

# Strategic Plan 2.0

*Final Recommendations*



**HOLY TRINITY**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

# Introduction

What *does* it look like to share God's love?

As Christians we throw out terms like this regularly. But thanks to a rekindle Congregational Development Program grant of \$15,000 from Columbia Theological Seminary, Holy Trinity had the opportunity to think, pray, and plan together for what this really looks like.

Awarded by the Lilly Endowment, a private philanthropic group funded by the pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly, the grant is part of the Thriving Congregations Initiative. Holy Trinity was one of eight congregations across the country to receive this grant.

Over the past 9 months leaders from Holy Trinity have completed an intentional discernment process titled "Strategic Plan 2.0". This process included five initiatives: Welcome; Worship; Respond; Children, Youth, and Family; and Facilities, and included two congregation-wide meetings and dinners, termed "Huddles."

We hope this summary report gives you a chance to look back on the Strategic Plan 2.0 process, but also look forward to exciting ministry opportunities going forward. Good days are ahead.

Pastor Ben Hilding and Pat Remfert grant facilitators.

# Goals of the Strategic Plan 2.0

At Holy Trinity, we realized that following the initial experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic, we needed to foster intentional and communal conversations about our next steps in ministry. We're on a journey, trying things, learning and unlearning, growing and leaving things behind. We find ourselves in a moment of disruption, but we realize that this moment is actually opportunistic. It allows for experimentation, innovation, and creativity that would otherwise be difficult to foster in normal times.

Holy Trinity launched a successful Strategic Plan in 2015, and benefited from a number of its results. With the conclusion of the vision process in 2020, we have a clarified vision statement to "share God's love for all people from one generation to the next." Our mission is to 1) welcome, 2) worship, 3) respond. Now that we have a unifying vision and mission, we were well-positioned to have a subsequent process that refines our goals and ministry initiatives, which we have titled, "Strategic Plan 2.0".

We commissioned 5 teams, each composed of 7 members. These teams corresponded to five particular ministry areas (1) Welcome, 2) Worship, 3) Respond, 4) Children, Youth and Family (CYF) ministry, and 5) Facilities). These 35 gifted and passionate individuals were invited intentionally to serve, and they represent a variety of demographics at our congregation. Our Strategic Plan 2.0 project shared the privilege and responsibility of experimentation with our congregation. Through this process we were able to ask the question. "What's the most important thing we need to do right now as a church?" These teams of people generated creative ideas, fueled collective passion, and fostered collaborative discernment regarding our purpose and activity going forward.

# Strategic Plan 2.0 Process

After formulating these five teams, we hosted a congregational event called a “huddle” on October 3, 2021. Just like sports teams huddle together to come up with a game plan, we did this as a congregation in a large, outdoor event. We invited Pastor Blair Anderson, a strategic planning consultant who guided us through our 2015 strategic plan, to be the keynote speaker. Our theme was “rainbows”- just as the rainbow served as a sign to Noah that God guided him and his family through the storm, we remembered the promises that God led and guided this church through the storms of 2020-21. About 100 people attended this gathering, and we commissioned these five teams for their important work.

Each of these five teams were tasked with four primary points of discernment:

- 1) deepen understanding and decision making efforts through the lens of the vision/mission/ core values,
- 2) circle back to the “further considerations” left on the table from the 2015 Strategic Plan,
- 3) create intentional conversations with in-house voices of expertise,
- 4) discern what we’ve learned and how we’ve been changed as a result of the digital ministry reformation.

Starting in August 2021, these teams met faithfully on a regular basis. The five leaders of these teams (Jamie Sticha, Christa Smith, Matt Goldade, Jay Schoenebeck and Jackie Lee) also met monthly with the grant facilitators (Pat Remfert and Pastor Ben Hilding). Pat and Pastor Ben met weekly to make sure the process stayed on track. Pat and Pastor Ben also met with each of the team leaders on an individual basis.

