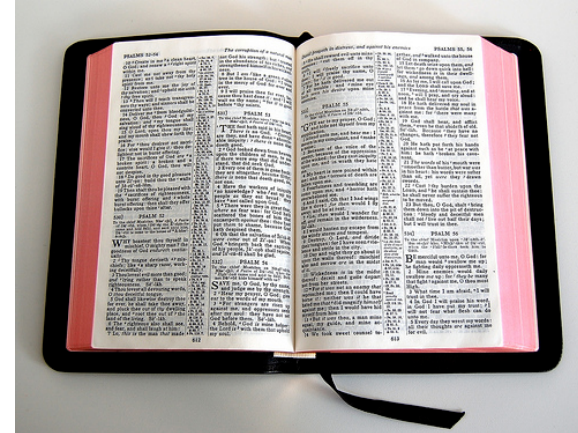


The three tables

1. Transformation
2. Community
3. Relationships

Word and Sacrament > To a New Life in Christ



The transformation at Baptism

“In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.” Col. 2:12+13

More on Baptism

- ▶ “It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare” LSC

One additional note on Baptism...



The power of His Word

“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and
alight for my path” Ps 119

“All Scripture is breathed out by God
and profitable for teaching.” 2 Tim 3:16

The renewal at the Lord's Table

"which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." Mt 26:28

"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."
1 Cor 11:25

More on the Lord's Table

- ▶ “These words “Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins” shows us that in the Sacrament, forgiveness of sins, life and salvation are given through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.” LSC

Romans 12:1+2

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship.


Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-his good, pleasing and perfect will."

At baptism, we are transformed for a different purpose than our former self

We are fed by the Word and at the Lord's Table

CFW Walther in 1872

“Another major duty of a Synod that wants to be and remain an Evangelical Lutheran Synod is that it not seek its own glory, but only the glory of God, being intent not so much on its own growth, but rather on the growth of Christ’s kingdom and the salvation of souls.



You see, dear brethren, we are assembled here not for our own sake. We are in the faith, and by this faith we hope to be saved! But there are still many millions who have no faith!

This is why we are here---so that we might bring salvation to as many people as we possibly can, so that the sad situation in Christendom and the corruption of the poor, blind heathen might be remedied.

Only for this reason does our gracious God allow Christians to live on earth, that they might bring others to the saving faith. Otherwise God would immediately take a Christian to heaven as soon as he is converted.”

“But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.”

1 Peter 3:15

A tool for your congregation from Synod

www.lcms.org/themes/february

The “Community” table



Who are your neighbors?

Community: with fellow believers

- ✓ Things which divide
- ✓ Healthy relationships with current fellowship of believers
- ✓ Cultivating Lifestyles of Reconciliation
- ✓ Why talk about reaching out when we have so many members not attending

What do you think of when you hear...
“church?”



Agree or disagree???

- ✓ We live in a “Post church” world.
- ✓ “Church membership is not a necessary part of acceptance in our culture.
- ✓ The truth of Christ is no longer a cultural truth or necessity for prosperity.
- ✓ The church has lost it’s status in society
- ✓ Denominational loyalty is quickly fading

How Do We Reach Them?

People group

Connecting Inhibitors

Connecting Strategies

Churches	→	Denomination Distance "Comfortable?"	→	Programs/Worship Style Denomination/doctrine Kind>Friendly>Inviting
De churcheds	→	Cautious Uncomfortable Hypocrisy All about \$\$\$	→	Meet real needs (S)low commitment Friendly>Authentic>Invest Tell when asked
Un churcheds	→	No experience/No need Cynical re: Christianity Christians are: Judgmental/Closed AND Irrelevant	→	Transparent/Real Conversation w/out Compromise Live Grace

Community: with those not yet connected

- ✓ You know them already
- ✓ Sometimes we are intimidated by them
- ✓ Authentic relationships build bridges
- ✓ If “converting” friends in 3rd places is our goal, they will resent our efforts.
- ✓ Conversion is the Holy Spirit’s job!

The Mission Field in our backyard

- ✓ What do they fear?
- ✓ What preoccupies their conversations?
- ✓ Where are their hurts?
- ✓ How might this church connect with those hurts/needs?

Congregation and Community Survey Reports

- ▶ What are the strengths in this community?
- ▶ Needs?
- ▶ What is a “need” that is NOT currently met or not met “well.”
- ▶ What strengths exist in this place that could address these needs?
- ▶ Is that realistic? “Do-able?”

Community “Mapping” Summary

Strengths-

Needs-

Conduct a “Congregation and Community Connections” Survey

- ▶ With which community groups do members of this church have the most connections?
- ▶ With which community groups do the members seem most willing to build new relationships?
- ▶ What could realistically be done to help members build those relationships?

