

**MISSION**

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# Mission Driven!

## *A Mission Intensive for the 2015 Convocation*

**Mission** – commission, assignment, journey, undertaking

**Driven** – impelled, motivated, directed, steer, consumed

**It is the goal of the Mission Intensive to inspire congregations to embrace this key element of the NALC mission statement and begin to make actions plans on how they can become more focused in reaching out to others with the Good News of Jesus Christ.**

- 1:30 pm**      **Worship & Prayer** – Setting the stage for the journey
- 2:00 pm**      **Where are we going, and what does it mean to be a “Mission Driven Church”?** – Bishop John Bradosky sets the vision of the NALC becoming a denomination of Discipling Congregations
- 2:20 pm**      **Who is Driving?** – Dr. Gemechis Buba keynote on Congregational Mission Teams
- 3:00 pm**      **The Joys of the Journey** – Mission and outreach success stories from our congregations
- 3:30 pm**      **Roadblocks or Detours?** – Panel presentation teaching congregations how to see that “roadblocks” to mission may, fact, be an opportunity to see and do new things, i.e., “detours”
- 4:30 pm**      **Develop a Road Map** – Time for congregations to make specific action plans
- 5:30 pm**      **Dinner**
- 7:30 pm**      **Mission Driven! Mission District Meetings** – Taking action plans to the next level, breakout sessions by Mission District

# NALC Core Values

## Christ Centered

We confess the apostolic faith in Jesus Christ according to the Holy Scriptures. We affirm the authority of the Scriptures as the authoritative source and norm, “according to which all doctrines should and must be judged” (Formula of Concord). We accept the ecumenical creeds and the Lutheran Confessions as true witnesses to the Word of God.

## Mission Driven

We believe that the mission of the Church is to preach the Gospel and to make disciples for Christ. We believe that making disciples — in our congregations, in our communities and nations, and around the world — must be a priority of the Church in the present age.

## Traditionally Grounded

We affirm the ecumenical creeds and the faithful witness of the Church across time and space. We endorse the form and practices of the universal Church that are consistent with Scripture, particularly the office of the ministry and the tradition of worship under Word and Sacrament. We seek dialogue and fellowship with other Lutheran churches and with faithful Christians of other confessions.

## Congregationally Focused

We strive to be a church that is organized to facilitate the ministries of local congregations in a posture of servant-hood and a spirit of partnership, through the provision of resources, connections and information.



# Session Information and Panel Notes

## **Session 1: What Does It Mean to be a “Mission Driven Church”?**

**Presenter:** Bishop John Bradosky

**Speaker Notes:**

**Key personal idea and action step from Session 1** (transfer to Action Steps, page 29):

## Session 2: Who is Driving?

**Presenter:** Dr. Gemechis Buba

**Speaker Notes:**



**Key personal idea and action step from Session 2 (transfer to Action Steps, page 29):**

## Congregational Mission Team (CMT) Template

*As baptized disciples of Jesus Christ, living members of His body, our “mission” is to share the good news of His saving death and resurrection with those living in darkness, fear and godlessness, bringing the kingdom—His risen presence—near so that, through God's Word and Holy Spirit, they may become his followers, baptized into His Church, disciples, with us, in the Kingdom of God.*

***“Mission is sharing the good news of Jesus’ death and resurrection, bringing the kingdom near, making disciples, together, following all that Jesus has commanded us.”***

As part of the NALC focus on being Mission Driven and Congregationally Focused, congregations are encouraged to participate in at least one local and one global mission and, if possible, a national mission. To help with these goals, congregations are encouraged to form a Congregational Mission Team (CMT). CMTs will function as the leaders of mission efforts in their respective congregations. This document is a template for forming a functioning CMT.

### **Step 1: Pray**

- The Pastor and congregational leaders should pray about missions and ask God for guidance and support.
- Pray at every step and name the name of Jesus!

### **Step 2: Recruit**

- Seek out people who seem to have a heart and passion for mission.
- Invite people who may already be involved in service organizations.
- Invite people involved in church activities that help people and try to spread the Gospel.
- Invite people with financial and/or administrative talents to help the mission effort.
- Be prepared to find people you weren't expecting!
- Invite people of all ages.

### **Step 3: Organize**

- The team
  - Gather the people interested in or with a passion for missions.
  - Decide on a meeting schedule.
  - The CMT should commit to continually asking for God's guidance and support!
- Set goals
- Assess the resources of the congregation.
  - Funds – What financial resources are there for missions? How will they be raised and what is needed?
  - People – What time and talents do people have to benefit missions?
  - Materials – What supplies, food, Bibles, etc., can be donated or might be available? What is needed?
  - Missions – What missions are being done currently, and how are they working?

- Investigate various mission possibilities: Local, Domestic, and Global
  - Mission opportunities suggested by or connected to congregation members.
  - NALC website.
  - Other Internet resources.
  - Coordinate with other congregation groups and committees.
- Determine the needs of the mission
  - Financial – What funds are needed? How will they be raised?
  - Personal – What is needed in terms of spiritual or other relational support?
  - Material – Are Bibles or other religious materials needed? Other physical materials?
- Choose missions to be passionate about based on your goals, investigations, and assessments.
  - Ask for commitments to lead a mission or missions
  - Use NALC resources provided at fall Mission Festival to further evaluate missions chosen.

