includes responses from about 50% of the average worship attendance on any given weekend. The AWA for Faith Lutheran is 470, so this response represents a good sample of the views of the congregation.

Personal interviews were conducted by Tom Jolivette of Kairos and Associates on July 18-19, 2018. The leadership of Faith Lutheran selected persons for these interviews who represented congregational leadership and persons who have demonstrated generosity to Faith Lutheran in a variety of ways. Each interview was thirty minutes in length. A total of 31 people were interviewed.

Results from the MAP Survey

The MAP survey indicates that Faith Lutheran is a growing, theologically progressive, younger and adaptable congregation. Over half of the respondents to the survey were 54 years of age or younger. Also, over one-third of the respondents have been participating in Faith Lutheran for ten years or less. In addition, 77% of the respondents live within five miles of the church building. All of this supports the assertion that Faith is a growing, younger, Waconia-based congregation.

Faith Lutheran is also a very well educated congregation. A vast majority of those who took the survey, 84%, have a college degree or more. Coinciding with this, the income level of the respondents was very high with 60% of respondents reporting income of \$100,000 or more and 33% reporting income of \$150,000 or more.

Self-reported giving to the ministries of Faith Lutheran show that two-thirds of the respondents give \$300/month or less to Faith Lutheran, which is \$3,600 or less per year.

Among the findings worth mentioning are the following:

- Worship is highly valued and is the highest rated source for faith development within the congregation. Small groups also emerged as a significant source for faith development.
- People of Faith are willing to tell others about their experiences at Faith Lutheran and invite them to church activities and worship.
- People want to know that the decisions of the leadership are in line with the mission of the congregation. The MAP did not indicate mistrust in leadership. People simply want to be better informed about decisions being made in relation to the mission of the congregation.
- People want to better understand how finances are used. Again, this is not a statement of mistrust. It indicates people want to be better informed about the gifts they are giving and how they are being used.
- As you have already seen, the gap between the levels of income in this congregation and the level of generosity to the church is wide. This provides an opportunity to build a culture of generosity for the sake of personal faith development and for the sake of mission development.

Results from Personal Interviews

The purpose of the personal interviews was to gain greater understanding of some of the results from the MAP survey and to measure the level of financial giving that is possible for the next three-year congregational appeal.

In an attempt to understand reasons why Faith Lutheran is growing, especially attracting younger families, the interviewees were asked to comment on their experience with Faith Lutheran. What does Faith Lutheran do better than other congregations in the area? What is the reputation of Faith Lutheran in the community?

Follow are the most-often mentioned reasons:

- The welcome to new people at Faith Lutheran is warm and sincere. People are personally greeted, invited to participate and introduced to others within the congregation as a way to welcome and engage new attendees. The

emergence of many small groups has proven to be a way to involve new people immediately in the life of the congregation.

- Faith Lutheran is an inclusive congregation. It is known throughout the area that Faith is serious when it says “all are welcome.” This inclusivity includes race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and faith (or lack of faith) background.
- A high quality children’s ministry was often mentioned as a drawing card. The stability of leadership in children’s ministry, plus the quality of programming attracts and retains younger families.
- Music was also mentioned as a quality for which Faith is well-known.
- It is also important to note that Waconia and Carver County are among the fastest growing areas in Minnesota. The average age of Waconia residents is reported to be in the mid-30’s. Some of the growth of Faith Lutheran can be attributed to these statistics.

As Faith Lutheran continues to grow, it is important to be mindful of your future. When asked about hopes and dreams for the future of Faith Lutheran, the following responses were most common:

- Faith needs to find more ways to engage young people and young families in meaningful ways.
- Faith Lutheran is a largely staff-led congregation. As Faith continues to grow, it will be important to staff appropriately and to retain a stable staff and program.
- Continued growth of small groups will be critical to growth of Faith Lutheran for a variety of reasons – involvement, education, faith-development, outreach, etc.
- A greater emphasis on generosity is needed. There are many very generous people in Faith Lutheran. But as a whole, financial giving to the ministries of Faith is not where it could be.
- At some point if Faith continues to grow, the current church facility may be inadequate for worship, group spaces and parking. Options mentioned include buying neighboring properties to expand the church’s footprint with parking as a major need, add more worship services to accommodate more people, start a satellite campus or spin off a new congregation, build a new and large church facility.

Potential for a new three-year fundraising appeal

Faith Lutheran is approaching the end of a three-year Powered by Faith fundraising appeal. In 2015 the congregation decided to combine into one commitment giving to both the annual ministry and the capital budgets. By all counts, this has worked well. Leadership is again proposing a three-year fundraising appeal for the same purposes.

In order to meet the increasing needs of a growing congregation, it will be necessary to increase the goal of this campaign, compared to the previous one. This means that a combination of new participants and increased commitments will be needed to meet the goals.

Of the twenty-two giving units asked, 50% of them indicated they would consider increasing their commitment to this new three-year appeal. Most of them actually said they would be increasing their gift. When asked to give a probable range of their new commitment, almost all indicated they would give between \$5,000 and \$20,000 each year for three years. Several indicated they would give more than that. Only one indicated slightly less.

Recommendations

Based on the information provided through the MAP survey and personal interviews, the following recommendations are made:

1. Explore and implement new and innovative ways to increase the effectiveness of the congregation's communication to participants in the life of Faith Lutheran. Of particular importance are communications related to decisions made by leadership of the congregation (both ordained and lay) and information related to the use of congregational finances.
2. Explore, develop and implement new engagement strategies to meaningfully involve people in the mission of Faith Lutheran Church. Of particular importance is the engagement of people new to Faith, young adults and young families.
3. Continue to prepare for a growing future. This includes conversation about staffing, program and facilities.
4. Give a high level of focus to developing a greater sense of financial generosity within the congregation. A multi-faceted approach (worship, education, Bible study, book study, one-on-one conversations, mentoring, etc.) will be needed to ensure generosity is given high priority. Remember that financial

generosity is both about personal faith development and funding important mission opportunities.

5. Conduct a three-year fundraising appeal to raise funds for both the annual ministry and capital budgets with a goal of securing commitments of at least \$2.5 million over the three-year giving period. This is an increase of at least \$300,000 over the last appeal.

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