



## *Shepherd Of The Hills Evangelical Lutheran Church*

# **2017-2022 Five Year Plan**

### **SWOT ASSESSMENT**

#### **STRENGTHS**

- Pastors faithfully teach and preach the law and the gospel
- Dedicated administrative assistant
- Warm and friendly congregation overall
- We are doing senior ministry in 13 senior facilities (est. 350-400 people served in last 5 years)
- A women's ministry group started organically
- Thriving Soccer Bible Camp on which we can build
- Faithful ministry to inactive members by elders
- Bible Class attendance up 50%
- Marriage enrichment workshops benefited nearly 20 couples
- Number of people engaged in ministry at SOTH is above average
- We offer a wide range of Bible studies at church and personal electronic study options
- There is an openness to assess expectations for and performance of staff, leaders, laity
- Generally peaceful relationships in the congregation
- Congregation is blessed with spiritually mature leaders
- We have a demographically well-balanced congregation
- The congregation has no debt and is financially stable
- We have two pastors
- We are linked with WELS campus ministry at Michigan State

#### **WEAKNESSES:**

- Lack of member participation in outreach events and programs
- Our engagement in the community, and community awareness of us, can improve
- Ministry to those needing admonishment/church discipline is weak
- Members needing special care are not always adequately served
- Christ Care (one-to-one support) ministry not functioning as it could
- Room for growth in financial stewardship/giving
- We have not maximized technology in our ministry
- Fellowship events hit and miss with little leadership
- Recruiting, engaging, training, overseeing volunteers needs improvement
- We try to do too much and we plan too big, resulting in things not getting done
- Participation down in choir and chime choir
- Hymn selection and music ministry as a whole can improve
- Facility is limiting our ministry

- Our teen ministry needs lay leaders for service projects and outreach events
- Leader communication with and to members can improve
- Leadership training, including for succession, is weak

#### **OPPORTUNITIES:**

- We have the saving truth of God's Word (in WELS and at SOTH) to share with a dying world
- Teen ministry can be built on enthusiastic young men and women in our congregation
- Facility expansion can reach more people with the gospel
- Senior ministry could expand to more facilities with only manpower holding us back
- Property acquired next door gives us ministry opportunities we did not have before
- Potential for outreach to community via a ministry to couples and families
- Pastor Burger's work with CCC gives SOTH access to planning, leadership, ministry resources
- People are asking for training for sharing their faith
- We can impact other church's outreach as we assist them with Soccer Bible Camps
- We could engage our gifted women in our ministry to a greater extent than we are doing now
- We have many children we could encourage to consider the vocation of full-time ministry
- We have young families on which we can build our marriage and family ministry
- We can share the gospel with people of other cultures in our MSU WELS campus ministry
- We honor the traditions of the church but we have an openness to trying new things
- Millennials and seniors form large demographic groups with specific opportunities to share the gospel
- In a culture that wrestles with how religion intersects with politics, the Lutheran doctrine of Church and State is attractive

#### **THREATS:**

- Negative effect on our ministry/attitudes as culture grows increasingly cold toward religion
- Not as many guests attending worship
- Worship patterns of a significant number of members declining
- Not adapting how we minister in a changing culture and to the next generation
- Big projects, like facility expansion, can lead to bickering or divisions in the church
- A "status quo is fine" mentality as this point of our congregation's existence
- A "we should do that" recognition of ministry needs without stepping forward to serve
- Being influenced by the world without perceiving it
- We are retaining only 1/3 of our young adults
- The media provides easy access to many popular but false and misleading theologies
- Many in our culture assume that all Christians hold to fundamentalist beliefs
- Technology makes it easier for people to isolate versus coming together as a community

### **PROPOSED MISSION STATEMENT**

*God has called us to "go and make disciples of all nations." (Matthew 28:19) Therefore...*

The family of God at Shepherd of the Hills exists to share the love of Christ and proclaim his gospel to people near and far for the salvation of their souls.