**Step 4: Communicate – Let the congregation know about missions. Keep them involved and informed!**

- Verbal
  - Pastoral announcements/sermons.
  - Team announcements.
  - Encourage relationships between the congregation and the mission – keep the excitement going!
- Written
  - Weekly bulletin/announcements
  - Newsletter articles/congregation website
  - Displays
  - Missions Fair
- Communicate with the NALC
- Communicate! Communicate! Communicate! Great communication brings enthusiasm and fosters success!

**Step 5: Follow through with commitments!**

- Be creative.
- Try things; don't let fear of failure hold you back
- Stay the course!

## **Session 3: The Joys of the Journey**

What stories inspire you and why? Make note of stories from your personal life and congregation that you can share as “joys of the journey” in daily life.

**Key personal idea and action step from Session 3** (transfer to Action Steps, page 29):

## **Session 4: Road Blocks or Detours?**

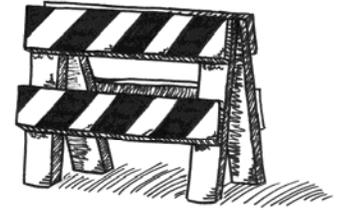
**Presenter:** Various (please see following pages)

**Speaker Notes:**



**Key personal idea and action step from Session 4** (transfer to Action Steps, page 29)

## 20/15 Vision – Better than Good



***“Where there is no vision the people perish, the people cast off restraint; But happy is he who keeps the law.”*** Proverbs 29:18

Lack of vision and/or failure to thrive is possibly one of the greatest road blocks preventing the church from building God’s house and advancing God’s Kingdom here on earth. ***“Where there is no vision the people perish, the people cast off restraint; But happy is he who keeps the law.”*** This is the King James Version translation of Proverbs 29:18. It is often quoted, but not always understood. “Vision” here refers to the redemptive revelation of God. The principle is that apart from God’s Word, society quickly spins into moral chaos, resulting in a total loss of social order. If people do not hear God’s Word, then we can expect society to break down and even local churches to cast off restraint.

Traditionalism, complacency and fear are three major factors that impair our vision. We do what we have always done, even though it is no longer relevant. We cling to what we have done before because it is comfortable. We fear what we have never done, because it is foreign to us. Too often we forget that the vision belongs to God, that God is with us and nothing is impossible with God!

God has bestowed upon the Church the awesome responsibility to establish spiritual presence, social harmony and Kingdom justice on earth as it is in heaven. God has also provided for us everything we need in order to be successful and significant in carrying out His mission. However, success and significance come by way of purpose and planning. It is necessary for us to write the vision and make it plain.

***“Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.”*** Habakkuk 2:2-3

The fulfillment of this mission requires the exhortations of the prophets and the teaching of God’s word. The pastor, leadership and membership each have a vital role in making the vision come to pass. The pastor’s responsibility is to cast the vision. The leadership’s responsibility is to help the pastor write out the mission and make it plain. The membership’s responsibility is to run with it.

20/20 vision is considered good, but there is a vision better than 20/20 vision. It is 20/15 vision. As it is with natural vision, so it is with spiritual vision. The vision for the church created by humanity may be good, but God’s vision for the Church is better than good. The focus of “20/15 Vision – Better than Good” is to establish an atmosphere conducive for ears to hear, eyes to see and hearts to receive what the Holy Spirit is speaking to the church during this season. A church operating with 20/15 vision is a church of reconciliation, restoration, and retreat: Reconciling God’s people to God, restoring to the community peace and prosperity through the restoration of justice, and providing a place of retreat or sanctuary to those who are wounded and worn! Now, during the year 2015, is an excellent time to sharpen the spiritual vision and mission of your

congregation. We are in a season of open portals in heaven. God is reviving, equipping and activating His church. 20/15 vision will allow you to see now, what others cannot yet see! Be strong and of good courage! You are here for “such a time as this!”

**Assessment Questions:**

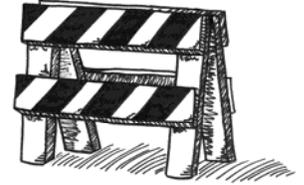
- Is the vision of your ministry relevant? Does it provide solutions for the community in which it is located?
- Is the mission of your church relevant? Does it clearly and succinctly provide instruction on how the vision will be accomplished?
- Are the ministries of your church relevant? Do they fulfill the mission and undergird the vision of your church?
- Do the vision and mission statement of your church position you to be reactive, proactive or inactive within your community?

