

God's Work. Our Hands.



Connecting All Generations to Christ and Community

Updated January 2011



*An Ongoing Vision and Strategic Plan
for the Mission and Ministry of Canton Lutheran Church*

Vision & Strategic Plan

Why has God called Canton Lutheran Church (CLC), a member congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), to be one of His many expressions of the Church, in Canton SD, in the 21st century, and how has God gifted us to be the Church with vision, talents and resources? To answer this question we begin by wrestling with the following;

- Who Are We?
- What is Our Context?
- What Are Our Opportunities for Ministry?

These are primary questions that any congregation should ask themselves on a continual basis and are the basis for this document and the work that goes into maintaining it from year to year. Through this document we hope to cast a common mission and vision for CLC while outlining a strategic plan for the purposes of guiding our mission and ministry.

To help in communicating this plan, we have identified three (3) primary areas of congregational identity and focus:

1. **Welcoming and Witness**
2. **Mission and Ministry**
3. **Stewardship of Resources**

Although one might think of these three areas as legs of a stool supporting the structure that is Canton Lutheran Church, it may also be helpful to think of them as intertwining circles, each having some unique characteristics but also being intertwined and connected with the other ministry areas.

Within each of these areas, this document will attempt to identify current ministries that should be celebrated as well as opportunities and future goals that will provide focus for the leadership and staff of the congregation as we move forward. Our hope is that this document should remain an “open-source” body of work, ever-changing, improving and growing based on input from the body of Christ and members of Canton Lutheran Church. Through faithful implementation of this strategic plan our hope is to live out our mission to **“connect all generations to Christ and community.”**

Our Mission

Connecting All Generations to Christ and Community

Our Baptismal Vision

Marked with the cross of Christ, forever, we are claimed, gathered, and sent for the sake of the world.

Claimed by God's grace for the sake of the world, we are a new creation through God's living Word by the power of the Holy Spirit;

Gathered by God's grace for the sake of the world, we will live among God's faithful people, hear God's Word, and share Christ's supper;

Sent by God's grace for the sake of the world, we will proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, serve all people following the example of our Lord Jesus, and strive for justice and peace in the world.

ELCA Signature Phrase

God's Work. Our Hands.

A Brief Elaboration

God's work. God is at work. As in creation of the world, what God is bringing into existence is very good – the new creation. Jesus is the embodiment of what God is working on. Jesus' life of mercy for outcasts and sinners, offered fully on a cross and raised from the dead, is the new life God promises for the whole world. The new creation God has begun in Jesus is good work for all, and God will bring this good work to completion.

Our hands. This new creation is God's work. God is working it both in us and through us and our hands. In us God's Holy Spirit is accomplishing what nothing else, not even God's law could accomplish – a liberated life. God frees us from enslaved service to sin and death, frees us to use our hands generously, lovingly, faithfully – to live in service of reconciliation, to live for the life of the world, to live in joyous hope of what God will bring to completion in the day of Jesus Christ.

God works a new creation in us. "For we are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life." ~ *Ephesians 2:10*

God works through us, our hands. "So we receive our blessings not from them [other human creatures], but from God, through them. Creatures are only the hands, channels, and means through which God bestows all blessings" ~ Martin Luther, explanation of the 1st Commandment, *Large Catechism* (Kolb/Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, p. 389; Tappert, *The Book of Concord*, p. 368

Our hands serve the world. "We do God's work not because God needs us to do so, but because our neighbor does. We do God's work in Christ's name for the life of the world." ~ Bishop Mark Hanson

Expanded Signature Phrase

God's Word. Our Voice

God's Welcome. Our Embrace

God's Work. Our Hands.

A Brief Elaboration

God's Word. Our Voice. God the Father speaks the Word who is Jesus Christ, resurrected with the Breath whom we call Holy Spirit. This Word is salvation for all through forgiveness, relationship, purpose and faith. By our worship and witness of what God has done in Jesus Christ, CLC facilitates connection to God's Word of salvation.

