

**A DIAGNOSTIC ANALYSIS**  
**FOR**  
**ST. JOHN'S EV.**  
**LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**RED WING, MINNESOTA**

November, 2000

by  
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Pastor Paul Soukup  
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## INTRODUCTION

1       “Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I always thank God for  
2 you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way —  
3 in all your speaking and in all your knowledge — ... Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you  
4 eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will keep you strong to the end, so that you  
5 will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God who has called you into fellowship with his  
6 Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.” With these words Paul began his letter to the Corinthian  
7 congregation (I Cor. 1:3-9). The Lord has certainly been faithful to the members of St. John’s Lutheran  
8 congregation. You come behind in no gift as you seek to carry out the will of Jesus in your midst. We  
9 thank God for you and count it a privilege to serve you in the name of Jesus and His Kingdom.

10       St. John’s Ev. Lutheran Congregation contacted Pastor Hems in the summer of 1999. On August  
11 24, 1999, the church council was introduced to Parish Assistance. On February 12, 2000 an all day  
12 Parish Assistance Seminar was held for all the active members and leaders in the congregation laying  
13 down the biblical and conceptual foundations for beginning long range planning in a church at the close  
14 of the this century. Parish Assistance was also introduced at this time as one way to carry out a planning  
15 process. Subsequently, St. John’s leaders decided to apply for assistance.

16

17       Admission to the Parish Assistance project was granted on April 25, 2000 and a consultant team  
18 made up of Pastor Ron Heins, Pastor Paul Soukup and Principal Stephen Schafer was assigned to help  
19 St. John’s Lutheran through the working phases of Parish Assistance: Phase II Analysis, Phase III  
20 Mission/Vision Setting, and Phase IV Strategy and Action plan formation. This report and its discussion  
21 are the last step in Phase II. The purpose of the analysis is twofold: to obtain an accurate description  
22 of St. John’s Lutheran in its current spiritual and physical state, including blessings and problems and  
23 secondly, to create a data baseline from which to plan and measure the effects of efforts made in the  
24 future.

25       Subsequent phases will help the congregation establish what it wants to become under God, identify  
26 the mission it wants to accomplish for the Kingdom and design the strategies and activities which, with  
27 the Lord’s blessing, provide the best opportunity to progress from where you are to what you and God  
28 want you to become as you cross into the 21st century.

29       During the months of June, July, August and September leaders of St. John’s completed work on  
30 a series of diagnostic instruments designed to provide the congregation and consultants with an objective  
31 picture of St. John’s congregation. The results of these studies — together with the congregational  
32 reports, regional analyses, the constitution, recent official minutes and historical data — were provided

1 to the consultants. On the basis of this information they developed preliminary hypotheses and identified  
2 significant areas to further explore during the on-site portions of this study.

3       The on-site visit took place September 28-October 1, 2000. At its conclusion an oral preliminary  
4 report was made to the congregation. Minor follow-up activity took place during the first two weeks  
5 of October. The report that follows is an expanded version of the oral report given to the congregation  
6 at the conclusion of the on-site visit. It is provided for the purpose of giving you a “snapshot” of your  
7 congregation as we currently see it. It is your starting point for planning your Kingdom work into the  
8 next century.

9       Your task now is to react to this report; you, not we, are the experts regarding your congregation  
10 — only you can verify the accuracy of our analysis. Please use your copy to highlight significant points  
11 and make comments so that you can add your perspective to the process. An open meeting to review  
12 this document, question the consultants, and offer corrections and comment will be held on December  
13 1,2000 at 7:00 PM in the church. We hope the work done to date will serve you effectively as you take  
14 God’s hand and build on the many blessings you already possess while aggressively addressing those  
15 things which you can do to make your church and its members better servants of the King.

16       We also want to alert you to an all day seminar on December 2~ for all active members and their  
17 spouses to lay the biblical and conceptual basis for planning the future of St. John’s congregation’s  
18 ministry.