**Activation:**

- Pray. Pray. Fast and Pray. Ask God for revelation. Ask what His will is for your congregation. Pray for the Pastor to receive and embrace prophetic revelation.
- Review the current vision and mission statements. Do an honest inventory. Write down how are they relevant/irrelevant. Write down how they address the needs of the community. Write down how they provide solutions for the community. Write down how they foster the provision of retreat or a safe haven within your community. Pray for God to intervene and give you wisdom on how to realign with His vision.
- Talk to people in the community. Find out what the needs of the community are. Gas stations, grocery stores, Waffle Houses and Walmarts are excellent places to put your finger on the pulse of the community. Pray, asking God for wisdom and insight.
- Pray. Pray. Fast and Pray. Individually and corporately.

**Contact Information:** Pastor Trina Petersen; [trinamariiep@yahoo.com](mailto:trinamariiep@yahoo.com)

## Conflict in the Congregation: Roadblocks that Lead to Redirection and Renewal



*“May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* Romans 15:5-6.

One of the greatest challenges in congregational life and mission is that of conflict. A study of 14,000+ congregations in 2000 indicated 75% experienced some level of conflict. In 2008, another study found that 74% of congregations were in conflict over leadership, money or finances. While a stable percentage, it is troubling to consider that at any given time, three-fourths of congregations are conflicted.

According to the 2000 study, the top reasons for conflict were member behavior, use and abuse of funds, worship, leadership styles, and decision-making. A study conducted in 2004 of Christian pastors by *Christianity Today* indicated top sources of conflict were control issues, vision/direction, leadership changes, pastor’s style, and finance. The good news is conflict over theology and doctrine was rather low—the bad news is that conflict within the church, as within any human organization, is a part of life most of the time.

In spite of the rampant conflict, however, pastors and congregations most often refuse to acknowledge conflict, deal with it openly and creatively, and fail to see it as an opportunity for redirection and renewal. Conflict in the church is not the roadblock, but the unwillingness to approach and address conflict positively is the real challenge, hindering mission and ministry. As in all human relationships, the key is to deal with conflict openly and creatively.

The pathway forward in dealing with conflict in this way is honesty, clarity, good communication and a commitment to resolution for the sake of the whole. The goal is to develop a congregational climate in which conflict is embraced, when present, as a necessary means for redirecting life, ministry and behavior in positive ways so that renewal happens and mission and ministry are unhindered.

### Assessment Questions:

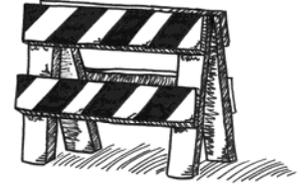
- How have your congregational leaders addressed conflict in the past? Share one real-life instance of conflict in your congregation and how it was/was not addressed.
- What are current sources of conflict in your congregation?
- Do your elected leaders lead, or is there “shadow” leadership that keeps conflict stirred up in your congregation, subverting the efforts of pastor and elected leaders?
- Are you able to be honest and open in your communications, or is such honesty and openness discouraged or not welcomed? Are complaints/negative comments offered directly and encouraged, or are there “triangulation” and “secret” communications and complaining?

**Activation:**

- Conflict handled positively creates positive outcomes: greater wisdom and effectiveness; can be purifying/freeing; can lead to better defined vision; improves communication; creates stronger relationships; brings about reconciliation. Dealing with conflict and tension will lead to growth in attendance/participation.
- Most congregations wait too long to address conflict and/or request outside assistance; addressing conflict/tension as quickly as possible is key to positive outcome.
- All involved must seek win/win, not win/lose solution.
- Even when outside consultation is requested, the congregational pastor/leaders and members must do the work—no one can do it for you.
- Leaders must deal with “bullies.”
- Leaders must lead, and not allow “shadow-leaders” to control the outcome.
- Leaders must covenant together how they will deal with conflict and agree to hold one another accountable.

**Contact Information:** Rev. Dr. David Wendel; [dwendel@thenalc.org](mailto:dwendel@thenalc.org)

## Revived to Thrive: Confronting the Road Block of a Plateauing Congregation



Here is the truth. Over 75% of Lutheran congregations have plateaued or are declining. Worship attendance is dropping at an alarming rate. Many Christians are biblically illiterate, and do not share the faith with their friends, relatives, associates, and neighbors (F.R.A.N.). There is such a thing as a ‘life cycle’ of a church. But does a congregation have to accept its downward trajectory, or can it be “turned around” by the power of Jesus Christ? Can it be “revived” to “thrive?”

There can be many reasons for plateau. The culture, the world, continues to take over lives, as it tells us that faith is not important. Maybe the congregation has lost its passion/zeal for Christ or the pastor is burned out and frustrated. Spiritual growth may be lacking, as fewer people are in the Word and praying. Maybe the few people doing everything are tired, and others’ spiritual gifts are not being used for ministry. Could there be a reluctance for the church to be involved in the greater community, serving, doing outreach, and sharing God’s love with others? Is your church more “inward” than “outward”? Conflict, control and power struggles might be reasons why the church is less loving and declining. Maybe there is a lack of visitation, care and concern for fellow brothers and sisters. Even in Holy Scripture we are told that when there is a lack of vision the people will perish. The reasons for plateau are endless. But does this have to be?