## **CORE VALUES STATEMENT**

**At Shepherd of the Lutheran Church, we value:**

### **Worship (We exist to “Proclaim his gospel”)**

God’s Word and Sacrament are the means by which God creates and preserves saving faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, we will gather weekly for worship around the Means of Grace to grow in our faith and to give thanks to God through our prayers, praise, and offerings. (Hebrews 10:25; 1 Corinthians 10:24,25) Valuing the blessings of the gospel, and desiring to glorify God, we will strive for excellence in how we conduct worship services and how we demonstrate Christ’s love to all fellow worshipers before, during, and after the service.

### **Evangelism (We exist to “proclaim his gospel to people near and far”)**

Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world. All people matter to God. Therefore, they matter to us also. We will zealously proclaim the Gospel to the lost and the straying in our personal witness, in our congregation’s evangelism efforts, and in mission work outside our congregation, so that the Holy Spirit can create faith in their hearts. (Romans 10:14,15; 1 Timothy 2:4)

### **Discipleship (We exist to “proclaim his gospel to people near”)**

Christians want to grow in both their Christian faith and also in their Christian living. We value the pure Word of God as the means for such spiritual growth. We will offer regular Biblical teaching and training so that God’s people might grow in faith and be equipped to joyfully serve Christ and others to the best of their God-given ability. (Matthew 28:19,20; 2 Peter 3:18; 2 Timothy 3:16,17)

### **Fellowship (We exist as “God’s family”)**

By Christ’s death and resurrection, believers are made children of the Heavenly Father. That means believers are also united into one family in Christ. We will not neglect our family members, but value each one, striving to get to know one another and to genuinely care for one another as brothers and sisters. (1 Peter 2:17; Galatians 6:10)

### **Peace (We exist to “share the love of Christ”)**

Through the sacrifice of Christ, we are at peace with God. It is God’s will that this peace also exists between believers. We will strive to be a place free from the tension and bickering that marks life in the world. We pray the Spirit to grant us this through the power and grace of Christ who lives in us. (Colossians 3:15)

## **VISION STATEMENT**

At Shepherd of the Hills, we pray for God’s continued blessings on our gospel ministry. While God only knows what the future holds for us, if he would graciously bless us in the future as he has in the past, both with spiritual growth through his word and with numeric growth as he works through us to call and nurture souls with the gospel, our church would look significantly different in 5 years.

We envision Shepherd of the Hills as a congregation that, in five years is:

- 1) Serving a greater number of people with weekly worship that centers on the gospel in word and sacrament. Worship will be done with excellence and reflect the rootedness and flexibility of the historic Christian tradition. Guests and members will receive a warm welcome and experience the love of Christ not only in the gospel that is proclaimed but in the way we care about and serve each other.
- 2) Serving more people with a menu of Bible Classes that develop the faith of those new to Christianity or our Church and that strengthen the faith and life of mature believers. Classes will be sound in doctrine, creatively taught, and address a number of needs, including training for leadership and service, specific life challenges, marriage and parenting enrichment, sharing and living our faith in an increasingly secular world, etc. Well-trained leaders and workers, growing in faith through the Word, will be the key to expanding our ministry, reaching more people with the gospel, and building strong families.
- 3) Doing more to show love and support not only to members of our church family, but also to those who are not part of our church family, to the lost, and to the community as a whole. We will show we value each member of our family here by supportive relationships, charitable acts, spiritual care, and practical assistance. We will build bridges to the lost with deeds of love and compassion so that we can share the gospel with them.
- 4) Spearheading efforts in the greater Lansing area to reach and to serve seniors and their families with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We will guide and share resources with WELS churches in the Michigan District who want to reach out to seniors in their communities through Bible classes and worship services.
- 5) Gathering in an expanded facility that is able to support our ministry with adequate space for worship, fellowship, and education, and enable us to do more to reach the lost with the gospel.