In January 2022, in an effort to include the whole congregation in this discernment process, we completed a congregation-wide survey called the CAT (Congregation Assessment Tool) survey. We took this survey as part of the 2015 Strategic Plan, and used it to compare progress. The survey was administered by the

HTLC communications team for three weeks. 198 surveys were completed! The results and findings from this survey were presented by Pastor Blair Anderson to Strategic Plan 2.0 team members, staff and council members on February 1.

In late January and February, we hosted listening sessions in an effort to facilitate open dialogue with the congregation at large. Two listening sessions per team were held, where anyone from the congregation could participate in a brainstorming conversation with the team members.

The five teams processed all the information gathered, and collectively discerned what this means for our congregation. At the conclusion of the discernment process, each of these 5 teams made 2 recommendations for future church ministries.

- **“Investment”**- Recommend choosing to re-invest in an already existing ministry, in an emphasized way.
- **“Innovation”**- Recommend something brand new that aligns with our vision/mission, but moves us forward in experimental ways.

Our culminating experience for this Strategic Plan 2.0 process was a second congregation huddle on April 3, 2022, as the Strategic Plan 2.0 teams presented their recommendations to the congregation as “10 Next Steps”. Rev. Dr. Julie Josund from Columbia Theological Seminary was present as a keynote speaker. Approximately 150 people were present for this gathering.

In the pages to follow, you’ll find these final 10 recommendations for ministry “Next steps”. If you are interested in helping with one of these projects, you can sign up online at [holyytrinityonline.org](http://holyytrinityonline.org).

# WELCOME TEAM

Team Members - Jamie Sticha (Chair), Jamie Bisek, Ann Studer, Al Gulbransen, Joel Loose, Nyla Newton & Laurie Thorp

## CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY AROUND FOOD (INVESTMENT):

Everyone has a place at God's table! This recommendation seeks to invest in increased opportunities to connect over food and fellowship. Food is a universal love language. Because we value community, inclusivity, and authenticity, we propose:

1. Periodic breakfast Sundays
2. Explore pre-made meals for homebound members, new parents, and those recovering from surgery or illness.
3. Provide more theme nights - incorporate diversity of culture
4. Host "how-to" lessons for making lefse, kolacky, or jello!

## INTERESTED IN HELPING?

We're looking for people to help the kitchen team. As we increase food opportunities, we need to add people to the team who can prepare meals, serve them with a smile, and help wash dishes. Please go to [holytrinityonline.org](http://holytrinityonline.org) and click on the "Sign Up" button to view all of the "10 Next Step" opportunities!

## CREATE A "WELCOME" TEAM (INNOVATION):

All are welcome! This is a fundamental aspect of our mission. This recommendation seeks to:

1. Create a team who would take leadership on reaching out to new community members (people who have recently moved to New Prague and surrounding communities) and invite them to worship/attend HTLC.
2. Tend to the Welcome Center
3. Prepare packets to give to people visiting HTLC
4. Participate in New Member classes and engagement opportunities
5. Implement the "First 5 Rule", and ensure all are truly welcome at Holy Trinity.

## INTERESTED IN HELPING?

We're looking for people to be a part of this exciting "Welcome Team." Do you have an inclination to welcome new people? We'd love your help to form this new important team and to live out our mission at Holy Trinity! Please go to [holytrinityonline.org](http://holytrinityonline.org) and click on the "Sign Up" button to view all of the "10 Next Step" opportunities!

# WORSHIP TEAM

Team Members - Christa Smith (Chair), Kimberly Carlberg , Rita Sapp, Joan Bohnsack, Michael Busch, Daryl Thietje, Heather Tietz

## WORSHIP ENHANCEMENTS

### (INVESTMENT):

The heart of our identity is as a worshiping community gathered around Word and Sacrament. This recommendation endeavors to enhance worship experiences within the sanctuary walls. We love our sanctuary and want to explore ways to enhance the space we currently have. This includes:

1. Researching colorful banners and backlighting around the sanctuary to brighten up the brick walls and altar.
2. Explaining the purposes and history of significant people and days within the worship calendar,
3. Hosting regular music events that invite guest musicians within our community and region, as well as host “open mic” opportunities.