### Assessment Questions:

- From your own local context, determine the reasons why your congregation is plateaued or declining. (Be honest!)
- If these “roadblocks” were shared with the congregation, how would they react? Would they agree or disagree?
- Do you think there would be a willingness to work on dismantling these “roadblocks,” or would the congregation just go about “business as usual”?
- In your estimation, what are some things your congregation can begin to do right now in order to “revive to thrive”?

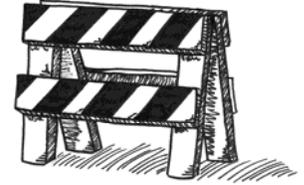
### Activation:

- *Focus on Discipleship* – This includes reading/studying the Word of God, prayer, worship and service. Bible Study, prayer groups, etc. Spiritual renewal is the key for lasting revival.
- *Confronting The Darkness* – There are reasons why the congregation is stagnant, and they must be confronted. If not, the church will have difficulty growing.
- *Getting Known In The Community* – It’s essential that the congregation become involved in its community. What are the needs? Can the church start a “niche” ministry to meet these needs? This is where outreach begins.
- *Visitation* – Intentionally visiting members and non-members. This builds trust relationships, and gives the opportunity for the vision of Christ and his Church to be cast.

- *Be Willing to Try New Things* – Maybe this includes adding a new worship service, starting house churches/small groups, moving to a different location, or even reaching out to another part of the community.
- *Making Love a Priority* – Most congregations say they are loving and welcoming. But are they really? How are people treating each other? Is the love, fellowship, support, and mutual consolation of bearing one another's burdens truly present? A loving congregation can translate into a growing congregation.
- *Remembering It's All About Jesus!* – The objective of the Church is to share the saving love of Jesus Christ of Nazareth with the world. We should always encourage our congregations to share the faith, invite others to worship, and be excited and passionate about their relationships with Christ.

**Contact Information:** Pastor Brad Hales; [pastorhales@hotmail.com](mailto:pastorhales@hotmail.com)

## Managing Congregational Finances: Aligning Means and Mission



*“Honor the LORD with your substance and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.”* Proverbs 3:9-10

*“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”* Matthew 6:21

It seems no one likes to discuss church finances, budgets and income! As in many marriages, disagreements over money can be the source of significant conflict in congregations, creating a barrier to mission and ministry. In some congregations, discussions over finances can be so touchy that leaders and members hesitate to have open, honest, truthful conversations about spending priorities and realities.

When congregations become part of the NALC, however, they are invited and perhaps even challenged to think differently about congregational finances. In the NALC, we are committed not to continuing the institutional policies and practices we had in our previous denominational structures. Our commitment to shape our individual and communal lives around our call to discipleship means that we should strive to shape our congregational budgets and giving on biblical understandings of stewardship. We commit what we have and what we are to the spread of the Gospel, rather than just the maintenance of the institution.

An important component of sound financial management is realistic budgeting. Many congregations experience shortfalls to their agreed budgets year after year. This pattern can have negative consequences, such as creating uncertainty around commitments to staff, programs and activities. It also can become self-reinforcing. There is certainly a place for challenging increased giving through a budget, and for trusting in faith when the path is not clear, but it is usually best to do so once parish members have bought in to the ministry priorities reflected in that budget.

Some years ago, a prominent economist coined the phrase “revealed preferences” to describe the idea that individuals “reveal” what they value most highly by how they spend their money. Of course, this is nothing more than a version of what Christ taught us in Matthew 6:21. And, it applies to congregations as much as individuals. Some congregations intentionally align resources with mission priorities. Others express a strong commitment to missions and outreach, but spend the vast majority of their resources on programs which predominantly serve their own membership.

Endowments present special challenges for some congregations. To be sure, endowments reflect the faithfulness of past generations and can be blessings. At the same time, the priorities of past donors may not be consistent with today’s missional opportunities. In addition, endowments tend to encourage a focus on storing up resources for the unknown future rather than doing ministry in the present.

A congregation's approach to benevolence also reflects its ministry priorities. The NALC embraces a philosophy that it is best for congregations to form direct relationships with the external ministries they support, rather than giving through a "middleman." For that reason, and because of our lean organization, the NALC's benevolence request to congregations is quite low, which enables those direct external partnerships. The NALC Convocation has also adopted a "prayerful goal" that congregations allocate 12% of their annual budgets to all external benevolence. Striving to reach this goal is critical, because NALC mission congregations depend on partnerships with established congregations for the bulk of their funding in their early years.

### **Assessment Questions:**

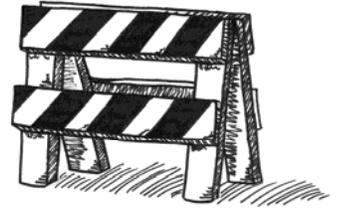
- How do your congregation's actual expenditures and income compare to your budget? Do you frequently have to cancel or delay planned expenditures due to a shortfall in anticipated giving?
- Looking at your congregation's "discretionary" spending (expenditures other than for pastoral compensation and building operation), what are the purposes towards which the majority of those expenditures are directed? What are your congregation's expectations for how your pastor(s) and staff allocate their time?
- If your congregation has an endowment, what purposes does it serve? Are the funds restricted to specific uses?
- What portion of your congregation's budget is dedicated to external benevolence? For former ELCA parishes, how have you changed your giving pattern following your transition to the NALC? Have you established formal partnerships with domestic and/or foreign missionaries and mission congregations?

