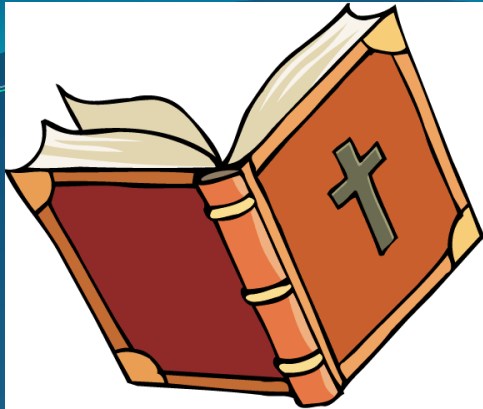




Small Church Workshop

April 2, 2016 – 9am
St. Paul Lutheran Church
Shawano, WI



Devotion



What do we wish to
accomplish?

What are outcomes?

- Get you thinking and talking about the future
- Give information
- Give you options
- Give some resources

Leaders

- Deal with reality

Do three things

- Give direction
- Build trust
- Offer hope

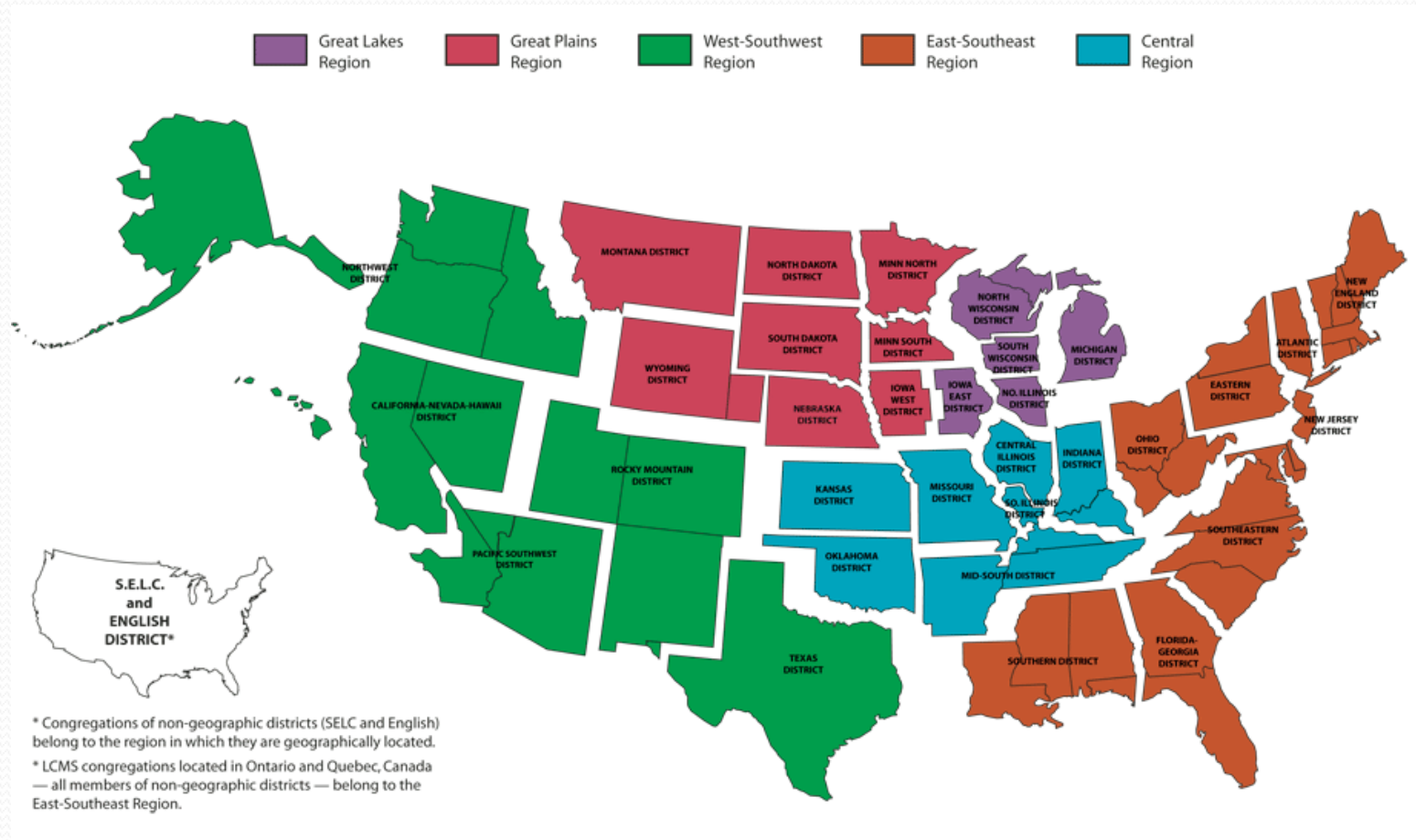
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH - MISSOURI SYNOD