## INTERESTED IN HELPING?

We're looking for people interested in providing input for physical worship enhancements, or providing special music, either during a worship service or another “open mic” kind of opportunity. All abilities welcome! Please go to [holytrinityonline.org](http://holytrinityonline.org) and click on the “Sign Up” button to view all of the “10 Next Step” opportunities!

## DEVELOP LITURGICAL ARTS

### MINISTRIES (INNOVATION):

Our worship has personality to it, and we strive to engage a variety of means to help people build a meaningful, close relationship with God. At its heart, this initiative offers a vehicle to create dynamic worship experiences. We understand the rich, historical context of our church's history, and feel compelled to expand modern worship expressions through liturgical arts. In response to our congregational survey, this recommendation responds to the need for people to be involved and see their faith “come alive.”

We seek to explore:

1. Dramatic readings
2. Liturgical dance
3. Theater opportunities
4. Other artistic elements that would foster an engagement with the creativity of the Spirit.

## INTERESTED IN HELPING?

We're looking for people who have interests in theater, dance, or other forms of art. We'd love to be in conversation with you to imagine ways that we can incorporate these sorts of liturgical arts into worship services. Please go to [holytrinityonline.org](http://holytrinityonline.org) and click on the “Sign Up” button to view all of the “10 Next Step” opportunities!

# RESPOND TEAM

Team Members - Matt Goldade (Chair), Pastor Diane Goulson, Nicole Anderson, Jen Saylor, Mitch Paschke, Lindsey Cornell

## INVEST IN HIGH SCHOOL MINISTRIES (INVESTMENT):

In gratitude to God's grace, we cannot help but respond to the evolving needs of our greater community. After the past couple years, we hear the recurring theme that high school age students need a safe, healthy, and faith-filled community. We seek to build a robust youth group that:

- Brings teens together from all religious/ unchurched backgrounds.
- Provides faith formation opportunities
- Provide space for teens to sing, play games, learn kindness
- Provide opportunities to enhance leadership skills, and become positive contributors to the community.

## INTERESTED IN HELPING?

Do you care about investing in our high school youth? Are you interested in being a mentor? Do you want to see your student have a meaningful high school ministry experience? Please go to [holytrinityonline.org](http://holytrinityonline.org) and click on the "Sign Up" button to view all of the "10 Next Step" opportunities!

## FORM A "RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS" TEAM (INNOVATION):

With loving hearts and helpful hands, we are called to work together to contribute to the good of the world. We aim to develop a team that stands ready to respond to needs that arise. This group will be proactive in spreading God's love, by touching the lives of others through good deeds and planned tokens of appreciation.

Examples include, but certainly are not limited to:

- Paying negative balances on lunch accounts
- Sending Valentine's to the newly widowed
- Lending a helping hand to elders with yard/snow clean-up
- Hosting short-term stays to someone in need

## INTERESTED IN HELPING?

We're looking for people who have a heart for helping others. People who recognize the needs in the community, and think, "I wonder if anyone is helping them." If you'd like to serve whenever you can, we'd love to have you on this team! Please go to [holytrinityonline.org](http://holytrinityonline.org) and click on the "Sign Up" button to view all of the "10 Next Step" opportunities!

# CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY TEAM

Team Members - Jay Schoenebeck (Chair), Lauren Petersen,  
Kate Kienow, Cassie Olson, Cory Magnuson, Andrew Weiers,  
Stacy Hemann

## FORM A “YOUTH MINISTRY” TEAM (INVESTMENT):

Our vision is to share God’s love for all people from one generation to the next. This recommendation seeks to:

1. Identify and invite team members to match their strengths and talents with our age group needs (PreK-5, Confirmation, High School).
2. Provide support to the Pastors/CYF Director in recruiting, training and supporting volunteers.
3. Assist staff in creating a curriculum that includes a yearly scope and sequence with foundational learning targets (i.e. Lord’s Prayer, 10 Commandments, etc.).
4. Ensure activities/events that will engage students in fellowship with their peers and foster intergenerational connections.
5. Conduct an annual review/evaluation cycle for the curriculum, and make adjustments as needed.