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## PARISH ASSISTANCE

1  
2 Parish Assistance is a flexible, step-by-step effort to help individual WELS congregations focus on  
3 their Means-of-Grace ministry of outreach and nurture. The specific objectives of this process are as  
4 follows:

- 5 1. Help parish leaders to EVALUATE their spiritual leadership on the basis of the Word of God and  
6 renew their conviction that God rewards their efforts, forgives their weaknesses, and provides the  
7 wisdom, strength and ability to make the practical changes necessary to more fully serve the gospel.
- 8 2. Convince parish leaders that their involvement in BIBLE STUDY is essential both to improve their  
9 spiritual leadership skills and to provide the example by which other members will be drawn to adult  
10 spiritual growth.
- 11 3. Help parish leaders see how Jesus' great commission sets their personal and corporate MISSION  
12 for a balanced ministry of outreach and nurture.
- 13 4. Use the Lutheran confessions and the scriptural teachings about adiaphora to alleviate the fear and  
14 misgivings many parish leaders have about CHANGE in the church.
- 15 5. Help parish leaders analyze the ministry STATUS AND NEEDS of the congregations.
- 16 6. Teach the New Testament concepts of church, MiNISTRY, and Christian freedom on the basis of  
17 the Bible and as expressed in the formal doctrine and writings of the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran  
18 Synod.
- 19 7. Help parish leaders see PLANNING as a God-pleasing approach to carrying out changes in  
20 ministry.
- 21 8. Enable parish leaders to FOCUS on outcomes of Biblical significance, develop strategies and  
22 execute action plans which center their resources on their most important ministry needs.
- 23 9. Help parish leaders TRAIN the people in their spiritual care for works of service in their daily  
24 priesthood and in their member ministry for the congregation.
- 25 10. Leave in place an attitude, structure and planning PROCESS that will serve the congregation for  
26 years.

## ASSUMPTIONS

27  
28 As consultants we bring to this process some basic working assumptions which may be helpful for  
29 you to know as you read our report:

- 30 1) Only God's Word Works (is efficacious). God's Word works. We believe that it does not return  
31 to the Lord empty, but does accomplish what He desires (Isaiah 55). We believe no change of worth  
32 or substance before God can take place in your congregation apart from the Word (John 6:63).
- 33 Faithfulness to and operating from the Word is a fundamental starting point for anything and everything

1 that the church is and does. We believe that only the Holy Spirit, working through the Word and the  
2 Word in conjunction with the sacraments, can change hearts and lives. Unless members and leaders are  
3 rooted and growing in the Word, little positive spiritual gain will be made in any congregation or mission  
4 endeavor.

5       2) The context for carrying out ministry changes. While God's Word does not change and the  
6 church dare not change it, the context within which the church conducts its ministry does change. With  
7 St. Paul (I Corinthians 9:22) we believe that churches can and sometimes must change their structure,  
8 strategies, methodology and priorities to accommodate the contemporary needs and opportunities which  
9 confront them. The New Testament does not prescribe the way we must minister beyond the twin  
10 injunctions of "truth and love" (Ephesians 4:15), "fitting and orderly" (I Corinthians 14:40). We have  
11 a healthy respect for a church's history and heritage. Because we recognize any change risks resistance  
12 and emotional conflict, we urge carefully reasoned and clearly communicated change based on  
13 commitment to the most effective ministry of God's Word possible. A congregation must understand  
14 the biblical parameters within which it exercises its freedom of choice. We believe churches should  
15 address needs and opportunities pro-actively with Christian judgment and planning, not just reactively  
16 as a response to festering problems. Different approaches to and methods of ministry will vary in their  
17 degree of effectiveness as we seek to apply the Word in people's lives. We believe it is vital to  
18 understand the context and setting in which people are living, thinking and working in order to minister  
19 to them in the best possible way. Jesus applied this principle as He talked to the woman at the well (John  
20: 4).

21       3) A congregation should strive for both balance and effectiveness in ministry. The mission of  
22 "making disciples" (Matthew 28:18-20) calls for a balance of outreach and nurture. The "nurture" half  
23 of that mission requires a balance of children's spiritual growth and adult spiritual growth, a balance of  
24 cognitive and affective approaches to teaching and preaching, a balance of "preventive" ministry aimed  
25 at spiritual maturity and "corrective" ministry. There should also be balance between the congregation's  
26 ministry of nurture, as it serves its own members, and its ministry of outreach, as it seeks to serve others;  
27 a balance between tradition and innovation to fit both the congregation and the community it tries to  
28 serve; a balance in targeting the programs of the church so that some segments of the congregation are  
29 not neglected while others are "overfed;" a balance in the types of activities, groups, programs and  
30 events to provide a variety of options from which to choose. Above all, there must be a biblical balance  
31 of law and gospel clearly distinguishing the roles and uses of the these twin messages (outreach and  
32 nurture) of Scripture, with evangelical pre-eminence to the Gospel of God's grace in Jesus Christ. In  
33 seeking balance the primary energies of the congregation should be placed on outcomes of biblical  
34 significance. What will potentially gain the most for the Kingdom at any point in time should be given  
35 priority.