God's Welcome. Our Embrace. God, the Father, patiently waits for the return of the prodigal within each of us. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, seeks out all that is lost in our hearts and souls. Inviting all of creation into the saving grace of Christ's body, the Church, God, the Holy Spirit, blows where God chooses, leading and teaching us in all truth. By our worship and witness of what God has done in Jesus Christ, CLC facilitates connection to God's all-inclusive welcome.

God's Work. Our Hands. God the Father is at work creating new possibilities. God the Son is at work redeeming our brokenness. God the Spirit is at work sanctifying our lives and sustaining us in the faith. Through our "hands of faith" used in service of the gospel, for the sake of God's Kingdom and God's people, CLC facilitates connection to God's creation, redemption and sanctification.

God's work is the new creation in Christ. "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation." ~ 2 Corinthians 5:17-18

Statement of Purpose

- **What is the Church of Jesus Christ?**

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.

- **Who is Canton Lutheran Church?**

Canton Lutheran Church is one of many expressions of the Body of Christ. "Though many, yet we are one." (1Cor. 12:12) We are located in Canton, SD. Incorporated in 1868 as Canton Lutheran Church, originally, a Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church, and merged together with Bethlehem Lutheran Church, originally an Augustana Lutheran Church,, today our congregation is part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America affiliated with the South Dakota Synod.

Canton Lutheran Church recognizes that all power and authority in the Church belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, its head. Therefore, all actions of this congregation shall be carried out under his rule and authority.

- **What are the chief purposes of Canton Lutheran Church?**

The chief purposes of Canton Lutheran Church are expressed in our constitution as follows:

1. To proclaim God's saving Gospel;
2. To carry out Christ's Great Commission;
3. To serve in response to God's love to meet human needs;
4. To worship God;
5. To nurture members in the Word of God; and
6. To manifest the unity given to the people of God.

Canton Lutheran Church seeks to participate in God's mission in the world through the practice of these purposes as follows:

- a. 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.
- b. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people inviting them to faith in Christ and doing our ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
- c. 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.
- d. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness and service.
- e. Nurture our 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 our Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for our life together and for our calling in the world.
- f. 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.

WELCOME & WITNESS



Whoever You Are, However You Come, You Are Welcome Here

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

John 3:16-17

Canton Lutheran Church will give witness to the power and presence of God in our world. We will declare the good news of Jesus Christ as instruments of the Holy Spirit; sharing love, forgiveness and hope while advocating for peace, justice and the care of all creation. Our congregation will embody the gracious and all-encompassing welcome of God offering the invitation of Jesus; “repent and believe, the Kingdom has drawn near” (Mark 1:14-15). ***Whoever you are, however you come, you are welcome here***, shall be our primary value as we seek to “***connect all generations to Christ and Community***”.

A Welcome & Witness Board has been created to oversee the following areas:

- Worship & Music
- Evangelism & Hospitality
- Congregational & Community Communications

Current Ministry Committees that support the goals and work of this Board include:

- Altar Guild
- Military Connections Team

Additional Ministry Committees might also be formed including:

- Special Music Committee
- Worship Committee
- Evangelism Committee
- New Member Welcome & Orientation Committee

Regarding Our Current Welcome & Witness activities...