## INTERESTED IN HELPING?

Do you care about passing on the faith to the next generation? Want to help us fine-tune our faith formation scope and sequence? Are you connected with people who already make a difference in the lives of our children and youth? Do you want us to take our youth ministry to the next level? Please go to [holyltrinityonline.org](http://holyltrinityonline.org) and click on the “Sign Up” button to view all of the “10 Next Step” opportunities!

## REVAMP YOUTH MINISTRY SPACES (INNOVATION):

The results of the recent CAT survey state the greatest needs of our people are multi-generational education and connectivity. The youth of our church need a visual representation of our commitment to their education. These actions will validate the importance our congregation has placed on youth and their development. We are eager to:

- Create a more welcoming and exciting environment for our youth to learn.
- Provide flexible seating options for Crew Time spaces
- Add pictures of youth/activities/drawings to youth spaces
- Create middle school/high school spaces where autonomy is embraced and they can create a sense of ownership for their space.

## INTERESTED IN HELPING?

We’re looking for people who have a heart for helping others. People who recognize the needs in the community, and think, “I wonder if anyone is helping them.” If you’d like to serve whenever you can, we’d love to have you on this team! Please go to [holyltrinityonline.org](http://holyltrinityonline.org) and click on the “Sign Up” button to view all of the “10 Next Step” opportunities!

# FACILITIES TEAM

Team Members - Jackie Lee (Chair), Jon Bergquist, Laura Meyer, Paul Newton, George Winn, Nate Borwege, Christie Will

## UPDATE THE KITCHEN FACILITY (INVESTMENT):

Facility needs follow ministry needs. At Holy Trinity, we value community, because God has created us to be in relationship with one another. Much of the fellowship of the church revolves around food. In conjunction with the recommendation to increase meal opportunities, we seek to:

1. Update the kitchen equipment and decor (to match the new addition)
2. Reconfigure the space for better flow (which would enable the kitchen team to serve a larger number of people more efficiently)

## INTERESTED IN HELPING?

Have you walked into the kitchen, and thought, “wow, someday we should improve this space?” Do you care about our meal ministries and want to help, but can’t volunteer right now preparing the meals? Do you have a redeveloper mindset, and want to help us make a kitchen we’ll appreciate for years to come? Please go to [holytrinityonline.org](http://holytrinityonline.org) and click on the “Sign Up” button to view all of the “10 Next Step” opportunities!

## “MAKE IT GRAND” RENOVATION (INNOVATION):

Holy Trinity believes “All are Welcome.” We want our building to show that. Our current building layout has been compared to a maze or labyrinth with poorly marked entrances. Our outside sign might say, “All are welcome,” but our building says, “we’re going to make you guess how to get in and then not tell you where to go.” A church entrance needs to boldly declare, “You are welcome here, and THIS is how you get in!” Holy Trinity values community, and we hope this new entrance would encourage connectivity amongst our people. This recommendation seeks to form a team to create a “grand entrance” which would address the layout and flow of the building. We envision that this grand entrance would have:

- Clear sightlines upon entrance
- Outdoor patio/sitting areas
- Indoor seating vignettes
- Maintain the context of historical preservation of our church.

## INTERESTED IN HELPING?

Have you said to yourself, “I get confused where to go at church”? Do you have an architecture and construction background, or a developer mindset? Have you been eager for this opportunity for years, and have just been waiting for the opportunity? Do you want to help us communicate “all are welcome” through our space? Please go to [holytrinityonline.org](http://holytrinityonline.org) and click on the “Sign Up” button to view all of the “10 Next Step” opportunities!



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