

## NEW JERSEY SYNOD STRATEGIC PLANS CONGREGATIONS

### CHAPTER 1-A: CONGREGATION MISSION ASSESSMENT (CMA)

**Mission Directions:** All, and especially the following -

- *To begin, nurture and redevelop congregations that see and understand themselves as outreach centers for God's mission*
- *To teach the faith, so as to encourage and enable all the baptized to connect their faith with their daily life, giving particular emphasis to personal witness, stewardship as a lifestyle, and advocacy for justice and peace.*
- *To pass on the faith to all generations especially those in the first third of life and to walk with them in their faith journey, advocating the full use of their gifts.*
- *To continue to become a community that faithfully reflects the diverse population of the territory of New Jersey.*

**Information:** There are 182 congregations in the Synod, 7 under development, and 2 additional mission initiatives. In 2007, worship attendance in the average Synod congregation declined (2006-2007) from an average of 102 to 97, down 5%). Unrestricted income from all sources declined in the average congregation from \$197,964 to \$195,111. Mission Support increased by \$58 to an average of \$13,838 per congregation. 25% of Synod congregations worship from 0-50 each week. 22% are between 51 and 75; 17% from 76 to 100, 17% from 101-150; and 19% worship over 151. 19% of congregations reported growth in worship attendance in 2007. 46% reported less total income in 2007 over 2006. 53% grew in their mission support sharing in 2007.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- To assist congregations in evaluating their present mission context, challenges and opportunities, and begin planning for their mission future.
- To identify and connect congregations to available mission resources or develop legacy plans where appropriate.

#### **PLAN:**

Every Synod congregation will complete a basic mission assessment (CMA) over the next three years (2009-2011). The basic format of the assessment will be the same for all congregations. Office of the Bishop will develop the plan, process, and leadership team. Cluster Counselors will help coordinate plans for the CMAs over the three years. Natural Church Development (NCD) engaged congregations may be engaged in a modified CMA.



# book of faith

Open Scripture. Join the Conversation.

## NEW JERSEY SYNOD STRATEGIC PLANS

### CONGREGATIONS

#### CHAPTER 1-B: BOOK OF FAITH

Mission Directives (possible all but #2 diverse populations)

- *To shape and encourage spirit-filled, gospel centered worship that both honors our traditions and embraces the gifts of God's diverse people.*
- *To begin, nurture and redevelop congregations that see and understand themselves as outreach centers for God's mission.*
- *To teach the faith, so as to encourage and enable all the baptized to connect their faith with their daily life, giving particular emphasis to person witness, stewardship as a lifestyle, and advocacy for justice and peace.*
- *To recruit and equip pastors for Word and Sacrament ministry, lay leaders for Ministry of Word and Service, and lay persons for church leadership.*

**Information:** The Book of Faith is an initiative of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The Book of Faith initiative invites the whole church to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered, and sent by the Word.

#### OBJECTIVES:

- 75% of New Jersey Synod congregations to commit to being Book of Faith congregations by 2010.
- 90% of congregation use "The Book of Faith 40-Day Lenten Journey".
- Five or more disciples from each congregation (rostered and lay) participate in a Bible Teacher enrichment workshop from 2009 to 2011.
- 50% of all New Jersey Lutherans join the Book of Faith online social network.

#### PLAN:

- Provide a Book of Faith Commitment Covenant for each congregation.
- Acquire for every congregation "The Book of Faith 40-Day Lenten Journey" to be used in 2009, 2010 or 2011 or for personal daily readings and/or adult small groups.
- Offer Book of Faith Bible Teacher enrichment workshops for rostered and lay leaders in various venues in 2008, 2010 and 2011.
- Communicate and encourage use of the Book of Faith online social network (<http://bookoffaith.ning.com/>).

## NEW JERSEY SYNOD STRATEGIC PLANS CONGREGATIONS

### CHAPTER 1-C: NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

Mission Directions (All, and especially the following)

- *To begin, nurture and redevelop congregations that see and understand themselves as outreach centers for God's mission.*
- *To teach the faith, so as to encourage and enable all the baptized to connect their faith with their daily life, giving particular emphasis to personal witness, stewardship as a lifestyle, and advocacy for justice and peace.*
- *To continue to become a community that faithfully reflects the diverse population of the territory of New Jersey.*
- *To pass on the faith to all generations especially those in the first third of life, and to walk with them in their faith journey, advocating the full use of their gifts.*

**Information:** The ELCA and the New Jersey Synod Evangelism Team has embraced Natural Church Development as a process to assist congregations to strengthen congregational health and vitality toward growing the church, raising up leaders and building peace. Currently, twenty-seven trained coaches are working with thirty-two congregations as they measure quality characteristics in the area of congregational life and ministry. The coaches walk alongside the congregations NCD team in developing a strategic plan in the area of greatest need for development.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- To encourage congregations to be engaged in the NCD process and to commit continue the process through three to four surveys (five to eight years)
- To assist the evangelism team in the recruitment of potential NCD coaches
- To pair congregations with NCD coaches
- To provide informational workshops
- To nurture NCD coaches with annual refresher event and quarterly gathering

#### **PLAN:**

- Provide educational and inspirational information about NCD to congregations.
- Seek to enlist/encourage ten congregation per year to commence the NCD process.
- Build on the current team of NCD coaches and NCD congregation by growing the number of congregation to be engaged in Natural Church Development.
- Train/retrain/renew NCD coaches at events planned by the NCD coordinating team through the evangelism team.

## NEW JERSEY SYNOD STRATEGIC PLANS CONGREGATIONS

### CHAPTER1-D: TRANSFORMATIONAL MINISTRY

**Mission Directions:** All, and especially the following –

- *To begin, nurture and redevelop congregations that see and understand themselves as outreach centers for God's mission*

**Information:** Eighteen congregations of the New Jersey Synod have participated in some form of Transformational Ministry Training. Transformational Ministry begins with a decision by congregational leaders to learn new ways of seeing and understanding themselves as outreach centers for God's mission. The New Jersey Synod Transformational Training Team provides a week end event that challenges, encourages and equips a congregational team of pastor and lay leaders to ground their ministry in prayer, Bible study and faith conversation as they become missionaries in their context. Participation in this event is the beginning of work in the congregation that seeks God's purpose, fosters ministry behaviors that are centered in God, expects and deals with change, and grows a congregation of eager witnesses.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Accompany congregations who seek to engage in mission for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- Equip congregational leaders to center their work in prayer, Word and faith conversation.
- Build capacity to deal with change, plan strategically for mission and witness effectively.

#### **PLAN:**

The Transformational Ministry Team will provide two week end training events a year on the territory of synod.

At least four congregations will participate in each event.

As the cadre of congregations who are participating in Transformation grows, follow up support events will be offered to provide a forum to share experiences and mutual encouragement. Other communication efforts may be developed with the use of the synod website.