### **Activation:**

- Good budgeting is fundamentally realistic. Repeatedly budgeting far beyond what is achievable is often counterproductive.
- Challenge budgets should be the end result of a congregational discernment process to set ministry priorities, not the starting point.
- Stated ministry priorities and actual ministry priorities are often different.
- Parish spending plans reveal the congregation's actual ministry priorities. Both money and time are forms of spending (both are scarce resources).
- Endowments can serve positive purposes, but they can also shift focus away from current ministry. Those with endowments should work to secure flexibility in how and when endowed funds are spent.
- NALC benevolence philosophy prioritizes congregations directly partnering with and supporting external ministries.
- NALC Convocation has established a total benevolence target of at least 12% for NALC congregations, of which 5-8% is needed to support NALC operations.
- Each NALC parish is encouraged to form partnerships with one local, one domestic and one global mission/missionary. Everyone benefits from these partnerships, which are the primary source of support for mission congregations.

**Contact Information:** Ryan Schwarz; treasurer@thenalc.org

## **“Evangeliphobia” – an unnatural fear of the word “Evangelism”**



“*Evangeliphobia*” is not a real word, but it does describe a real fear. Just the thought of talking to people, outside of their inner circle, about something as intimate as faith can induce an almost catatonic state in some of our most faithful members. Why is this? A very real possibility is that the Church itself has conditioned this reaction by attempting evangelism without first focusing on discipleship.

In Matthew 4:19 Jesus calls Peter and his brother Andrew in this way, “*And he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.’*”

In the above scripture Jesus teaches us how evangelism and discipleship cannot be separated. “Follow me” is an act of evangelism, an invitation to follow Jesus. If Peter and Andrew answer this call they will become evangelists, “fishers of men.” This leap from fisherman to evangelist, however, will not happen overnight. Jesus tells them “**I will make you** fishers of men” and then spends three years doing just that, molding them into disciples with the skill and conviction to take the Good News into the world.

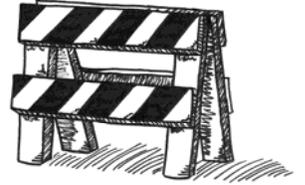
For many congregations, evangelism has been reduced to simply inviting people to church on Sunday. We have forgotten that the invitation by Jesus to those early disciples was an invitation to a journey, not a gathering. As they walked together with Jesus they discovered what it meant to be disciples, and they were empowered to “Go into all the world and preach the gospel” (Mark 16:15). As congregations we are at times guilty of either sending our people out unprepared or reducing the Great Commission to Sunday morning hospitality. We remind our people that they are called to make disciples and teach the commands of Jesus, but then do not adequately train them for the task. In doing this we may be setting our prospective evangelists up for failure.

### **Assessment Questions:**

- Does your congregation have an Evangelism committee?  
If so, what is its primary task?
- If you do not have an Evangelism committee, what would be the benefits in forming one?
- Does your congregation have a Discipleship committee?  
If so, what is its primary task?
- If you do not have a Discipleship committee, what would be the benefits in forming one?
- Does your Congregation offer opportunities for discipleship formation, such as Bible studies, small groups, workshops and retreats?
- Does your congregation offer training for lay evangelism callers?

**Contact Information:** Pastor Dave Keener; [pastordave46@knology.net](mailto:pastordave46@knology.net)

## The Road Block of Self



*“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”* 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

The New York Times published an article in August of 2010 on the issue of clergy burnout. To no one’s surprise, clergy burnout continues to be at an all-time high, but the cause of such a high rate of burnout is still somewhat of a mystery. The author quoted a researcher at Duke saying, “These people are driven by a sense of duty to God,” finding, as the researcher explained, in a survey that showed most of the participants had not taken a vacation in a number of years and expected to be on call 24/7.

While clergy burnout is something that everyone seems to be aware of, how to handle it—or even prevent it—is an issue we rarely address. This is precisely when the self, of the pastor or lay leader, becomes the road block. The creation story in Genesis orders creation by God creating man on day 6 and then resting (with man) on day 7. It is not only God who works and then rests; man was created to rest. This framework of faithfulness leads us to question how we live, faithfully, into our call (or sense of duty to God). Understanding God’s desire for our human selves creates a pathway to better physical health and examples faithfulness in a holistic way.

### Assessment Questions:

- Assess basic needs: How well do I sleep? How many hours? What do my eating habits look like? How often do I share a meal with my family? Do I engage in physical activity? What health issues am I dealing with?
- Assess basic spiritual care: How am I tending to my soul? What am I grieving? What am I doing to feed my faith?
- Balance: Are these first two areas in balance?
- What does rest (Sabbath, sabbatical) look like to me? And does this understanding of rest fit into God’s desire for me?