1 4) Choices will need to be made. No congregation is able to accomplish all of the good, useful and  
 2 beneficial things which it might undertake. Therefore, choices must be made. At times one thing will  
 3 have to take precedence over another; choosing to do “A” may mean not choosing to do “B.” To do  
 4 this, personal opinions, preferences and agendas will need to be put aside. We listen to God where He  
 5 speaks and, where He has not, to the consensus of our fellow believers. A congregation must also  
 6 understand the “necessity” of choice. Failure to address a need or opportunity j~ a choice, even if the  
 7 congregation never formally votes to retain the status quo.

8 5) The ministry belongs to the congregation. We believe that pastors and teachers are Christ’s gifts  
 9 to the church called to shepherd and nurture to maturity and to equip God’s people for lives of service  
 10 (Ephesians 4:11-16; H Timothy 3:15-17). We do not call people to minister for us we call people to  
 11 train us for ministry and to minister with us. The Church is the “Body of Christ” (Romans 12; I  
 12 Corinthians 12), with each member gifted and placed by the Holy Spirit so that the “Body” is built up  
 13 by the means of grace through the mutual and interdependent service of all members. The priesthood  
 14 of all believers is a clear Biblical teaching (I Peter 2:9-12), and its implementation will provide a great  
 15 blessing both to the ministry of the congregation and to the members who exercise their faith within that  
 16 ministry. We believe that such “ministry by members” may take many forms, from elected offices of  
 17 leadership and administration to roles of teaching, evangelizing, admonishing, training,  
 18 visiting/comforting and musical praise. We are convinced that the key to training and employing Christ’s  
 19 people in the church’s ministry is a sufficient staff of called ministers of the Gospel.

20 **ANALYTICAL OBSERVATIONS**

21 Analytical observations are subsumed under the following categories:

22 I Strengths to Build on	III Programs
23 II Key Issues	Adult Spiritual Growth
24 History	Worship
25 Community Context	Child Discipleship
26 Adult Spiritual Growth	Ministry to Youth
27 Money focus	Group Life and Fellowship
28 Pastoral roles and Performance	Financial Stewardship
29 Communication	Ministry Beyond St. John’s
30 Equipping Members for Ministry	Ministry to and by Seniors
31 The Strayed and Straying	IV The Future
32 Facilities	Challenges
33 Consensus	Next Steps

1 **I**

2 **STRENGTHS TO BUILD ON**

- 3 1. A high value for the true Word of God and a strong commitment to be faithful to it. In today’s  
4 world, this is truly an outstanding blessing upon which much can be built. When God’s people  
5 pursue God’s purposes and build their decisions on his promises, the record of history is one of the  
6 accomplishment of great things for the Kingdom.
- 7 2. A long history. St. John’s is an historical church in its community. Those who consider it, know it  
8 is not here today and gone tomorrow. This conveys a solidity of presence to go with your solidity  
9 of teaching.
- 10 3. Quality Worship. When we asked the members of St. John’s what they considered a strength of their  
11 present congregation they pointed to their worship, its variety, life focus, and strong preaching.
- 12 4. Gifted Staff There is a sense that God has gathered some outstanding gifts in the called workers  
13 who serve this congregation. It is a multi-talented group that works very well together. As a result  
14 many new things have been started or restarted like lay visitation, working with the straying, and  
15 outreach team. When we look at the team of called workers whom God has gathered at St. John’s  
16 at this point in its history, we could not help but wonder if he had done that because you have big  
17 and challenging things to accomplish in these next years.

18 **II**

19 **ISSUES**

20 **HISTORY**

21 History is important to your planning process because it is in your history that your values, habits,  
22 and approaches to ministry have been honed and shaped. Some of them prove helpful to the work of  
23 the Kingdom. Your strong desire to be faithful to the Word of God for instance is a product of having  
24 that challenged. Others can be barriers, such as the neglect of training in the Word for the adults of the  
25 congregation, thus keeping people from the very strength and wisdom God would give. It is important  
26 to learn from the past to help us understand the present and have confidence for the future.  
27



8

1 The history of St. John's is a long history running back to 1858. It is also a history of many  
2 struggles. in the first part of the last century St. John's like many other WELS congregations faced the  
3 challenge of either changing the way they did ministry or seeing their church go into decline. Your  
4 forefathers made a huge personal sacrifice of their comfort, so that Gospel could be brought to the  
s coming generations. They gave up their German language as the language of worship and instruction.  
6 Significant to learn, is they did not make it an either or but a both/and decision. They started English but  
7 continued for a time the German during the transition.