**1.36 “Districts and circuits...are...
To motivate one another to action,
And to shape and suggest new directions”**

Article VII Relation of the Synod to Its Members

1. In its relation to its members the Synod is not an ecclesiastical government exercising legislative or coercive powers, and with respect to the individual congregation's right of self-government it is but an advisory body....
2. Membership of a congregation in the Synod gives the Synod no equity in the property of the congregation.

LCMS – 35 Districts



Congregations of NWD/Worship

• 2013 (128 (59%) of 218 reported)

2002

(Congregations – Size based upon average worship attendance)

• Cong under 35	21	16%	Cat	13
• 36-100	48	40%	Collie	93
• 101-175	33	24%	Garden	47
• 176-225	4	5%	House	24
• 226-450	18	7%	Mansion	27
• 451-700	1	5%	Ranch	9
• Over 700	3	3%	Nation	8

Congregation information for the area



EXTERNAL FACTORS LEADING TO A CONGREGATION'S DECLINE

- Changes in community (re-zoning, re-routing of roads, arrival of mega-church, ethnic, commercial, socio-economic, jobs, age, etc.)
- Loss of Population (gradual and slow leak of people)

Shawano County

Demographics



Internal Factors Leading to Decline

Resistance to Change

Living in the Past

Lack of Pastoral Leadership

Isolation from Community

Survival Mentality (just wanting the institution to survive)



Internal factors

Lack of Ignitor Events (events which cumulatively stop the decline)

Lack of Viable Core (declining attendance; few volunteers, leaders, and donors)

Conflict (unreconciled or mismanaged)

Triple Elder Effect (older church, older members, and older pastor; difficult to draw younger families)

Relational Dysfunction (unhealthy relationships)

Factors Precipitating Increased Talk of Closure

- Attendance Decline (dipping below a “critical mass” of worshipers)
- Growing Lack of Leaders/Volunteers
- Income Decline (inadequate to support ministry of full-time pastor and facilities)
- Fatigue (especially among pastor and leaders)
- Attrition Due to Open Talk of Possible Closure

ALTERNATIVES FOR CHURCHES CONSIDERING POSSIBLE CLOSURE

1. Communicate openly with the congregation regarding the present challenges, asking for a new commitment and enhanced stewardship of gifts.
2. Secure a loan for operational expenses.
3. Extend a call to a part-time, usually semi-retired pastor.
4. Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP)

ALTERNATIVES FOR CHURCHES CONSIDERING POSSIBLE CLOSURE (cont)

4. Close for a time and rebirth the congregation under a new name, vision, and pastor.
5. Find a partner for a dual parish arrangement, sharing a pastor.
6. Partner with 2-3 other churches and share two pastors.
7. Find a strong mentoring congregation to support your ministry with funds and staff.
8. Merge with a large congregation and become one of its multiple sites.

Questions to discuss

- Is our congregation's worship attendance in severe decline?
- Is the average age of our congregation increasing?
- Is there a complete absence of infants and small children?
- Is there an absence of baptisms of children and adults?
- Is there an absence of youth confirmations?
- Is there an absence of adult confirmations?
- Is there an absence of an organized effort to engage the community and include new people into the life of the congregation?
- Is the number of people available to fill roles of leadership less than the number of needed roles to be filled?
- Is there a significant loss of financial giving?
- Are there important property issues failing to receive needed attention in our congregation due to lack of funding and/or interest?
- Has the local community changed and our congregation is unable or unwilling to engage the changes with needed ministry?
- Is our congregation more focused on surviving as an organization or institution than it is on growing in faith and knowledge in Christ and finding ways to engage people in the community with Christ?
- Will sharing a pastor with neighboring congregation truly engage our congregation in mission and ministry or is it only a way to share costs and postpone closure?
- Will being served by a part-time pastor truly engage our congregation in mission and ministry or is it only a way to share costs and postpone closure?

