

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

Southington, CT

2018-2023 Strategic Plan

We, baptized members of the Church of Christ, responding in faith to the call of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel desire to continue together to preach the word, administer the sacraments, and carry out God's mission.

Mission Statement

Live by Faith, Be Known by Love, and Be a Voice of Hope

Statement of Purpose

The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.

To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the church shall:

1. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
2. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
3. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as a Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
4. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless, and committing itself to their needs.
5. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling the world.
6. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.

Authority

All authority in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this congregation are therefore to be carried out under his gracious rule.

History

Our congregation has experienced tremendous transition in its recent past. With the leaving of a 20 year pastor followed by an intentional interim pastor, our church is starting in a new direction with new leadership. The process of transition highlighted many of the strengths our congregation poses including our spirit, determination, financial stability, music program, and family orientation. In addition to a multitude of strengths, our congregation discovered areas for potential improvements. This document is a step toward addressing some of the larger challenges our congregation is currently facing with a long term plan.

This document has been informed by a variety of sources. Previous to calling our pastor, a discernment team met with members of the greater Southington and our church communities while research our congregations history and present. The discernment team laid the groundwork for our council to initiate a strategic planning committee to look at the creation of a long term strategic plan for the church. Through a variety of conversations, public workshops, research, and collaboration the strategic planning committee identified three target areas to focus on creating long term systemic change within the Zion culture: Communication, Missions, and Facilities.

Our church is structured as a family style church yet is the size of a program church. Multiple services, multigenerational families, and limited space are some of the challenges in communication within our congregation. Within the community, our church is often identified solely by its role in the Apple Harvest Festival. There is a need to improve our ability to build connections within our church while providing a larger picture of who Zion is to the greater Southington community.

Zion has a diverse set of mission programs that operate within the congregation and within the Southington community. Communication will assist in strengthening these mission programs and provide the vehicle for launching new mission programs. Zion has the ability to support small group missions that target seniors, families, children, and youth.

Zion has made the most of its physical footprint, yet there is a desire to do more. This requires a careful analysis of the facility we currently own overlaid with the needs of our programs and service opportunities. Realigning our physical space with our current needs while looking at what additional spaces could enhance our mission work will set Zion in a position of strength for future growth and development.

Together, these three areas have the potential to symbiotically support growth within our Zion community, increasing the Zion's footprint in the greater Southington community, and provide long term stability for the congregation's future.

Zion Lutheran Church 2018 Strategic Plan Goals:

1. **CONNECT** Zion's worship, programs, and service opportunities with our congregation and the greater Southington Community.
2. **OPTIMIZE** Zion's facilities to support worship and a variety of congregational and community programs and service opportunities.
3. **GROW** Zion's worship, programs, and service opportunities within our congregation and the greater Southington Community.

GOAL #1

CONNECT Zion's worship, programs, and service opportunities with our congregation and the greater Southington Community.

Rationale

As ways of communicating in organizations and with society have evolved and will continue to change, we must examine and adapt as necessary. Zion's members and participants are multigenerational and require multiple mechanisms to effectively inform, teach and grow Christian faith and missions.

Biblical Connections

Mark 16:15 And Jesus said to them "Go into the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation."

Matthew 18:20 For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them

Acts 2:4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Actionsteps

1. Follow up with the community members we reached out to as part of the discernment process
2. Invite the media or publish an article/photo about Zion at least once per quarter
3. Revise the Zion constitution and/or by-laws by December 2018
4. Post mission and constitution and by-laws on the website
5. Publish a master list of the ministries and missions that are supported at and by Zion in print and on the website
6. Create an onboarding manual for council members including job descriptions and expectations ensuring understanding of the church constitution and by-laws
7. Create a brochure for visitors
8. Update new member packet
9. Establish the church office as the central location for communicating and connecting the needs of church members and church functions
10. In 2018, select recipients of apple harvest funds in advance of the festival and post the recipients names or organizations on the booth

GOAL #2

OPTIMIZE Zion's facilities to support worship and a variety of congregational and community programs and service opportunities.

Rationale

Zion's history includes growth in its facilities. Hearing God's call to continue His mission in ways we may not yet know, we must consider both the future use and potential expansion of our facilities.

Biblical Connections

Acts 2:47 Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their numbers day by day those who were being saved.

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Luke 16:10 Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much

Actionsteps

1. Support and develop the current board of facilities
2. Create an ad hoc property planning committee (2018-2019)
 - a. Engage an independent consultant to perform an assessment of current and future facility needs
 - b. Create a prioritized list of items needing repair (ie. Parking lot, roof, etc.)
 - c. Conduct an energy efficiency study
3. Create an ad hoc facility development committee
 - a. Create a building fund/capital campaign
 - b. Contract with appropriate experts to implement facility plan

GOAL #3

GROW Zion's worship, programs, and service opportunities within our congregation and the greater Southington Community.

Rationale

We joyfully respond to the Gospel by engaging in good works with the community around us. Using our time, talents, and treasure, we interact with people both within our congregation and the community at large .

Biblical Connections

Matthew 5:16 let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Luke 10:27 "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."

Matthew 4:19 And Jesus said to his disciples, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men".

Actionsteps

1. Increase Zion's active membership in each of the next 5 years
2. Increase the number of programs offered by Zion to meet the needs of the Southington community in the next 5 years
3. Increase the number of programs offered by Zion to meet the needs Zion members in the next 5 years
4. Evaluate current programs offered by Zion to determine effectiveness and eliminate any program that is no longer needed or effective
5. Start at least one interdenominational program
6. Develop additional adult educational opportunities
 - a. Additional adult bible studies
 - b. Small group ministries
 - c. Adult form
7. Grow youth programs by hiring youth development staff
8. Develop additional opportunities for individuals to serve within our congregation
9. Increase participation on the constitutional boards
10. Reduce reliance on Apple Harvest funds to support operating budget by 15% per year for next 5 years