8 Life did not get easier in mid century as the congregation split over the issue of whether you would  
9 be faithful to the word and insist that members not belong to organizations that undermined biblical  
10 teachings. Many members belonged to Scouting organizations and lodges. Many left.

11

12 Again in the 50's, St. John's was faced with a major doctrinal challenge as it became involved in  
13 the CLC controversy as our synod struggled with the theological drift of the Lutheran Church-Missouri  
14 Synod with which we were then in fellowship. Again many left.

15 You have also struggled with the personal and professional lives our your called workers and some  
16 of the sins they fell into.

17 None of these were easy. All left scars. The real positive that came from all these is the strongest  
18 affirmation of Scripture as the norm and standard for Christian life and practice we have seen in the  
19 congregations we have worked with. The down side of these events has left you fearful and hesitant to  
20 make decisions which need to be made for the health and future of the congregation and its service to  
21 the Red Wing community.

22 The fear shows up on two fronts: fear there will not be enough money, fear we will lose members.  
23 The only solution to fear is the reality of God's love for you. A reality that you are presently  
24 experiencing. Despite the struggles, you are still here, living, and carrying out the Lord's work.  
25 When your present challenges come before you, remember not the pain of the past, but how your  
26 God graciously kept you, strengthened you, and enabled you to do what he has called you to do despite  
27 the struggles. Learn from your past to trust God for your future.

1

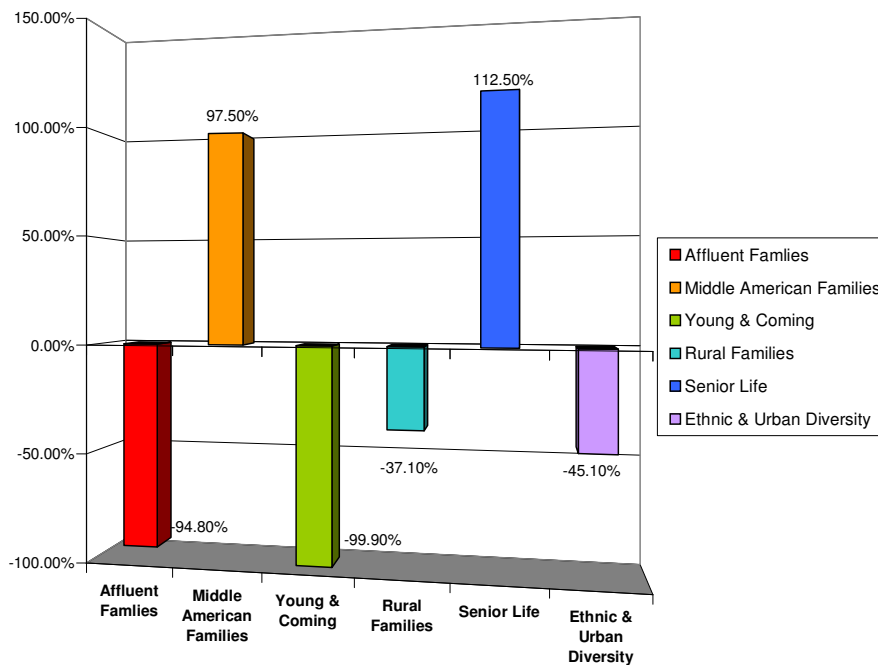
## COMMUNITY CONTEXT

2 Red Wing is an interesting river city. For one thing it is a highly churchd city. Between 70-80%  
 3 of its citizens claim membership in a Christian church. A number of members called Red Wing “a good  
 4 place to raise a family.” This Christian atmosphere has created a common set of values which has made  
 5 Red Wing a comfortable place for a Christian to live. Maybe too comfortable. On the other hand the  
 6 largest employer is in the business of gambling, an interesting combination. While the Twin Cities are  
 7 not far up the river, the proximity to the cities has only recently begun to impact the community with  
 8 new housing developments.

9 The people moving into Red Wing were not what we anticipated: baby boomers (people born  
 10 between 1945 and 1964) and retirees. This is significant information for future planning.

