

Natural Church Development

Vision: Called into God's Marvelous Light: To Be Joyful Witnesses

Objective: Natural Church Development multiplies

In the spring of 2005, the Salem congregation in Albert Lea began a process which has had wonderful outcomes. This effort, the Natural Church Development (NCD) process, was introduced as a way to address the aspects of our church life which need to be strengthened to remain effective and vital. A "Health Team" was appointed from among the congregation to carry out the NCD process along with a coach to teach and guide the team. Based upon the results of the initial survey which was completed by members of the congregation, the focus for the first year was Passionate Spirituality.

The Health Team visited every group within the congregation to get feedback -- what did folks think that we could do to improve our Passionate Spirituality? The clear indication was that we should become a more prayerful congregation. The Health Team went back to the groups and asked, "How do you think we can become a more prayerful congregation?"

Much needed to be done. We recruited more members to the Health Team, rolled up our sleeves and got to work putting into practice ways for us to become a more prayerful congregation. In the first year we:

- Added a small altar and a kneeler to our parlor creating a Prayer Chapel where people are invited to pray before and after any service.
- Placed prayer request cards in the pews.
- Recruited and trained a Prayer Team to pray for those on a prayer list.
- Began including a short scripture quote accompanied by an original prayer in each Sunday bulletin.
- Developed a web site to give access to the resources in the church, including the Prayer Team.
- Distributed a time/talent survey to the congregation.
- Began an initiative to provide a sabbatical for our Pastor and congregation.
- Provided progress and update reports to the congregation.

While these actions were happening, the congregation responded. Many things happened as we went through the process that were not planned: new leadership came forward, public speaking skills and opportunities grew, some groups worked with renewed purpose, people were recruited who had not been actively involved before. Undoubtedly, there are still more areas

of growth yet to be discovered.

Then, it was time to take the NCD survey again. The results of the 2006 survey are in -- the overall rating average went up ten points and Passionate Spirituality is up eleven points. We have identified the focus for the next year -- it will be Loving Relationships.

The Health Team is energized with the potential for growth in Loving Relationships. There is great strength to build upon. We pray that we will continue to grow in our love and understanding.

2006: A Synod Joined in Bible Study

Women Studying the Bible!

By Cathy Mannel, AIM
Congregational Renewal Team

This past spring, what started with six women gathered for prayer and Bible study grew. It culminated in a ten-week Bible study at Trinity Lutheran Church, Owatonna. One hundred women of various ages and faith traditions committed themselves to individually study a Bible lesson for 30-45 minutes five times each week. The topic was: Making Liberty in Christ a Reality in Life. The study was based on a workbook: "Breaking Free" by Beth Moore.

Monday evenings, the women gathered in small groups for discussion, prayer, and to work on response sheets for the first hour. The second hour, all the groups gathered in the sanctuary to watch a teaching video featuring Beth Moore. A survey taken at the end of the ten weeks indicated that over a majority of the women would like to do another study.

For more information about this study, contact Kathy Blomquist, a Trinity member and one of the organizers. Her home phone number is: 507-451-8281.



Called into God's Marvelous Light

To Be Joyful Witnesses

To Be Christ-Centered Disciples

To Be Strong Leaders