Inspiring Hope and New Dreams in Today’s Church!

Dream Leaders Initiative
Expect God To Surprise You!
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...to receive a copy of this PowerPoint, digital copies of the S.O.A.P. Journaling Form and Congregational Assessment Form, or to answer any questions about adapting this material for your congregation’s use. I am happy to share any of this as my gift to the church.
Attitude Impacts Outcome
Moving Beyond COVID-19 Fears
to Greater Faith and Congregational Vitality
Who Could Have Imagined?
COVID-19 CHURCH

Sunday Worship
Zoom & Facebook at 11am
WELCOME BACK HOME
PLEASE PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING
Please Remain In Car Until Previous Service Dismisses
WHO CAN IMAGINE THE POST COVID-19 CHURCH?
I Can’t Predict the Future!
Here’s What I Know...

Average Weekly Worship Attendance 2017-2041 Projections

Source: ELCA Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation
Comparing the 2008 Age of ELCA Attendees and the US Population

Medians for people age 15 to 99 are 58 for ELCA attendees and 38 for US population.
BEFORE COVID 19:
80-90% of ALL Congregations were Plateaued or Declining

Fear, Worry, and Anxiety were Common

Fears have gone VIRAL since March
POST COVID-19 CHURCH?

God works for good in all things!
Romans 8:28
Here’s What I Know:

*Change is Coming and Churches need to Embrace It*

1st Step: Exorcize the Viruses of Fear, Worry, and Anxiety That Will Block Your Congregation’s Future Vitality
THE RIGHT FRAME OF MIND.
Inspiring Hope and New Dreams in Today’s Church!
LET GO of what’s holding you back
TRUST GOD to empower your dreams
RISE UP to face the challenges
Living Word Lutheran Church - December 1995

$50 & 50 Mostly Retired Members
Spirit of Joy Lutheran Church - Easter 1997
Purchased - April 2004
By the power at work within us, God is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine!

Ephesians 3:20
DreamLeaders Initiative
Rooted and Grounded in Ephesians 3:20
Freed & RENEWED in Christ
500 YEARS OF GOD’S GRACE IN ACTION
Inspiring Hope and New Dreams in Today’s Church!

Dream Leaders Initiative
ENCOURAGED
INSPIRED
CHALLENGED
Encouraged
LET GO
of what’s holding you back
Let Go!

Fears, Worries, and Anxieties

Essential First Step!
Do not be afraid

for behold I bring you
good tidings of
great joy which will be
to all people.
DO NOT WORRY ABOUT TOMORROW
Matthew 6:34
DO NOT BE ANXIOUS ABOUT ANYTHING.

Philippians 4:16
Attitude Influences Outcome!
LET GO OF WHAT’S HOLDING YOU BACK

Write down your fears, worries or anxieties.

• Exposed to the light...they lose power and Satan loses his leverage with us
• Exposed to others...we realize that we don’t walk alone and are encouraged
• Vulnerable...we discover power beyond ourselves
TABLE DISCUSSION

As a result of COVID...share the fears, worries, and anxieties you may have about your congregation’s future.

Identify your table’s top 3 fears.
Next Steps

Create a summary of your table’s top 3 fears to share with the council.

Your congregation council will create a process for the rest of the congregation to name their fears (via Bible studies / small or large groups / during worship, etc.)
Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
— Psalm 119:105
S.O.A.P. Bible Journaling

Hebrews 12:1-3, Psalm 13, Isaiah 40:27-31

S: Scripture
O: Observation
A: Application
P: Prayer
Bible Journaling

S for Scripture: Take a moment to read the scripture to yourself twice and allow God to speak to you. When you're done, look for one verse that particularly spoke to you about this season in your congregation's life. Write it down:

O for Observation: Whichever verse God spoke to you, ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you and guide you. Paraphrase and write down this scripture in your own words here:

A for Application: Personalize what you have read, by asking yourself how it applies to your congregation. Perhaps it is instruction, encouragement, revelation of a new promise, or correction for a particular area of your congregation's life. Write down how this scripture applies today:

P for Prayer: Think of a brief prayer inspired by this scripture verse. This can be as simple as asking God to help you use this scripture, or it may be a greater insight on what He may be revealing to you. Remember, prayer is a two-way conversation, so be sure to listen to what God has to say! Write out the prayer here:

When everyone at your table is finished, take turns sharing your journaling reflections with each other!
Attitude Influences Outcome!

You Must Create a New and Right Spirit!
Stand Alone Resource Prepping the Soil
Inspired
TRUST GOD
to empower your dreams
By the power at work within us, God is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine!