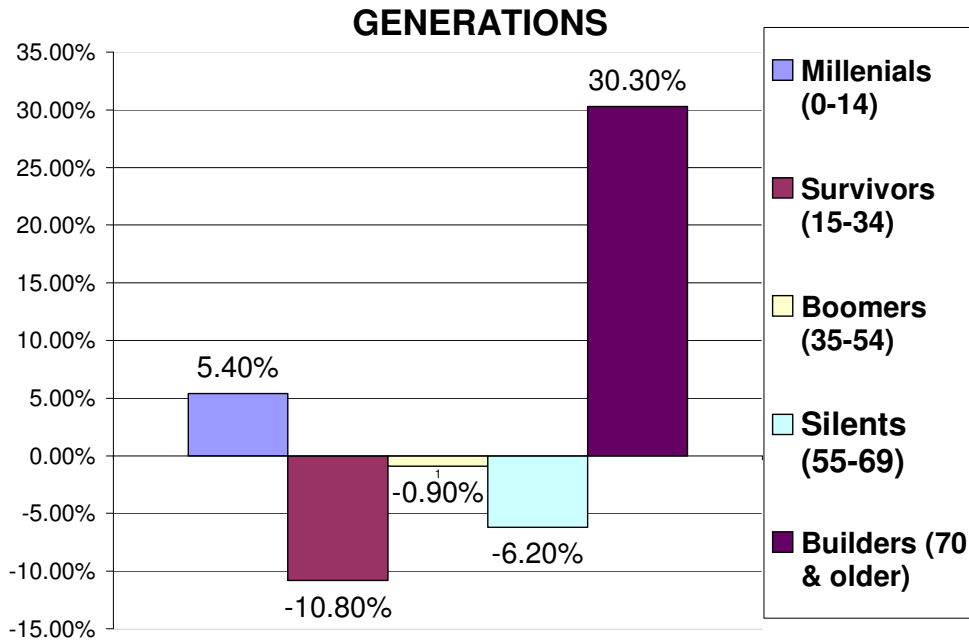
11

## U.S. LIFESTYLES GROUP



12 In this graph and the following graphs, the mid-line is the United States average. Thus when you  
 13 look at Red Wing, among the affluent Red Wing has 94.8% fewer families than would be found in an  
 14 average city in the United States but among those families who are middle American, you have 97.5%  
 15 more than average. To understand this graph you need to know this is not based on income but on  
 16 values and life styles. There may be considerable diversity within the groups. In fact, if you look at that  
 17 chart, there are two groups that dominate your city: Middle American families and seniors. The young  
 18 and coming are not choosing at this time to move into the city or stay here. The middle American  
 19 families are for the most part adults, many of whom are raising or have raised their children.

1 Who makes up the current population? The graph below describes it precisely.



2 As you can see, the population of Red Wing is skewed considerably toward the senior population.

3 Your congregation is proportionately equal to the nation with the boomer generation but below on  
 4 younger families. So how does your congregation compare to the target area? The chart below provides  
 5 a critical view.

6	St. John's vs Red Wing			
7	Age	St. John's	Red Wing	United States
8	0-5	3%	6.90%	7.60%
9	6 - 14.	12.40%	14.70%	14.30%
10	15 -19	7.40%	7.80%	6.70%
11	20-29	6.90%	10.40%	15.50%
12	30-44	14.30%	21.40%	24.40%
13	45-59	21.00%	18.50%	14.80%
14	60-74	27.30%	10.90%	11.30%
15	75+	13.30%	8.60%	5.40%

16 The data above is striking in that your congregation is even older than your community by a  
 17 considerable amount. Your community as noted above is already older than the country. As you head  
 18 into the future, it will be critical for St. John's to gear their program not only to seniors but also to the  
 19 20-44 age group.

1 Economically the Red Wing area reveals some interesting facts. You have fewer families under 2 \$35,000 and  
 3 fewer over \$100,000 in household income than does the nation. But you have more in the  
 4 \$50-100,000 household income than the nation. The average household income for the study area is  
 5 \$55,241. This means that the Lord has given to the members of St. John's the financial strength to do  
 6 whatever is needed. If each family unit were returning what God's people were asked to return to the  
 7 Lord in the old testament, you would easily have a budget of \$ 1-2.3 million per year on the conservative side  
 8 instead of the present \$400,000. The graph below depicts the variance.