## **LONG TERM OBJECTIVES** *(Italics are simply initial suggestions for achieving goals)*

### **Worship** *Five years from now, by God's grace, we will...*

- 1) **Strive for excellence in hymn/music/liturgy selection, vocal and instrumental performances, and the use of technology, adornment, and visuals.**  
*Pastors plan worship 6 months at a time / camera and sound upgrade / training of ushers and greeters / recruit singers for choirs*
- 2) **Offer worship services that are Christ-centered, clear and understandable, joyful, and apply law and gospel faithfully for the spiritual growth of God's people and for the conversion of the lost.**  
*Pastors study readings each week and discuss how to communicate God's Word that week / Pastors learn about and discuss preaching practices and are open to critiques*
- 3) **Treat our visitors as cherished guests from the time they turn into our parking lot until the time they leave so that they see the love of Christ in us as well as hear it proclaimed in the gospel.**

*Think through the experience from a visitor's perspective and plan actions to make the experience positive*

**Outreach**    *Five years from now, by God's grace, we will ...*

**1) Use every ministry, class, group, and event as a means of outreach.**

*As we do ministry planning, identify how events can be used for outreach*

**2) Be more involved in our community and be better recognized by our community.**

*Lawn signs / research how we can connect with our community by participating in community events / maximize church sign / research what community needs are and how we can help / canvassing*

**3) Conduct senior ministry in more senior living facilities and with more of our people.**

*Offer worship service with food during weekday and use public transportation to get seniors here*

**4) Be reaching and serving more children and parents with the gospel.**

*Training and leadership and volunteers / Better follow up on prospects from kids events /*

**5) Have more of our members sharing the gospel with and inviting friends, relatives, acquaintances, and neighbors to church.**

*Training in how to share our faith annually / Make this a key cultural facet of SOTH / members encouraged regularly to tell pastors about people who could be served with the gospel /*

**Stewardship**    *Five years from now, by God's grace, we will...*

**1) Proactively be recruiting, training, equipping, and utilizing God's gifted people in the church's ministry.**

*Must identify processes, have job descriptions, training, leaders, and oversight / Network with other churches to get the above / We need a culture/mindset change to be committed to the work of utilizing others and trusting others to lead / set goal of 60% of confirmed members using their gifts in service and leadership roles in the church's ministry*

**2) Be financially stable, administrate our finances with sound, God-pleasing practices, and provide clear, reliable, and regular financial reports.**

*We need to identify what the budget impact of ministry plans will be and plan the impact year to year / Identify what financial reporting we want to do and how often / Utilize a different mass communication email group for staff and let "Flock" be just community messages / Establish a curriculum of annual stewardship training, including frank, Biblical teaching about money management and first-fruits giving*

**3) Support outreach ministries (such as WELS campus ministry) with a generous portion of budgeted funds and with the service of God's people here and abroad.**

*Adding a teen mission trip / Doing adult mission trips / Promoting Kingdom Workers, Lutheran Women Missionary Society, WELS Campus Ministry at MSU, etc. / Increasing our giving for WELS affiliated gospel ministry outside our congregation to 20% of budget for local ministry / Keeping the needs and work in mission field before the eyes and hearts of God's people*

**Fellowship**     *Five years from now, by God's grace, we will...*

**1) Make every event, class, program, project, etc. a fellowship opportunity**

*Include how we will make this happen when we draft our annual plans / Provide after opportunities for after-church socializing and refreshments / Determine who will be responsible for congregation-wide fellowship events*

**2) Encourage like-minded people to gather together in social, sports, recreation, hobby groups**

*We need a coordinator or team to regularly identify common interests and suggest things / Publicize the groups we have / Regularly brain-storming sessions to create new fellowship activities and opportunities / Produce a guide for starting and maintaining new groups*

