

THE COMMON TABLE  
St. Luke's United Methodist Church  
Monday, September 19, 2011  
The Fellowship Hall  
6:00 – 8:30 p.m.  
Audrey Elling, Facilitator

We gathered at 6:00 p.m. for a potluck dinner. Sallie Suby-Long led Grace for our meal. Audrey Elling then welcomed those attending and introduced the main topic for the meeting: "Creating Tomorrow at St. Luke's."

**Creating Tomorrow at St. Luke's**

Marty Davidson, Facilitator for Future Plans, then reviewed the Long Range Planning process that has been going on for some time.

A Long Range Planning Team was established two years ago, led by Jim Wolf. The team conducted surveys, interviews, meetings, (and more meetings) and led to the development of wide ranging information that has been used to establish a Foundation for Future plans. The intent of this foundation is create a platform on which we can successful build our collective vision and ensure its success to the greatest extent possible. Then he described the Foundation:

The Foundation has three pillars to support our future plans: They are Financial, Communications, and Big Vision:

The Financial pillar includes of stewardship, business case analyses, fund raising programs, endowments, financial planning, external fund sources, our 501C3 status, and starter loans. Action to fulfill any future plan requires funding and whether that funding is minor or major, we need an intentional, conscientious financial support structure.

The Communications pillar is also a key support for our future plans, in fact it is probably the most important pillar we have. We must make sure that all parties are kept up to speed and are given the opportunity to provide input as we grow through this process. We have many ways of communicating within the network of people and activities within the church. Communications areas of focus include: internal, external, face-to-face, and door-to-door, through social media, and marketing. We will also use new and evolving communication pathways as they meet our needs. Our total communication plan must remain effective as a support pillar for future plans. This includes communicating and coordinating with St. Luke's today and it's congregation.

The third pillar supporting our future is our "Big" Vision. This is where we figure out how to fulfill the amazing input and vision that the Long Range Planning team has discerned. There is tremendous desire to do "something big". We have been exploring what St. Luke's may look like, what we see the church becoming in the community, and the world, as the years go by.

Key elements forming our Vision include changes in our business operations, our system of governance, reaching out in mission and ministry via the virtual world, incorporating house churches into the life of the church, developing a second site for church-related functions, establishing new revenue-generating functions, entering into partnerships with other organizations, and making improvements in our decision-making process to facilitate the vision. Most importantly the team supporting this pillar will be performing the due diligence to help determine what the "something big" will be! □ We cannot do everything, so the due diligence will involve selection as well as implementation.

The Long Range Planning Team has heard a desire and passion to do something significant in the following Big Vision areas:

- Fusion and Young Adults
- Missions
- Music & Arts
- Spirituality

Marty noted that each Foundation pillar will have a team of volunteers to help guide and direct action and coordination with those working on other pillars.

Other key foundational elements that we must keep in mind are internal leadership, strong connections with the external community, and our corporate memory of what it has taken to bring us to this point in our ministry to the community and world. We must remember who we are: our core values and our history of growth.

We are seeking to help people become disciples of Jesus Christ, and have named this action the "Path to the Cross." How do we do that? By letting God's light shine through us as we interact with others. The key to remember is that there are many paths that people may take to find Jesus and part of our job is to help people find their path.

St. Luke's has healthy financial support and effective governance; these provide the church with the means to fund new activities and the decision-making ability to support our desire to move in new directions. Accordingly, any action taken to implement our future plans must not ignore who we are as the congregation of St. Luke's. We must always remember our history of continuing membership growth and our current strong revenue, and seek to maintain them. We must also take into account the stability of our membership and organization. Our risk tolerance, our security provisions, and our history of flexibility, complement our consideration of new directions.

So, where do we go from here?  
To the future, with God's help.

## **Long Range Planning Q&A**

Marty then invited those attending to discuss what they had just heard.

“What do we have to do, to make the things we do now, more successful?” he asked. The responses included, “Bring in those with expertise in the areas we want to take action,” and “Identify the resources and potentials and framework within which the church can do something.”

A participant asked, “When will people know that it is time to get involved?” Marty’s reply was that the messages are going out right now in a number of areas. There have been announcements in worship about Love-inc., mission trips, the Pumpkin Patch, Feeding the 5,000 and other activities that need people to help.

Another asked, “What has been the response so far?”

The response was, “There have been very supportive words and actions by many. People are expressing interest in getting involved in the announced plans. There seems to be a lot of momentum for the planned actions.”

Another participant asked, “How do we avoid losing sight of our core values as we reach out in new areas of ministry?” “Why do some succeed and some do not? The response was, “We must recognize that momentum like this cannot and will not change our core values or the vision of church members making disciples for Christ. We are trying to listen to what’s happening in the church and discern the direction the Spirit is pointing us. We must pay attention to the trends that are beginning to show up. For example, why do we have so many certified spiritual directors in our congregation, why do we have so many pastoral candidates coming through our doors, what does the size and effectiveness of our Stephen Ministry tell us?”