- **We Rejoice...**
 - a. In our variety of worship styles and settings including traditional, blended and contemporary services.
 - b. In the musical gifts provided by Paul Konietzko, Kathy VanVoorst, Patti Ramse, Angie Larson, Kris Goodroad, Becca Toso and others who provide accompaniment during our worship services.
 - c. In our Adult Gospel Choir under the direction of Colin Conner and our annual Christmas Cantata under the direction of Paul Konietzko
 - d. Our CLC Youth Handbell Choir under the direction of Kristi Feucht
 - e. In our special worship services this year including: Break These Chains with Dakota Roads, worship at Newton Hills State Park in July, backpack blessing worship in August and Anjelic in December. We look forward to welcoming the Augustana Choir in January 2011 and continuing to find special worship opportunities for the congregation.
 - f. In our Living Nativity and the witness it provides to our community including our inclusion in the Canton Christmas parade and the opportunity for so many in our congregation to come together in its production.
 - g. In our "open-table" communion policy and the welcome it provides to all.
 - h. In our eConnect Devotion and Newsletter as well as our monthly newsletter **The Voice**
 - i. In our congregation's Facebook page and the ways it provides additional forms of communication and social networking.
 - j. In the public relations work of our congregation that included many positive articles about our ministries in the Sioux Valley News this year as well as a positive article in the Argus Leader about our Living Nativity that was also covered by at least two TV stations.

- k. In our strong community witness, our partnership with the Canton Ministerial, our presence in the schools and community events and our strong connection with Love INC
- l. In our redesigned logo and this mission and vision document

- **We Continue to Develop...**

- a. Ways to welcome and connect with visitors who join us for worship.
- b. Ways to integrate new members into the life and mission of our congregation
- c. Our new website to include additional information and features
- d. Our worship services and special events centered around Lent, Holy Week and Easter, giving thanks for last year's Living Last Supper and seeking new ideas as we have already scheduled a donkey to be present for Palm Sunday
- e. Our communications and support to those serving in the military as well as finding ways to provide support for their families who await their return.
- f. Our video recording of worship services to ensure consistency of sound and video quality understanding that this ministry is extremely important to people who are unable to join us for worship. This ministry also provides an opportunity for us to reach out to people who may be considering becoming a part of CLC.
- g. Our ministry to families during times of funerals and memorial services to ensure that they know the welcome and compassion of our congregation. One of the ways this welcome is embodied is through the excellent work of Linda Madland and Cheryl Anderson who ensure that food and coffee is provided for families that desire a time of fellowship following a funeral or memorial service. In addition, we continue to develop ways to stay in contact with these families in the weeks and months that follow
- h. Our ministry with couples preparing to be married, hoping to be more intentional about welcoming them and integrating them into the life of our congregation.

- **We see opportunity...**

- a. To be more intentional in our interaction with Food Pantry and Love INC clients to not only offer food for their stomachs but also food for their souls.
- b. To improve our outreach to college students
- c. To coordinate more special music pieces for our worship services.
- d. To develop our projection ministry system, installing a permanent projector so that all services held in the sanctuary can take advantage of this ministry
- e. In finding ways to include more laity in worship including new members and youth
- f. In building a welcome center for the sake of connecting with visitors and guests who join us for worship
- g. In exploring ways to improve and update our handicap accessibility
- h. In exploring ways to make our sanctuary and chapel more easily available during many and various times for the sake of inviting people to use the space for prayer, meditation and to facilitate finding connection to God's welcoming and healing presence.
- i. In developing an Outreach Committee to facilitate inactive member connections with congregational life at CLC

Mission & Ministry



Ministry Anytime, Anywhere, by Anyone

For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Romans 12:4-8

Canton Lutheran Church exists to be a means of grace, used by God, for equipping people to grow in their journeys of faith and discipleship. Through worship, education, service, prayer, hospitality, stewardship and the other disciplines of faith, people experience the abundant life that Jesus promises. Spirituality is deepened as Father, Son and Holy Spirit encounter us in Word and Sacrament as well as the mutual conversation and consolation of the saints. CLC will be a community of grace, forgiveness and love so that as people live out their faith journey, they will feel safe in their questions, empowered and valued in their calling to various types of ministry and embraced in their uniqueness and beauty bestowed on them by God. Centered in the value **“ministry anytime, anywhere, by anyone”** Canton Lutheran Church **“connects all generations to Christ and community.”**

A Mission & Ministry Board has been created to oversee the following areas:

- Education
- Youth & Family Ministry
- Discipleship & Spirituality
- Mission Support & Education

Current Ministry Committees that support the goals and work of this Board include:

- Milk's Camp Ministry Team under the leadership of Michelle Short
- CLC Prayer Team under the leadership of Lollene Schoeberl

Additional Ministry Committees might also be formed including:

- Youth & Family Ministry
- Mission of the Month Committee
- VBS & Day Camp
- Confirmation
- Hunger Ministry Support & Education
- Development of Small Group Ministries

Regarding Our Current Mission & Ministry activities...