### Activation:

- As clergy and lay leaders, we are called to example faith. This is not only done in worship, spiritual practice and study, but also in self-care.
- Most leaders wait too long before assessing the need for self-care.
- Many leaders develop a god-complex in leadership, believing everything rests on their shoulders.
- Self-care is simple! Slight adjustments can make a huge difference in our holistic health, yet the benefits are incredible.
- We, as leaders, don’t have to die for the church...someone already did that!

**Contact Information:** Pastor Jody Becker; [jodybecker@ymail.com](mailto:jodybecker@ymail.com)

## Session 5 – Congregational Road Maps

### Overview

It is the goal of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) to inspire congregations to be truly “mission driven.” First, what does “mission” mean? If you went around the room, or asked people in your group or congregation, it is likely you would hear many different definitions. Obviously we look to scripture, and no one person is ever going to understand it perfectly... because it is lived out through our congregations and our lives in ever-maturing ways as we grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. For the purpose of talking about mission—and to embrace this key element of the NALC mission statement by creating a team *Vision for Mission*—this is one definition that may be helpful: “***Mission is sharing the good news of Jesus’ death and resurrection, bringing the kingdom near, making disciples, together, following all that Jesus has commanded us.***”

In order to sharpen our focus on reaching out to others with the Good News of Jesus Christ, it’s important to take a realistic assessment of where your congregation is at the present time. For mission teams—and all ministry teams—a SPOT/SWOT analysis can be a very helpful tool. This includes identifying the *strengths/assets, problems/weaknesses, and threats* that challenge us. Did you connect with some of the issues and roadblocks the panel presenters talked about this afternoon? Are there other obstacles that face your congregation’s ability to engage successfully in Christ’s Great Commission?

This covers the S, P/W and T. But, because the power of the Holy Spirit is available to us, these can work for good and amazing *opportunities*. So, in doing a SPOT or SWOT analysis new ideas and opportunities present themselves. And for the purpose of this exercise as many opportunities as possible should be considered. Let the juices run and prune back as you get further into the visioning and action planning stage. Even though you approach the exercise from a personal or individual point of view, stay at the broad level...your focus is your congregation within the context of its immediate community, region, nation and world.

### Strengths and Problems (20 minutes)

- Appoint a recorder/facilitator for the group and a presenter (they don’t have to be the same person) who will speak for the group when the large group reconvenes.
- One person agrees to be the timekeeper.
  1. Read along with the Directions.
  2. ***Quietly and alone***, each person should spend 3-4 minutes jotting down strengths and problems on notepaper. You can also jot down a threat if you like.
  3. Starting with **strengths**, the facilitator will ask everyone to contribute one idea, going around the group several times and writing responses on the flip chart. Don’t duplicate other ideas expressed, even if you had them on your list.
  4. After a list of 6-8 or so have been generated, ***cluster*** those ideas that naturally go together (in other words, are really the same strength).

5. Have the group agree on the **top three strengths** and “star” (★) them.
6. Repeat steps 1-4 for **problems**. Transfer the new categories to the larger template at your table.
7. If there is more time, for each major problem area, describe what would happen if no one took action? Write that down next to the problem.

### **Threats (2 minutes)**

Can the group identify one or two “threats” (problems/weaknesses that will cause extreme turbulence and prevent you from moving forward)? Most “threats” are really problems. Note them on the chart.

