

May 19, 2024

Intentional Interim Report Rev. Jeffrey Heimsoth, IIM

Thank God & Thank You!

I thank God for the privilege of serving here at Faith, if only for a year. I can see how God has blessed this ministry over the years and Faith truly is a family of great people who have a passion for Jesus and for this church.

As I have stated before, my purpose is to provide stability during this time of vacancy. But since we have some time it is good to explore who we are, how we got here, and the direction in which God is calling us. After all, Jesus is the head of Faith (Col.1:18). He has entrusted this ministry into our hands, so we do well to follow His lead.

Here Is What You Said

I have listened to members of the congregation (and am still happy to listen) to find out what drew them to Faith and their passion(s) for ministry. I have also listened to what people want to see for future ministry and their concerns for directions the church is taking/might take.

How did you come to faith?

What kind of people are drawn to Faith? Are we a church which Lutherans find to be comfortable or where people discover Jesus for the first time? Below are the responses given when asked about people's faith experiences:

57% are lifelong Lutherans

19% are lifelong Christians who came to be Lutheran

13% came to faith somewhere along the way

10% I either failed to ask or failed to hear what they said

Assessment: We do much better attracting life-long Christians (especially Lutherans) than we do those who are not Christian. Is this an area of ministry we are called to explore?

Why Faith?

The pearl of all our conversations was in the responses given as to why people joined Faith and how they would describe this church. The most common reason for joining Faith was how they were welcomed and the sense of family they experienced. Second to that was the ministry Faith provided for families. Below are descriptions of how they describe Faith today:

Caring/Family 40% Having a rich history 1%

Cliquey, vibrant, comfortable Lutherans, older, safe, aging, unfriendly, downhill, great church, hot/cold, large, wonderful, at a crossroads, conservative—but thinking we are progressive, Christ-centered

Assessment: It seems as if our being a “caring family” as a church is important to many, but that is not their dream for our future (see below). It might be good to spend time asking how we might be more intentional in building up the concept of Faith as a caring community, the “body of Christ.” Also, while not reflected above, many came to this church because of ministry to children. We might do well to explore how to strengthen children’s/family ministries.

Faithfully Living Every Relationship in God's Way.... to Unite Everyone with Jesus for Eternity

I stopped asking about the impact of our mission statement on people's lives as groups got larger. Responses were mixed on how people saw it driving the ministry and/or their lives. My sense is that the statement has been personalized (by some, but not all) but people do not seem to have captured the sense of how "living every relationship in God's way" is meant to be a unifying force for ministry. Is it Faith's or Pastor Biermann's mission statement?

Assessment:

I value your mission statement, but believe it would be good to explore its full meaning again. Spend some time dating your mission statement—what it means and why it is so important.

My Dream for the future of Faith Lutheran Church

Responses to this question were most telling. It is a question that seemed to catch people off guard and responses were varied. Now is the time for Faith to dream as we call a senior pastor who might lead us to make that dream a reality. Below are directions people want to see Faith take in the future:

Community Outreach 15%	Youth 12%	Sense of family 8%
True to the Word 5%	Great growth 5%	

More welcoming, uplifting music, better use of internet, meeting needs of people, serve all generations, greater high school connection, more youth to be church workers, reach lost who are hurting, music ministry reaching outside church campus

My Concerns for the future of Faith Lutheran Church

I did not get many responses to this question. There is no looming threat to Faith that overshadows all we do here, but these were communicated to me. People are concerned that we might become:

Too legalistic 7%	Too worldly 7%	Financially strapped 5%
Too clique-y 5%		Loss of youth 5%

We lose families to sports, people pleasing, families pushed aside, weak pastoral staff, short term for senior pastor

Assessment:

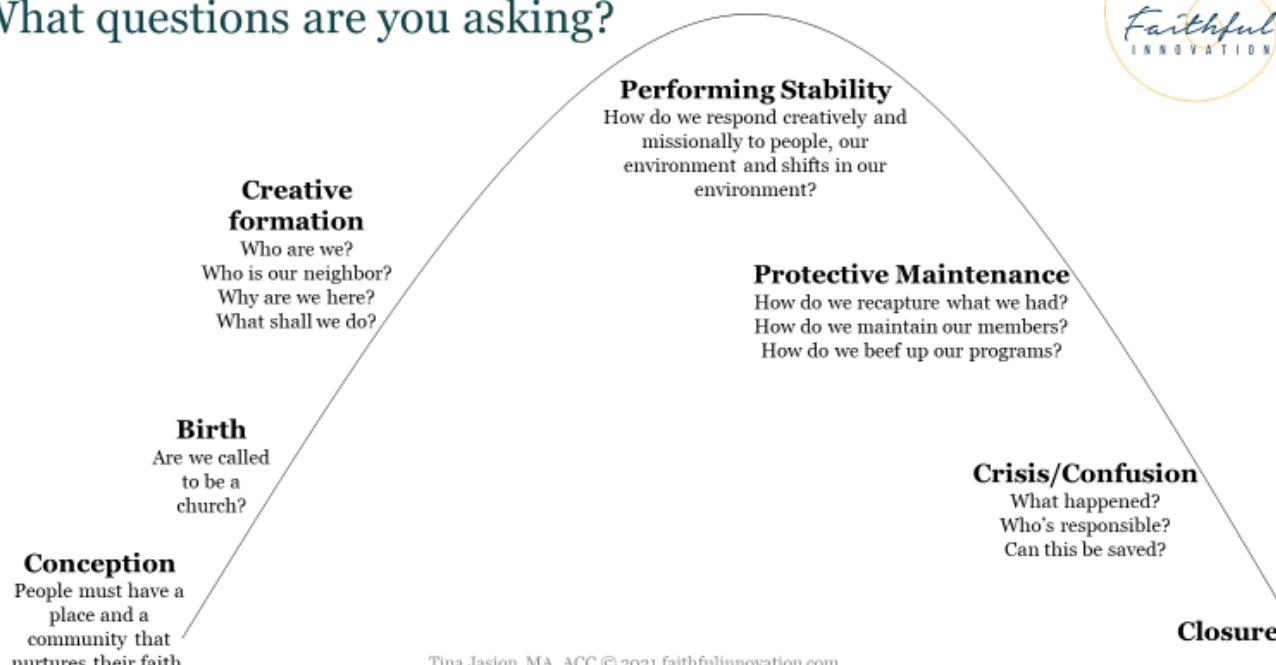
We do not have a unified vision for the future of ministry. This creates the opportunity for division or stagnation. Neither of these is God-pleasing. Our first step into the future is one of repentance. We have fallen short of being the people/church God has called us to be. Repentance opens our hearts to listen to God's heart. What does He want us to do?

My suggestion is that we focus on four things as we look to the future:

1. Nurture our relationship with God through the Bible (collectively/personally)
2. Work to strengthen our relationships with one another (Body of Christ)
3. Equip one another with the tools and heart for reaching those outside of the Body
4. Fall in love with our Mission Statement once again as we work through #1-3.

We understand the age curve for individuals, but organizations also have a natural age curve. The good news is that organizations can change theirs—we can only make the best of ours.

What questions are you asking?



Where is Faith on the Aging Curve? Why Is it So Important and What Are We Going to Do About It?