- **We Rejoice...**
 - a. In our excellent middle school and senior high youth ministry under the direction of Kari Elling
 - b. In our excellent Wednesday and Sunday School ministry under the direction of Janet Henke
 - c. In the many hunger ministries that CLC supports throughout the year including our Food Pantry, Love INC, ELCA World Hunger, The Banquet, Feed My Starving Children, Canton Backpack Program, and many more.
 - d. In our Prayer Team ministry under the faithful leadership of Lollene Schoeberl
 - e. In our Care Cards ministry which provides a weekly reminder of our worship themes and television worship times to people who worship from home.
 - f. In our Home Communion ministry with people who worship from home.
 - g. Occasional Youth and Family trips which are well supported by parents and under the excellent leadership of Kari Elling.
 - h. In our Adult Faith and Fellowship Forums
 - i. In our Food Pantry under the excellent leadership of Bud Steensland
 - j. In our partnership and support of Love INC and especially in the ministry of our office administrator, Lori Pudenz who joyfully greets and serves the many clients whom we together serve.
 - k. In our Annual Milk's Camp ministry in partnership with Grand Valley Lutheran Church and under the excellent leadership of Michelle Short.

- **We Continue to Develop...**

- a. Our Mission of the Month ministries seeking ways to effectively share the stories of how God is working throughout the many expressions of God's church.
- b. Our confirmation curriculum which is being written and tested by Pastor Tony and Kari Elling. We are having a lot of success with our Revive 78 group (7th & 8th grade students) and the Re-Form curriculum that is being used from Augsburg Fortress and success with our Route 58 (5th & 6th grade students) and our Grapple curriculum from Group Publishing. In addition, we are holding 6 "Dig Deeper" sessions each year to teach the catechism and help our kids grow in faith.
- c. Our R.O.C.K. programming so as to best serve the kids who join us on Wednesday afternoons.
- d. Our hospital visitation ministry, hoping to include more laity to help in this work and to encourage families and individuals to contact the church when a hospital stay is going to occur.
- e. The ways that we mark milestones and celebrations in the life of families and individuals

- **We See Opportunity...**

- a. Praying that other individuals will step forward and partner with Kari Elling in occasional Youth & Family trips, and possibly even planning additional trips that Kari would not have time to otherwise put together.
- b. To develop small group ministries and Bible studies for the sake of growing disciples and building up our community of faith.
- c. To recruit and train laity for the sake of partnering with CLC staff in visitation and pastoral care of our members, including our members in assisted living facilities and nursing homes.
- d. To offer additional adult education opportunities in addition to Sunday School and the CLC Women of the ELCA Bible study.
- e. In growing our support of ELCA World Hunger, setting a goal of providing \$5 per member per year to this important work.
- f. To continue to grow and improve our youth and family ministry with the acquisition of a people mover or large van for the sake of transporting people to various events
- g. In the possibility of restarting a Men's Ministry

Stewardship of Resources



Everybody's Got Something to Offer

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Canton Lutheran Church has been gifted by God with great treasures of disciples, gifts for ministry and financial resources. God gives us all we need to do the work that God sets before us. As we discern the work to which God calls us, we must also be good stewards of the resources God gives us for the sake of equipping and encouraging the disciples of Jesus in the stewardship of the resources God has given them. Healthy stewardship is one of the ways that God brings about his Kingdom in our world but more importantly it is the way that God matures disciples and calls them away from idolatry into his loving embrace. Stewardship involves the care and careful use of;

- 1) gifts for ministry that people possess,
- 2) financial gifts; and
- 3) building, grounds and other resources given to us for the sake of ministry.