### **Opportunities (15 minutes)**

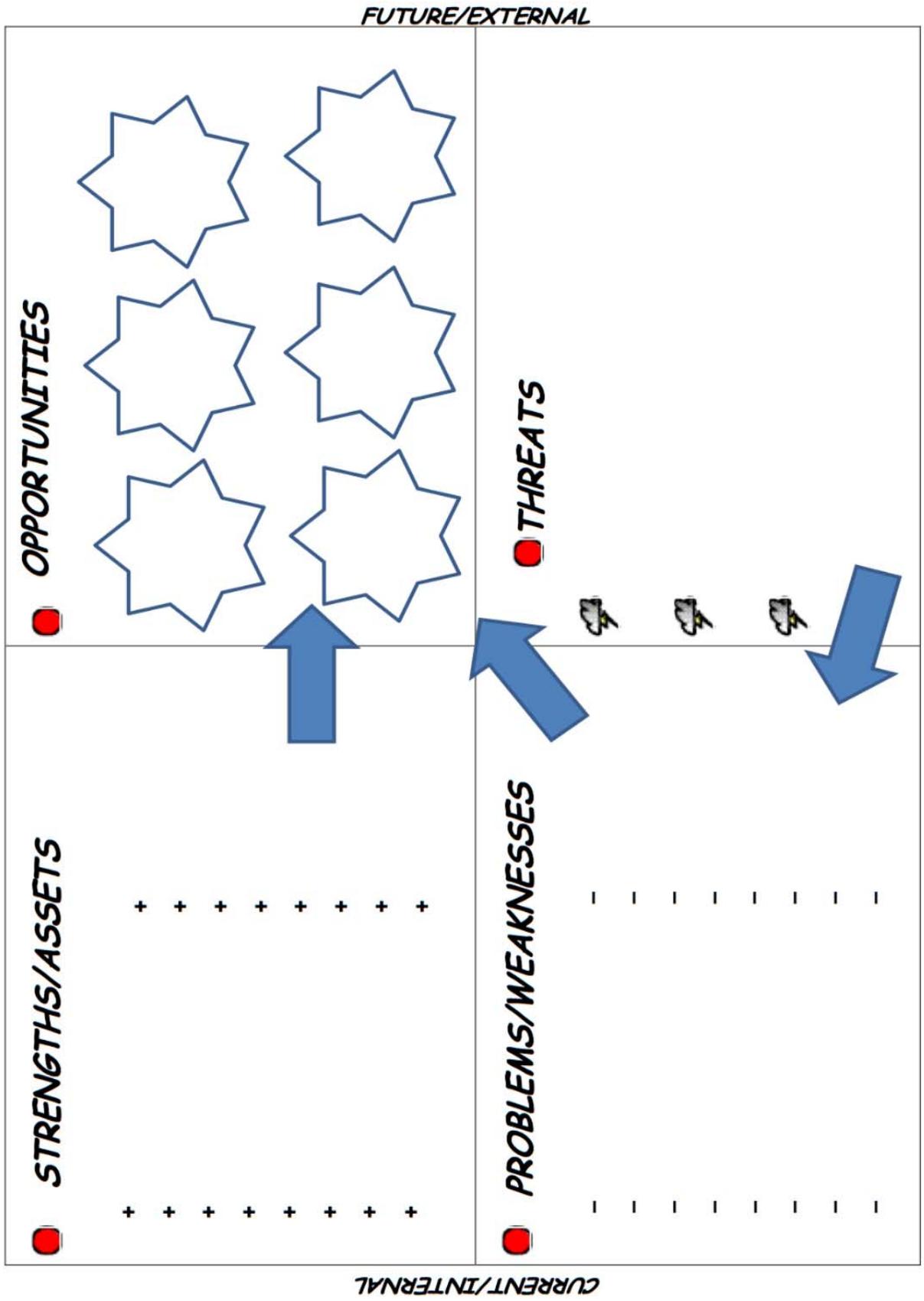
1. Study the lists of strengths, problems and threats. All of these can be turned into opportunities for ACTION. Be open and creative...this is NOT the final Vision element or “To Do” List.
2. Each person should take 2-3 minutes jotting down a word or phrase that describes future opportunities.
3. Then share with the group and cluster ideas. It doesn't have to be perfectly planned out yet...it needs to be prayed about and slept on, so to speak.
4. The six or so ideas that get the most mentions should be placed in the stars on the template. You can state a concept and list a couple of components/or actions under it if you like....but not all ideas lend themselves to this.

*NOTE: Even though we are not ready for it yet, some people may have generated a nice list of action steps. Save these for the next steps in the visioning process.*

### **Report Out (15 minutes)**

The larger charts will be collected and posted at a place to be announced so others can view them. Next steps in this process will be provided at this time for continued work upon return home from the conference. Please agree on a scheduled meeting time to begin working on the next step and write it in your calendar. Close with prayer.

MISSION DRIVEN! SPOT/SWOT for \_\_\_\_\_ Congregation



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## Session 6 – Mission District Road Maps

### OVERVIEW

It is the goal of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) to inspire congregations to be truly “mission driven.” First, what does “mission” mean? If we went around the room, or asked people in your group or congregation, it is likely you would hear many different definitions. Obviously we look to scripture, and no one person is every going to understand it perfectly... because it is lived out through our congregations and our lives in ever-maturing ways as we grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. For the purpose of talking about mission—and to embrace this key element of the NALC mission statement by creating a team *Vision for Mission*—this is one definition that may be helpful: “***Mission is sharing the good news of Jesus’ death and resurrection, bringing the kingdom near, making disciples, together, following all that Jesus has commanded us.***”

In order to sharpen our focus on reaching out to others with the Good News of Jesus Christ, it’s important to take a realistic assessment of where your congregation is at the present time. For mission teams—and all ministry teams—a SPOT/SWOT analysis can be a very helpful tool. This includes identifying the *strengths/assets*, *problems/weaknesses*, and *threats* that challenge us. Did you connect with some of the issues and roadblocks the panel presenters talked about this afternoon? Are there other obstacles that face your congregation’s ability to engage successfully in Christ’s Great Commission? What are some congregations doing that can be lifted up as examples and even mentors. And are there other congregations looking for help?

This covers the S, P/W and T. But, because the power of the Holy Spirit is available to us, these can work for good and amazing *opportunities*. So, in doing a SPOT or SWOT analysis new ideas and opportunities present themselves. And for the purpose of this exercise as many opportunities as possible should be considered. Let the juices run and prune back as you get further into the visioning and action planning stage. Even though you approach the exercise from a personal or individual point of view, stay at the broad level...your focus is your congregation within the context of its immediate community, region, nation and world.