	Households by Income - 2000	
	Study Area	United States
150,000 & up		
100,000-149,999		
75,000-99,999		
50,000-74,999		
35,000-49,999		
25,000-34,999		
15,000-24,999		
5,000-14,999		
under 5,000		

8 Spiritually the community has more churching citizens than other communities of this size. At this  
 9 particular point in history there are between 25-30% unchurched citizens, a considerable mission field.  
 10 The number of unchurched is anticipated to grow by 10% in the next ten years, mostly from those  
 11 boomers and seniors moving into the area.

12 Many in our interviews commented that the community is becoming ethnically diverse in recent  
 13 years. At present the Red Wing community is 3.3% non-white. The Black population is projected to  
 14 increase by 15 persons and to remain stable at 0.4% of the total. The Hispanic/Latino population is  
 15 projected to increase by 38 persons and to increase from 0.9% to 1.1% of the total. The Asian/Other  
 16 population is projected to increase by 40 persons and to increase from 2.0% to 2.2% of the total.  
 17 Total growth for the area is expected to remain relatively flat for the foreseeable future. Even  
 18 though new housing is going in each year, the size of the households is decreasing. The opportunities  
 19 for the Gospel will lie primarily in targeted populations.

20 Some summary points:

- 21 • St. John's is in a stable area which is projected to grow at a very slow rate
- 22 • St. John's membership reflects this flat stable growth
- 23 • St. John's is older than its community

- 1 • 30% of the people in the area have no church home
- 2 • The Lord has blessed the members of St. John's materially with solid steady household incomes.
- 3 • St. John's offerings from 1979 to 1989 fell behind inflation by 11% and between 1989 and 1999
- 4 fell behind 4% so that the work of the Lord through St. John's has 15% less spending power
- 5 than it had 20 years ago despite the fact that the membership has stayed relatively the same.
- 6 • New members of the community tend to be boomers and seniors.

## 7 **ADULT SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

8 We see this as the most critical need at St. John's at this point in its history and the most difficult  
9 to achieve as you head into the future. Many of the issues we heard of people struggling with their  
10 personal lives and in their congregation can only be solved by a closer connection with God. People  
11 wanted more volunteers, greater giving, greater zeal for the Lord's work, greater love for one another,  
12 more compassion and understanding one to another, more active participation in the Christian education  
13 programs, more members in worship. When you ask for these things you show a heartfelt desire for the  
14 things God wants for you.

15 We all need to understand though, that when volunteers are becoming harder to secure, when it is  
16 harder to do the Lord's work, when service to the Lord becomes more burden than joy, when many  
17 people can't seem to muster the energy for worship or the desire to give generously, when life becomes  
18 harder and more stressful, God's people are low on fuel. Their spiritual batteries need charging. When  
19 God's people are not connected tightly to their God, issues, doctrines and life become cloudy and hard  
20 to understand. What "I want" overtakes what God wants all too often.

21 God's people at St. John's need to seriously add to the strength of their connection with their God.  
22 The only way this occurs is when God's people spend time listening to their God as he speaks in his  
23 Word in Bible classes and at home. It is the principal way God works in the hearts of people. This is the  
24 way he has chosen to bring strength and comfort, peace and joy, a sense of purpose to life and the zest  
25 to pursue it.

26 Through the Word the Spirit enters our lives, charging and recharging our spiritual batteries and  
27 enabling us to fend off the ways of the pagan culture in which we live. The world in which we are  
28 carrying out our ministry knows no god, let alone the God. The forces of this pagan culture have "freed"  
29 our world from constraints against adultery, divorce and abortion, substituting a whole new language  
30 that speaks of "natural relations," "personal freedom" and "choice." Members watching and listening

1 to entertainment which treats destructive sin as normal, place themselves spiritually at risk unless they  
2 know the Scriptures and are empowered by the Holy Spirit to resist and become witnesses to the truth.

3 St. John's cares about children. In this new environment, when adults are not spiritually connected  
4 well, kids hurt. As a congregation, the importance of adult spiritual growth is critical to the nurture of  
5 children. It is, for instance, the adults who are the models for the children. Research among our churches  
6 has shown ~a direct and strong correlation between the effectiveness of our churches' Christian  
7 educational efforts and the modeling of the truths taught by the parents at home. To the degree parents  
8 deviate in their lifestyles, decision making and actions from the teachings of Scripture, the work of your  
9 Christian Elementary School and Sunday school is undermined. Having the parents of your children and  
10 the teachings at church spiritually in sync with each other is critical to the mission of the church to raise  
11 up the next generation of disciples. The only way biblical modeling can take place is for all involved to  
12 be growing in their Christ-likeness through regular contact with God's Word and Sacraments.

