

Mission Planning – A Resource List*

*This resource list was developed by the Southwest Pennsylvania Synod and included in *Congregational Mission Planning 2012: Discerning God's Mission For Our Congregation, Leader's Guide*.

Living Lutheran: Renewing Your Congregation, Dave Daubert, Augsburg Fortress, 2007.

Dave Daubert provides a practical how-to guide that will enable church leaders to help individual congregations walk through the renewal process for themselves. Creative and informative, the book provides a straightforward approach that helps congregations reclaim Lutheran tradition for the 21st century. It particularly focuses upon the development of a Purpose Statement and Guiding Principles and includes questions for individual or group reflection and an additional resources section.

Reclaiming the “L” Word: Renewing the Church from Its Lutheran Core, Kelly A. Fryer, Augsburg Fortress. This is a book about renewing congregations by recognizing and living out the core teachings of the Lutheran faith. In the introduction, the author states: "I hope that people of every denomination will find this book helpful as they wrestle with these important issues within their own traditions. But this little book is primarily written for those who call themselves Lutheran and, specifically, those who are members of ELCA congregations, and it is intended to help us answer central questions: Who are we? What DOES it mean to be a Lutheran today, anyway? And, why does it matter?"

A Field Guide for the Missional Congregation: Embarking on a Journey of Transformation, Rick Rouse and Craig Van Gelder, Augsburg Fortress, 2008. A Field Guide for the Missional Congregation reveals seven transformational keys, using real-life case studies to illustrate each key. A reflective milestone framework, including discovery questions for each chapter, ground the book in a practical process.

Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations, Gil Rendle and Alice Mann, The Alban Institute, 2003. Gil Rendle and Alice Mann cast planning as a "holy conversation," a congregational discernment process about three critical questions: Who are we? What has God called us to do or be? Who is our neighbor? They equip congregational leaders with a broad and creative range of ideas, pathways, processes, and tools for planning. By choosing the resources that best suit their needs and context, congregations will shape their own strengthening, transforming, holy conversation. They will find a path that is faithful to their identity and their relationship with God.

Pathway to Renewal: Practical Steps for Congregations, Daniel P. Smith and Mary K. Sellon, The Alban Institute, 2008. No pastor can lead a congregation to renewal alone. It requires a complete change of heart for the whole congregation. Congregational renewal occurs when people engage communally in a transition in their very understanding of the nature and purpose of their church. This goes far beyond a simple retooling of the mission statement or addition of a few programs. Authors Mary Sellon and Daniel Smith lead congregations through this process of renewal, breaking down into understandable components what is happening in the people themselves that makes renewal efforts successful.

Our Mission—Discovering God’s Call to Us, Robin and John McCullough-Bade, the Congregational LEADER Series, Augsburg Fortress, 2002. This book assists congregations in writing a mission statement, establishing goals, and creating action plans to carry out those goals. The four strategic planning steps to help your congregation fulfill its mission: STOP to pray and discern if your congregation is fulfilling the will of God LOOK at God's word to make sure it is at the heart of your mission LISTEN to the mission mandate of Christ to establish goals for the congregation GO to implement your action plans with confidence and hope in God's blessings.

Blueprint For Change: A Manual for the 21st Century Congregation, Pastor Neal R. Boese, Seven Steps Ministries, P.O. Box 18036, Erlanger, KY 41018 (www.nealboese.com) This 10 chapter manual is designed to help congregations focus on their Biblical mandate and reach out to those who do not know Jesus and His love for them. Church leadership is encouraged to use the questions at the end of each chapter to find ways to bring about change without creating conflict within the congregation.

Some additional resources for approaching this mission planning in a different way could be:

Unbinding the Gospel: Real Life Evangelism, Martha Grace Reese, Chalice Press, 2008 (Website: www.Gracenet.info) Martha Grace Reese provides a study resource specifically geared to main-line congregations to help a pastor and congregational leaders work through the challenge of being better witnesses of the Gospel. Questions are provided for discussion at the end of each chapter. It also includes a 40-day Prayer Journal as part of the process.

Natural Church Development – A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches Christian A. Schwarz, Church Smart Resources, 4th edition 2000 Christian Schwartz cites research from around the world that demonstrates eight characteristics essential to growth in congregations. The book helps readers to see how they might apply the principles in their local setting. Some synods have trained coaches that can help your congregation work through the NCD process.