Ephesians 3:20
Release Your Burdens &
Trust God’s Ephesians 3:20 and Resurrection Promises
Capture People’s Imagination
And Ignite Kingdom Impact
“Dream Big Enough... that you will fail miserably... without God’s help!”

Dr. Robert Schuller
Think KINGDOM Impact!

On earth as it is in heaven
“Instead of asking God to bless all of your good ideas, ask God to align you with the things God wants to bless!”

Pastor Dick Wills
Waking to God’s Dream
TRUST GOD TO EMPOWER YOUR DREAMS

Write down your hopes and dreams.

• Naming...gives birth to new possibilities and generates momentum
• Hearing...stirs the creative spirit within us and inspires us to keep dreaming
TABLE DISCUSSION
Share some big dreams for YOUR congregation that God would want to bless.
Next Steps

Create a list to share with your congregation council...and note if there is a common dream.

Your congregation council will then determine ways to invite the rest of the congregation to share their dreams.
S.O.A.P. Bible Journaling

Ephesians 3:16-21

S: Scripture
O: Observation
A: Application
P: Prayer
The Single Greatest Game-Changing Decision a Church Leadership Team Can Make!

Act as if you believe the Holy Spirit is up to something in your church!

In small towns and big cities, in wealthy churches and poor ones. In multisite megachurches and in rural four-point charges. Miracles are happening. Here is the difference: some churches and leaders live, work and act like they believe this, and others don’t. This distinction makes all the difference.
Talk to any of the pastors we interviewed, and you will instantly see that before there was any evidence that a church would work, these pastors believed that God was up to something, that God was going to do something significant. They were determined to be a part of it.

Acting as if the Spirit is moving changes everything.

www.cokesbury.com/Eight-Virtues-of-Rapidly-Growing-Churches-1
Challenged
RISE UP
to face the challenges
Stirring the Pot...

...Meddled...
The State of the Church: Are We On The Right Path?
An Assessment Tool
Congregational Self-Assessment

Paths of Decline
Use the following list and identify which, if any, of these paths your congregation is on and how far along the path it is:

Slow Erosion (we are on a slow path of decline)

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Our Past is Our Hero (we long for a return to the good old days)

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Our Church Refuses to Look Like Our Community (our community is diverse, but we aren’t)

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Our Budget Has Moved Inward (much of our budget goes toward caring for ourselves and our property)

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The Great Commission Has Become Our Great Omission (we don’t invest much in making disciples)

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We Are a Preference-Driven Church (we mostly do what we want not what others need or what God wants)

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Pastoral Tenures Have Decreased (our pastors don’t stay as long as they used to)

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Our Church Rarely Prays Together (outside of formal prayers in worship we don’t just pray)

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Our Church Has No Clear Purpose (we aren’t very clear about our mission)

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Our Church Obsesses Over Our Facilities (taking care of our facilities is a top priority and funding focus)

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These paths are further described in Autopsy of a Deceased Church: 12 Ways to Keep Yours Alive by Thom S. Rainer.
RISE UP TO FACE THE CHALLENGES

Identify the paths of decline you’re on and the changes you need to make to realize greater Kingdom impact.

• Helps you understand the challenges you face
• Prompts you to start developing strategies
• Reminds you that sacrifice is needed
TABLE DISCUSSION

Are You On Any Paths of Decline?

Review the paths of decline slide and identify any paths your congregation may be on or headed toward.
Repent
TABLE DISCUSSION

Name some things that need to change in your congregation to better align with God’s will and realize greater Kingdom impact. Is there a consensus #1?
Change? Change!
change is difficult.
not changing is fatal.
Next Steps

Create a list of paths of decline you may be on and any changes your table thinks are needed to share with your council.

Your congregation council will then determine ways to invite the rest of the congregation into the conversation.
S.O.A.P. Bible Journaling

Romans 12:1-5, 9-18 or Philippians 4:1-13

S: Scripture
O: Observation
A: Application
P: Prayer
Remember
Change is mandatory for extraordinary results.

Resistance WILL Happen!
Not My Will
But God’s Be Done!
It’s Not About You!

Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.

Philippians 2:4
Leave a Legacy For Your Grandkids!
Focus More on God’s Abundance Than On Your Limited Resources!
Be Adaptable and Resilient!
LET GO... of what’s holding you back
Trust God...to empower your dreams!

God's Power In You
Rise Up...to face the challenges!

Take your next step.
Expect God To Surprise You!
...to receive a copy of this PowerPoint, digital copies of the S.O.A.P. Journaling Form and Congregational Assessment Form, or to answer any questions about adapting this material for your congregation’s use. I am happy to share any of this as my gift to the church.
www.careynieuwhof.com
Lord, God, you have called us as your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN
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