Canton Lutheran Church believes that “**everybody's got something to offer**” and as we empower and free people to share their gifts we “**connect all generations to Christ and community.**”

A Stewardship of Resources Board has been created to oversee the following areas:

- Congregational Resources, Building Upkeep & Care of Grounds
- Financial Accountability & Controls
- Stewardship Encouragement and Education regarding Time, Talents and Financial Resources

Current Ministry Committees that support the goals and work of this Board include:

- Endowment Committee (members are elected)
- Nominating Committee (members are elected)

Additional Ministry Committees might also be formed including:

- Annual Stewardship Campaign Task Force
- Building & Grounds Committee
- Time & Talents Committee
- Constitution and By-Laws Task Force

Regarding Our Current Stewardship of Resources activities...

- **We Rejoice...**

- a. In the marvelous building and grounds that God has given us for the sake of mission and ministry.
- b. In the care and upkeep of our building offered by Don Pottratz, Jerry Keiser, Vince McKenney and the many volunteers who put in so many hours each year.
- c. In the many ways our laity help maintain and repair our building and grounds
- d. Our ministry of bi-monthly offering envelopes shipped to members homes reminding and encouraging them about the importance of supporting Canton Lutheran Church
- e. In the excellent care of our lawn, landscaping and parking lot
- f. In our newly remodeled office area including fresh paint and new carpets
- g. In our organ and numerous pianos and the way they are cared for and maintained
- h. Our sound system (recently upgraded by a generous gift from Bud Steensland in memory of his wife Lorraine Steensland), hoping to add additional speakers, mics and portable sound systems

- **We Continue to Develop...**

- a. Support of SD Synod and ELCA ministries through our benevolence giving and education. We set the goal of giving 15% of our general fund giving to benevolence and another 15% to the work of various other ministries that we support. We also set the goal of instituting a policy of "first-fruits giving" modeling for the congregation the stewardship values that God invites us all to embrace.

- b. Our Endowment Fund hoping to provide education and encouragement to members of CLC to consider remembering our church in their estate plans.
- c. Memorial gifts from individuals and families and providing more intentional opportunities for memorial gifts to be designated for specific projects
- d. Intentional opportunities for encouraging and educating the congregation regarding the discipline of stewardship for the sake of helping them grow in their faith.
- e. Our system of financial controls for handling weekly offerings, handling special gifts, annual auditing procedures and other areas as this group sees fit.
- f. Fee structures and policies regarding the use of our building for weddings, funerals, gatherings and community groups and events
- g. Our **Simply Giving** program, offering encouragement and education to members that they might consider providing all or part of their financial offering to the congregation through automated withdrawals from their checking or savings account. This program offers people the possibility to provide regular and consistent support to the congregation even when their schedule calls them out of town or makes it not possible for them to worship on a regular basis. In addition, it provides a service for people so that "getting the offering envelope ready" is one thing they can take off their to-do-list as they prepare for worship.
- h. The equipment and technology used in the church for the sake of ministry including; computers, software, copiers, office equipment and furniture, supplies and more
- i. Systems for cleaning and organizing our current storage areas eliminating unused and unneeded items

- **We See Opportunity**

- a. In developing a task force to conduct an annual Stewardship campaign within the congregation.
- b. In the possibility of beginning a building feasibility study to determine whether there are opportunities that might be worth pursuing for the sake of mission.
- c. To update and modernize our restroom facilities to provide a more welcoming atmosphere
- d. In creating an ongoing building fund and regularly inviting gifts for the sake of updating and maintaining our building
- e. In creating space for bells and the WOW worship team within our sanctuary possibly by moving pews or remodeling areas in the balcony. In this way, these ministries become more integrated into the worship of the congregation.