



What was accomplished at the first Vision Planning session?

In a very short time (the session lasted just 45 minutes) we accomplished a lot! We built a foundation for the new congregation that will be formed by combining Shepherd of the Hills and New Life. (Not a physical foundation, of course, but a more important one, a ministry foundation.)

At that meeting in August Pastor Rick Hans (our Mission and Ministry Facilitator for the Minnesota North District) met with members of New Life and Shepherd of the Hills for our first "VVM" session. "VVM" stands for "Values, Vision and Mission." Each of those words identifies the goal of one of the sessions. Thus, the goal for that first session was to set out the things that we Value in ministry. In other words, the things we feel are top priority for the new congregation we will form.

Out of a list of twenty-nine possible priorities we set out the following as being the most valuable:

1. Bible-Centered Teaching and Preaching
2. (tie) Discipleship - Being and Making Committed Christians
2. (tie) Christian Education - Teaching the faith to all members
3. Evangelism - Reaching people outside the congregation
4. Godly Servant Leadership
5. Welcoming Visitors

These are listed in the order of priority as voted on by those who attended the VVM. (I listed the "Bible-Centered Teaching and Preaching" far above the others, because that value was chosen as the top priority by nearly 2-to-1 over "Discipleship" and "Christian Education" which tied for second.)

Setting down what we Value at the present time was the foundation that needs to be in place before we can begin to build a Vision of where we want to be in the future. (Creating this Vision will be the purpose of our next VVM session on Thursday, September 4.)

Each person who attended that session was given an assignment for this next session: To write a Vision of what we see our new congregation being and doing in a couple years. If you were not able to attend the first meeting and would like to be part of this planning process, I've made a copy of the assignment and included it in this newsletter. Just complete it and bring it to our "Vision" session on September 4 at 7:00 p.m. at Shepherd of the Hills.

As I mentioned last month, this is an exciting time! It is not often that a person gets to be involved in setting the course for a new congregation. It was doubly exciting to see the priorities that were chosen for the congregation - especially the fact that "Bible-Centered" was far and away the top priority. This is so important! If we are to be a congregation that truly makes a difference in our community, our teaching and preaching and reaching activities must be based on and powered by God's Word.

As our discipleship verse from last month reminded us: "*If you hold to my words, you are truly my disciples.*" God will bless us as we hold to his words. We will be as described in Psalm One "a tree planted beside streams - a tree that produces fruit and does not wither."

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net