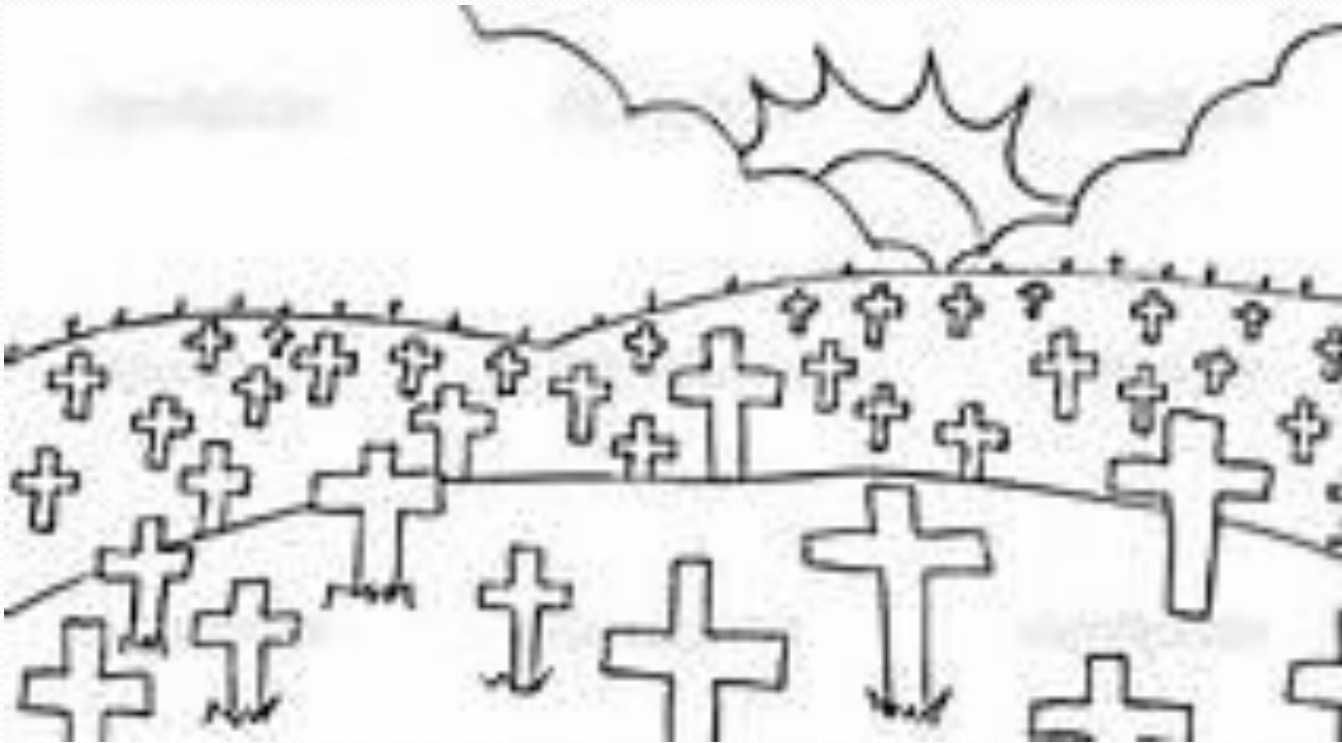
What is your next step?

- Review your ministry plan
- Review reality for you
- Consider what you heard today
- Put together a ministry plan for the future
- Talk with your people
- Talk to other congregation leaders

Consider closing

- If serious, contact District President Lueck and Circuit Visitor
- There are “**Guidelines for Congregations Merging or Dissolving**” from Dist Pres.
- Check dual parish agreement
- Pay close attention to constitution and bylaws on any decisions. Follow your constitution: merge, close, notice of meetings, etc.
- Property? Consult constitution & bylaws.
- Need officers in place till all business is done.

Cemetery



CLOSURE MODELS

1. Traditional Close (assets sold; remaining proceeds usually go to district – check your constitution)
1. Phoenix Close (assets to new church plant on site, often new pastor, new name)
1. Merger Close (assets handed over to larger church; church becomes additional site of larger church likely with new pastor and new name)

First Immanuel - Cedarburg

First Immanuel – Cedarburg

Saturdays at 5:00 pm (traditional)

Sundays at 7:30 & 9:00 am
(traditional)

Sundays at 10:35
am (contemporary)

River of Life – Saukville

Sundays at 9:00 am (traditional)

Sundays at 10:30
am (contemporary)

First Immanuel

W67N622 Evergreen Blvd.

Cedarburg, WI 53012

River of Life

598 Hillcrest Rd.

Saukville, WI 53080

Resources

- LCMS - “Engaging Your Community”
- Family Crossfires Ministries
- North Wisconsin District Staff