Community Connecting Points

Based on surveys, demographics and the members of this congregation, where are 3-4 areas with which we are uniquely called?

1.

2.

3.

4.

From service projects/activities to build bridges

- ▶ Singing at a nursing Home > Building relationships with residents
- ▶ Feed my starving children > Interview local food shelf about local needs
- ▶ Confirmation > Bring back Freshman to discuss faith challenges
- ▶ Environmental efforts > Apologetics for Creation v. Evolution and life issues
- ▶ Quilts > Baptism tracts

From “Program” and “Committee” to the Christian Vocation

- ✓ *How does relegating “outreach” to a committee effect our personal witness within our vocations?*
- ✓ *What does it look like when a Christian is “engaged in the Christian life*

**Our calling is simply to share
what we know...**

Colossians 4:2-6

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.”

Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

The kitchen table

One-on-one

- ▶ Relationships in the church are easier for a “Churched” culture person
- ▶ Newcomers often find relationships in a church intimidating and scary
- ▶ People “outside” of the church culture are not looking for relationships IN a church

Relationships

- What does it mean to build a relationship with someone?
 - Be pro-active and notice people and their circumstances.
 - Be a listener and identify ways to connect with others.
 - Be genuinely interested in people and taking care of their needs.
 - Offer to pray for them or with them

- Live a life others will question. Live a questionable life.
- Live a life that evokes curiosity.
 - How do you handle frustration, problems, disappointments, etc.?
 - How do you help others in need, etc.
 - How do you spend your time?
- Are people intrigued by you or your congregation and how they handle, how they help, and how they spend their time?

Church Health and Attitudes

▶ Church Attitudes

- ▶ Three responses from churches...hopelessness, denial, and indifference (Olson, 2008)
- ▶ *“Those who think Moslems will “grow up” and look like everyone else should prepare to be disappointed”* (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007).
- ▶ Worship is stale, ritualistic, uninspiring...it is confusing and irrelevant to unchurched who are visiting (Rainer, 2001)
- ▶ Christians perceived as, *“conservative, entrenched in their thinking, antigay, antichoice, angry, violent, illogical, empire builders”* (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007).

What happened to today's parents? Why aren't they coming back?

- ▶ More than 60% of millennials were regular church attendees growing up (Stetzer, Stanley & Hayes, 2009)
- ▶ Estimated U.S. attendance of 18% as of 2005, projected drop to 15% by 2020 (Olson, 2008)
- ▶ Over two-thirds of millennials dropped out of church from ages 18-21 (Rainer & Rainer, 2008)
- ▶ "You Lost Me"

Research on today's "Millennials"

6 "Disconnects"

How might you address this attitude?

- ▶ Anti homosexual God's plan for Man and Woman/ Law Vs Gospel
- ▶ Sheltered from real life The Bible addresses real life issues
- ▶ Hypocrites Law Vs. Gospel
- ▶ Judgmental Values and absolute truth > Not prideful
- ▶ Empty Rituals Teach the meaning behind our doctrine and practice
- ▶ Too political The role of government in the life of a Christian
- ▶ Proselytizers Unconditional love and acceptance

A Practical Tool

Who is God calling you to BLESS?

Intro- Christians are blessed by Christ's love and blessed to share that love with others. Sometimes we may be uncertain about how to share that hope in an authentic and caring manner with someone who does not yet know Jesus or who is quite distant from Him.

Remember to be prepared to give an answer for the hope we have (1 Peter 3:15) but it is the power of the Holy Spirit that is at work. (1 Cor 2:8-10). But how???

Begin with prayer
Look for opportunity
Engage by listening
Serve with love
Share the Truth

Begin with prayer- **Colossians 4:2** Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

1. Why would prayer be a good place to start when thinking about "Blessing" others?
2. How can being "watchful" or "thankful" contribute to an attitude of "Blessing?"

Look for opportunity- **Colossians 4:5** Make the most of every opportunity.

1. How does this passage help you see life's events as "opportunities" to bless?
2. How does this passage encourage one to be "intentional?"

Engage by listening- **Proverbs 1:5** Let the wise listen and add to their learning

1. How does listening increase learning?
2. How might you increase your listening so that you may bless others?

Serve with love- **Galatians 5:13** Serve one another humbly in love.

1. What does it mean that service is to be done "humbly?"
2. How might "serving" others build bridges to share God's truth?

Share God's Truth- **John 14:6** I am the way and the truth and the life.

1. How can Christ's "truth" point "the way?"
2. How can Christ's "truth" provide "life?"



*The center of
God's heart?*

*"The healing of the
leaves are for
every nation"*

(Rev 22)