**3) Offer a significant number of small group Bible study groups**

*Change the culture of our congregation that members embrace small groups as a way to get closer to each other / Research how other WELS churches do small groups and borrow practices that will work for us*

**4) Celebrate with and support each other in key life events**

*Identify key life events and what we would do to show we are brothers and sisters in the faith / We need leaders for various ways we would show love / Use our bulletin, newsletter, website and email network to promote activities and disseminate information about our members (birthdays, anniversaries, illnesses, births, deaths, etc.) / Promote and celebrate our new members by the following: posting photos and short bios in narthex and/or on website or email, new member reception following services, and quarterly new member dinners*

**Elders**     *Five years from now, by the grace of God, we will...*

**1) Have an active ministry of charitable help, providing numerous services to God's people.**

*Providing meals to the ill or recovering from illness / Providing food to the needy through our food bank / Providing emergency financial assistance through the Stephen Fund  
Providing transportation to those who need rides to church, the doctor, etc. / Providing child care to those who need that to attend classes or who need that at home / Providing a helping hand by running errands, shopping, doing house/yard work, etc. / Assisting those looking for work or a place to live / Helping people take advantage of social aid agencies for the help offered there*

**2) Offer personalized, compassionate, spiritual support for individuals and groups.**

*Provide Biblical, pastoral counseling and refer members to competent Christian therapists, if at all possible / Offer care for all called and hired workers with God-pleasing support through our Committee for the Care of Called Workers (CCCW) / Have an extensive network of mentors for teens, young adults, new couples, new parents, new members, etc. / Annually identify five key challenges people are facing and provide classes, presentations, or online resources to help people successfully cope with such challenges through the Word of God, because God's Word is a source of comfort and strength in every need / Have 5 support groups formed that fulfill our calling to bear one another's burdens and to pray for each other / Have a majority of our members trained and many functioning as "Christ Care" peer supporters because the church is the body of Christ and designed by God to provide mutual support and encouragement / Have at least 75 individuals or families visiting shut-ins, the ill, or the hospitalized, because Jesus specifically mentions visiting the sick as an evidence of faith in Jesus in Matthew 25 / Weekly identify SOTH member or friends who need special support and determine how best to serve them.*

**3) Weekly evaluate worship patterns of members and determine appropriate actions to show Christian love and to give encouragement to regularly receive the blessings of joint worship.**

*Elder will track this weekly and share information with pastors and elders / Clearly identify the process of follow up on members who are absent from worship / Everyone knows what their role is in follow up- from elders to pastors to friends and relatives of inactive member to entire congregation / Track communion attendance weekly and look for red flags*

**4) Weekly discuss and act on members needing law and gospel ministry for neglecting word and sacraments or for unrepented sin.**

*Pastors and elder chairman will discuss this weekly / Clearly identify the process of follow up on discipline cases / Everyone knows what their role is in follow up- from elders to pastors to friends and relatives of inactive member to entire congregation / Deal with all cases Biblically*

**5) Increase worship attendance to \_\_\_% of total available baptized members per Sunday.**

*Conduct listening phone calls to irregular attending members (utilize volunteers/elders) where we reference God's command to come together for worship and the blessings of word, sacrament, fellowship, and strive to find out why they are worshipping less frequently / Encourage regular worship / Analyze input from phone calls; develop appropriate response / Utilize many forms of communication to encourage worship (text, emails, letters) from pastors/elders/ Sunday School coordinators / Establish goals for increased worship attendance / Track attendance of members separately from non-members (for accurate records) and report quarterly / Develop a monitoring/outreach program for non-members who attend worship / Track membership attendance trends quarter to quarter and respond with appropriate action / Be intentional and diligent about new member assimilation (esp. first 6 months) / Continue to encourage regular Bible Class and Sunday School participation / Continue efforts to engage members in the life and ministry of the church / Strive for excellence in worship, worship welcome, and communication of God's Word*

