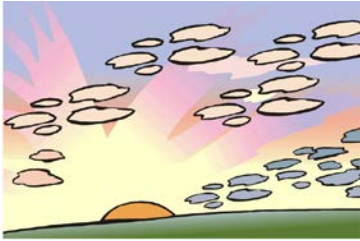


Planning for Effective Ministry Resource Section



Without a vision, the people perish.

Proverbs 29:18 King James Version

Purpose

To provide participants with a model for planning as spiritual discipline and identify what planning is happening in their congregations. Clarity of mission and vision are the foundations for good goal-setting, and on-going review and reflection are needed to keep focused on God's call.

Theological Understanding

At his ascension, Jesus charged his disciples to be his “witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). It is up to us to plan how to fulfill that charge. Jesus also set the example of reflecting on what had been done in his name when he asked the seventy disciples sent out to preach, heal, and cast out demons to report on what had happened (Mark 6:7-13 and 30-31).

Special Instructions

The exercise on Jerusalem/Judea/Samaria/ends of the earth is drawn from Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations by Gil Rendle and Alice Mann (see bibliography). It is used by permission. If you own a copy of the book, you can download additional handouts free from the Alban Institute website (the book provides the appropriate web citation).

There are two worship resources you might consider for opening the session. The Lutheran publication, Our Mission: Discovering God's Call to Us (see bibliography) has a call to worship and set of prayers related to planning that can be easily modified for a Fresh Start session (see pp. 71-73). The Episcopal Church's Book of Occasional Services (2004 edition) contains services for the Discernment for a New Church Mission (pp. 223-228) and a Litany for the Mission of the Church (pp. 246-248), which could also be adapted.

Related Modules

History-Sharing and Understanding
Leadership for Our Times
Leading Planned Change

Bibliography

Ammerman, Nancy T.; Carroll, Jackson W.; Dudley, Carl S.; and McKinney, William, eds. Studying Congregations: A New Handbook. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998 – provides detailed essays on approaches to determining congregational culture, identity, and context.

Branson, Mark Lau. Memories, Hopes, and Conversations: Appreciative Inquiry and Congregational Change. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2004 – gives background and instructions on use of Appreciative Inquiry for discernment and planning.

_____. “Ten Assumptions of Appreciative Inquiry.” Alban Weekly, February 5, 2007 – a brief overview of the foundations of Appreciative Inquiry available for download from the Alban Institute website (www.alban.org – under Publishing, click on “Find a Book, Video or Download” and search by author’s name; a link to the article will appear on the right next to the description of Branson’s book).

Cooperrider, David L. and Whitney, Diana. Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Revolution in Change. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2005 – a terrific introduction to Appreciative Inquiry, a process for building on an organization’s strengths rather than trying to fix its weaknesses; pioneers in this theory, the authors present it in a way that is short, concise, and clear.

Dudley, Carl S., and Ammerman, Nancy T. Congregations in Transition: A Guide for Analyzing, Assessing, and Adapting in Changing Communities. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2002 – a detailed guide for congregations facing major change; includes interview guides for talking to people outside the congregation and many helpful questionnaires to guide planning discussions.

Heifetz, Ronald A. Leadership without Easy Answers. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1994 – the classic book on leadership in uncertain times by a Harvard Business School professor and physician; makes helpful distinction between technical vs. adaptive problems which relate to the type of planning needed.

McCullough-Bade, Robin and John. Our Mission: Discovering God’s Call to Us. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2002 – another model for strategic planning; contains useful resources for worship, commissioning of a planning team, etc.

Melander, Rochelle and Eppley, Harold. Growing Together: Spiritual Exercises for Church Committees. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1998 –has exercises for committee members to use throughout their life together, including one on goal-setting (pp. 30-31).

Oswald, Roy M. and Friedrich, Robert E. Jr. Discerning Your Congregation's Future: A Strategic and Spiritual Approach. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1996 – an alternate approach to strategic planning.

Rendle, Gil and Mann, Alice. Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2003 -- guide to strategic planning; includes multiple resources for congregational use in the appendix.

Roberts, Fredric M. "Discovering Your Core." Alban Weekly, March 13, 2006 – an overview of how to determine who should be involved in planning and decision making; available for free download from the Alban Institute website (www.alban.org – click on Publishing and under "Find an Article" browse by author's name).

Sitze, Bob. "Need-Based Planning versus Asset-Based Planning." Alban Weekly, June 26, 2006 – a brief justification for use of asset-based, as opposed to deficit-based, planning available for free download from the Alban Institute website (www.alban.org – click on Publishing and under "Find an Article" browse by author's name).