### Strengths and Problems (20 minutes)

- Appoint a recorder/facilitator for the group and a presenter (they don’t have to be the same person) who will speak for the group when the large group reconvenes.
- One person agrees to be the timekeeper.
  1. Read along with the Directions.
  2. ***Quietly and alone***, each person should spend 3-4 minutes jotting down strengths and problems on notepaper. You can also jot down a threat if you like.
  3. Starting with **strengths**, the facilitator will ask everyone to contribute one idea, going around the group several times and writing responses on the flip chart. Don’t duplicate other ideas expressed, even if you had them on your list.

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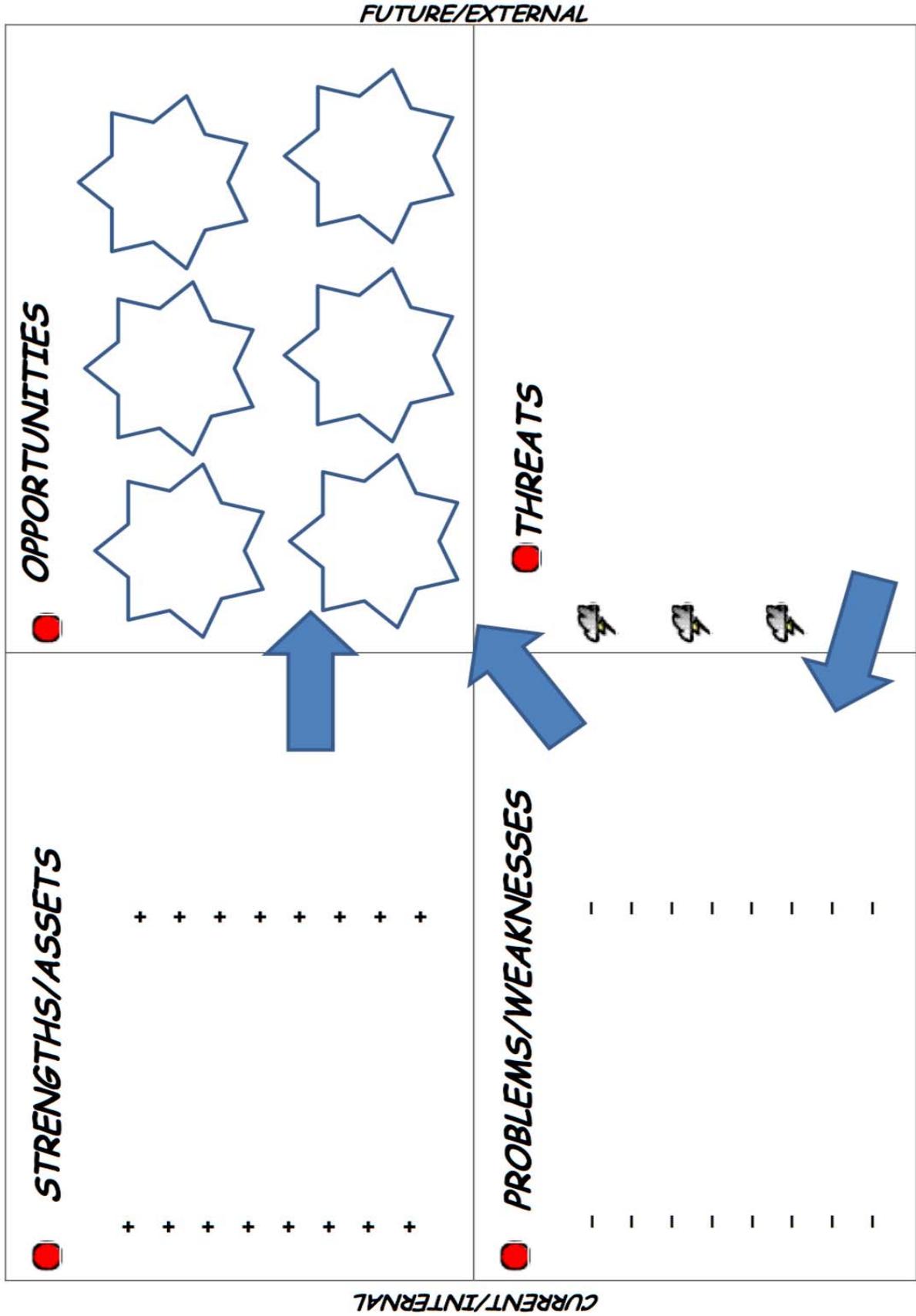
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### **Report Out (15 minutes)**

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**MISSION DRIVEN! SPOT/SWOT for NALC** \_\_\_\_\_ *Mission District*



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# Personal Action Steps

Session	Key Takeaways	Action Items/Next Steps
Session 1 Bishop John Bradosky		
Session 2 Dr. Gemechis Buba		
Session 3 Joys of the Journey		
Session 4 Roadblocks & Detours Panel		
Session 4 (Continued) Roadblocks & Detours Panel		
Session 5 Congregational Road Map		
Session 6 Mission District Road Map		

**Name:**

**Email Address:**

**Phone Number:**

**Congregation/Mission District:**

- NOTES -

- NOTES -