## **Children/Teen Spiritual Growth Five years from now, by the grace of God, we will...**

- 1) Attract, serve, and nurture a greater number of member and prospect children and their families.**

*We will conduct training for Sunday School teachers / Striving for excellence in our Sunday School program / We are offering spiritually-enriching programs for kids / We evaluate whether we need volunteer or paid leaders*

- 2) Have a greater number of families in our congregation sharing the Word of God among family members and teaching/modeling a Christian life.**

*Lenten and Advent home devotionals provided / Confirmation Class provides opportunities for home discussion of the Word / Parenting workshops, small groups, classes / Finding and providing resources for parents through WELS, WLCFS, CPH /*

- 3) Have a greater number of member and prospect teens and young adults actively hearing, reading, and studying the Word of God, and using their gifts to serve and lead others and reach out to the lost (including through the church's ministry).**

*Identify and train gifted teens as Sunday School teachers / Offer young people opportunities to serve / link young people at college with fellow college student members / We need parent and other member leaders for service and fellowship events / Combine fellowship and service in Confirmation Class on quarterly basis / We evaluate whether we need volunteer or paid staff / Pastors meet for lunch with teens over the summer to talk about church, service, outreach*

## **Adult Spiritual Growth Five years from now, by the grace of God, we will ...**

- 1) Provide more people who are seeking God, who are new to Christianity, or wanting to understand the faith with simple law and gospel, answers to basic spiritual questions, and ways to systematical study the core truths of the Bible.**

*Make sure everyone who wants to study the Bible can do that either in the class or one on one with a pastor or trained member as soon as possible*

- 2) Serve a greater number of Christians with opportunities for a deeper study of the Word of God.**

*Provide a specific class for those who want a deeper study of doctrine / Utilize technology / Small groups / Promote good books from NPH or CPH /*

- 3) Have more of God's people equipped to serve others in their daily lives and in the ministry of the church.**

*Have a mechanism for feedback from the congregation for what kinds of studies help them / Build into all studies a practical application for what we are studying / Rotate the studies done on Sun or Wed or Thur through the other time slots / People encouraged to let us know what they want to study on a quarterly basis /*



## **Leadership**

*Five years from now, by the grace of God, we will...*

- 1) Provide leadership training and adequate resources for all Council members, board chairmen and vice chairmen, committee, team leaders, and anyone in a leadership role.**

*Use a process for developing leaders among our youth and young adults / Commit to face to face discussions versus "sign-up" methods exclusively / Have processes, job descriptions, reporting figured out for various areas of ministry / June is training month / evaluate leadership as to where there are gaps, whether volunteers are adequate, or whether paid staff is needed / do exit interviews /*

- 2. Wisely plan, structure, and operate in a way that fully utilizes God's gifts (resources and people) in ministry.**

*Follow a structure and process for long range and annual planning / Conduct a ministry with achievable goals that stretch us to do our utmost to share the gospel / Have a structure that utilizes the gifts of women in meaningful ministry / Focus on achieving planned ministry goals in our Church Council meetings / Conduct honest evaluations of how we are doing our work / Expand the number of members working with our boards / Identify unique gifts of staff and also expectations of focus and time in ministry so that staff is maximized*

- 3. Bolster the relationship between leaders and the congregation.**

*Follow a written plan to communicate with and to the congregation efficiently and effectively in a specific, clear, regular way / Utilize technology to the fullest in our ministry / quarterly open forum meetings before voters' meetings / Make sure members know who their leaders are / Leaders engaging with people serving for encouragement and support / Recognize women with leadership, problem solving, or other key gifts and seek out their input / Use survey monkey and written forms to get questions ahead of time / Identify key people to seek out / New member assimilation via women's ministry*

## **Facility**

*In five years from now, by the grace of God, we will...*

***Have an expanded facility that enables us to do more to reach the lost with the saving gospel and to better nurture God's people in their faith and equip them for service and outreach.***