To succeed in any future plan, we must continually ask ourselves, “What’s God doing among us and how do we attend to that?”

Opportunity comes with a need to respond and there are costs if we do not.

Opportunities can be lost when we fail as a church to communicate to people and respond to a need in a timely fashion.

Marty closed by noting that the foundational teams supporting each of the three pillars are currently being put together and he will be helping to coordinate activities among the teams. If there is anyone interested they should contact Marty or Reverend Forbes.

## **Calendar and Upcoming Events**

### **Learning Opportunities**

An event calendaring and planning sheet for 2100-2012 (dated September 19, 2011) was handed out. The information is also listed on the “Calendars, Events” link of the St. Luke’s web site.

Rev. Brad Laurvick then reviewed a list of some of the current classes available. They include: Disciple classes, the Micah series, Letters You Have Never Written (for men), and World Religions.

#### Missions

Laura Richards discussed the planned Spring 2012 mission trips to Guatemala and noted that there is still space available for anyone who feels called to participate. She also noted that Love Inc. is planning the establishment of a thrift store in the southwest metro area. Those interested in helping should contact Cindy Chumacas. Rev. Brad then discussed this year's Feeding of the 5,000 missions project to benefit Denver Urban Ministries (DENUM). A higher goal has been set for his year, 100,000 lbs, to meet DENUM's need. Collection begins the last week of September.

#### Youth and Children

Susan Johnson reviewed some of the youth activities coming up. There will be fall small group outreach activities, visits to Urban Peak, and Warren Village and costume collections for Youth in Action to benefit the homeless in Jefferson County. Other mission opportunities include packing boxes of food for DENUM, staying in touch with other youth groups, and connections with shut-ins.

Sharon Oliver discussed the planned children's ministry programs, including Holiday events, a variety of classes for kids K thru grade 4, rotational teaching workshops for teachers, a new SLY Jr. program, distribution of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade bibles, a love and logic program, and interaction with Little School parents.

#### Performing Arts & Music

There will be a Jazz concert on Nov 5. The play, Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," will be presented in November 18 & 19, and the annual Christmas Cantata will be performed on Dec. 11 (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of advent).

#### Spirituality and Wellness

Sallie Suby-Long noted that the Spirituality and Wellness Center represents one of the new "Big Vision" directions. She announced that the latest session in the Spirituality & Wellness series will held in the Fellowship Hall on October 4, 2011, starting at 6:30 p.m. She handed out the card, "Journey Toward Wholeness," with the complete schedule of sessions.

#### Leadership Team Updates

Karen Wesson reported on succession planning in the leadership team and invited those present to the Leadership Luncheon scheduled for October.

Bruce Kirchhoff noted that Staff Parish Relations committee has been busy with staff changes this year. He then introduced Jay Van Hoosen, the incoming SPR chair.

Ann Roadarmel, announced the activity schedule for the Seasoned Voyagers; they will be traveling to Estes Park on October 5, for some “leaf peeking.” She noted that the group had grown out of senior ministry conversations with Rev. Janet Forbes.

Ken Fong, Trustees, noted that work will be done to fix the back stairs, safety and security plans are being updated, they will be improving AV aids, usher training will be enhanced and continued. A fire drill is planned for October 16.

Dave Cupp, Finance, happily reported that St. Luke’s has achieved the financial goal for the year.

Lynda Fickling, Servant Ministry, discussed how you get connected with the church and others. The most effective means is to invite people one-on-one. She is looking for people to man the Get-Connected Center.

### **Upcoming Sermon series and Stewardship**

Rev. Janet Forbes introduced the new Stewardship team leader, Robin Ford, The committee is using the book, “It’s Not Your Parents’ Offering Plate,” as a resource for this year’s fund raising campaign. The team has decided to use a theme of saying “Thank You St. Luke’s for the Opportunities to Changing Lives for Good,” for the 2011-12 Campaign. Campaign kickoff will occur on October 9. Three videos are being prepared for the campaign; each will depict being “changed for good.”

Rev. Janet also noted that the First Sunday of Advent is November 27. This year, we are craving for simplicity; we will celebrate Christmas in the present, and attend to Christmas in the moment.

### **Sending and Evaluations**

Audrey Elling asked those attending to provide feedback and submit any comments or suggestions to the church office. What went well? What could be improved? The Common Table Adjourned at 8:30 p.m., with a community prayer circle. Afterward, there were informal conversations with Staff and Leadership.

The next Common Table will be held, Monday, November 14, 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Les Ludlam, secretary for the meeting