Snow, Luther K. The Power of Asset Mapping: How Your Congregation Can Act on Its Gifts. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2004 – a quick process, well outlined in the book, for engaging a group of people in gifts assessment and planning.

Wheatley, Margaret J. Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World, 2nd Edition. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Kohler, 1999 – classic work by a scientist and management consultant who stresses organizations as living systems.

Wheatley, Margaret J. Finding Our Way: Leadership for an Uncertain Time. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Kohler, 2005 – a collection of essays on leadership when the environment is constantly changing.

Other Resources

The Episcopal Church: www/episcopalchurch.org -- has statistics about parishes (drawn from parochial reports) and their surrounding neighborhoods which would be helpful for planning purposes. On the website look under Who We Are, then Our Congregations and select "Studying Your Congregation and Community."

The Evangelical Lutheran Church has a brief guide to Asset Mapping; go to their website (www.elca.org) and enter "asset mapping" in the search box. The PDF file, which may be downloaded free is entitled "Some Basic Asset Mapping Instructions."

Percept: www.perceptgroup.com – offers faith-based demographic data for congregational planning; its resources may be accessed free through www.Link2Lead.com if your diocese is a subscriber; check the list of dioceses on the Link2Lead website (under Register go to the drop-down box under “Who Can Register”).

General Outline of Session

1. Opening prayer and meditation (suggested reading – Acts 1:6-11)
2. Check-in
3. Overview of planning cycle and types of planning (PowerPoint 1-4; Talking Points)
4. Where is your congregation? (Talking Points; Handout 1 – small group discussion or large group conversation using questions)
5. Large group discussion of observations (if small groups have been used)
6. Planning in an uncertain world and importance of discernment (PowerPoint 5-8; Talking Points)
7. Congregational identity in history (PowerPoint 9; Talking Points; Handout 2 – small group discussions or large group conversation using questions)
8. Large group discussion of observations (if small groups have been used)
9. Who's our neighbor (PowerPoint 10; Talking Points)
10. Where are we called (PowerPoint 11; Talking Points; Handout 3 – small group discussions or large group conversation using questions)
11. Large group discussion of observations (if small groups have been used)
12. Mission and vision statements (PowerPoint 12 -13; Talking Points)
13. Next steps (PowerPoint 14; Talking Points)
14. Reflection and review (PowerPoint 15 – 17; Talking Points)
15. Feedback, not measurement (PowerPoint 18; Talking Points)
16. Putting it together (PowerPoint 19-20; Talking Points; Handout 4 – small group discussions or large group conversation using questions)
17. Large group discussion of observations (if small groups have been used)
18. Wrap-up and closing prayer

Planning for Effective Ministry Handout 1

Does the congregation have a set of goals that have been articulated? These might be found in the Congregation Profile, the clergy's job description or letter of agreement, or in the latest Annual Report.

If yes, how were these goals set? What was the process and who was involved? Is there widespread agreement with these goals?

If no, what do you know about the congregation and any goals that it might have set in the past? What processes were used and who was involved? Was there widespread agreement with these goals?

Where might it make sense to start in terms of a strategic planning cycle with your congregation? Who would need to be involved?

Planning for Effective Ministry Handout 2

What brought your congregation together initially? Who was it founded to serve? What did it see as its mission and ministry?

What were these founding years like? Who made up the congregation? What values were present at the beginning?

How has the makeup of the membership changed over the course of the congregation's history? How has its mission and purpose changed over the course of the congregation's life? What has caused these changes?

Planning for Effective Ministry

Handout 3

Use the questions in each category to help you describe your congregation and those who are different from them.

Jerusalem: How would we most accurately describe ourselves? What are our gifts? What do we value most? What are our hopes? Who naturally comes to visit or join us? How do we treat others and welcome them? How do we deal with differences?

Judeans: Who are these neighbors? In what ways are they similar to us? Where do we find these similar people in our community? How would we invite and welcome them? What do we have to offer them? What do they have to offer us? How do we treat “Judeans” when they make a pilgrimage to our congregation?

Samaritans: Who are the people of difference in our midst who make us uncomfortable? What is our responsibility to and for “Samaritans”? How do we treat outsiders? How should we treat them? What does our vision for our congregation and our understanding of ourselves suggest for our relationship with Samaritans?

The Ends of the Earth: Who are the people at the ends of the earth for us? How do we reach out to these people? What does our faith expect from us in relationship to these people?

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Planning for Effective Ministry Handout 4

What questions does this model for planning raise for you?

What might you want to do differently in your congregation?

Who else needs to be involved?

What are your next steps?