13 **From the worship analysis, 89.3% of the children age 1-19 (those still living at home)**  
14 **worshiped once or not at all in the month of the survey.** This is a strong indicator of a major need.

15 While the spiritual light burns brightly in some, many at St. John's show the signs of low spiritual  
16 fuel.

17 In the congregational survey, members ranked adult spiritual growth 7''' out of 8 in program  
18 importance. This is why we said adult spiritual development will be hard to achieve. God's word has  
19 apparently slipped into the "taken for granted" category for a great number of St. John's members even  
20 while treasuring sound doctrine. The leaders ranked spiritual development 4~" out of 8 and the called  
21 workers ranked it 3rd out of 8.

22 In the congregational survey 89.3% of those surveyed said the adult spiritual growth programs of  
23 St. John's were "meeting the needs" or "very effective." Yet only 8.7% attend. This is a matter of  
24 serious concern. When members prioritized how they thought the pastors should spend their time, they  
25 ranked teaching adults 5'' out of 9 and the elected leaders ranked it the same. The elected leaders gave  
26 this area a grade of "B." These rankings are both encouraging and point to the major effort ahead to  
27 reprioritize growing in God's Word in the life of God's people and congregation.

28 While we will not formulate our specific recommendations until the next phase, Phase III, there are  
29 several ideas you may want to consider to help you begin in this area. In this post Christian era, many  
30 of our congregations have found it very beneficial to set as a goal to have all the members retake the

1 pastors' Adult Information Class in the next six years, a sort of tuckpointing of everyone's spiritual  
2 foundation. Given all the anti-Christian ideas pounding away at our Christians, this has fostered the  
3 beginnings of spiritual renewal, especially when it is taught from a life-orientation vantage point. Fact  
4 is, you may want to consider developing a base line curriculum of two or three courses for all members  
5 to provide the spiritual foundation for living in a culture that is hostile to our faith. "Training Christians  
6 for Ministry" might be a part of this base line. We would highly encourage use of the "Parish Leadership  
7 Series" of Bible studies with your congregational leaders especially during this time you are working  
8 through this planning process. As you head into the future, some of the spiritually mature and  
9 knowledgeable Christians at St. John's will need to be encouraged and trained as Bible study leaders  
10 to provide variety and to enable multiple Bible studies at the same time.

11 There is ample evidence of the presence of the Spirit at St. John's congregation. It shows itself in  
12 the love and concern which members have for each other and the work of their congregation. If the next  
13 steps of spiritual growth, strength and maturity are going to be reached, if the hopes you have for  
14 yourselves as Christ's servants are to have any hope of achievement, if there is to be unity of purpose,  
15 if there is to be growth in the frequency of worship, in offerings, in volunteers, in caring, in family life,  
16 in willingness to sacrifice in love, all of St. John's members will need to heed St. Peter's call to "grow  
17 in grace." These are things only the Spirit gives. He comes into our lives only through the word of God  
18 and sacraments

## 19 **MONEY FOCUS RATHER THAN MISSION FOCUS**

20 A concern emerged as we went through the interviews. A serious concern. There was little mention  
21 or concern for the work Christ has given to his children to do but much mention of money. It became  
22 apparent that in this flock of God, the means God has given for carrying out ministry has superceded  
23 in importance the purpose for which he gave the means. Money has replaced ministry. Concern for  
24 dollars has superceded concern for souls and mission.

25 How are decision made at St. John's? While money is always a concern in Christ's congregations,  
26 it ought not be the basis for determining priorities. It was the focus on money rather than souls that got  
27 Judas into trouble and caused Jesus to rebuke his disciples when they complained because Mary poured  
28 expensive perfume on Jesus head. Here at St. John's, "What does God want us to do?" or "How can  
29 we best carry out Christ's mission in our community?" are the questions that need to replace "how much  
30 does it cost?" as the first question asked.

1 If we were to believe what we heard in the interviews, one would think the members of St. John's  
2 were close to broke. There was loud talk of lack of money but yet there is little debt and no deficit in  
3 the congregation. **If this congregation is short on funds to carry out its mission, there is only one**  
4 **real reason. God's people have kept and spent what their God gave them to do his work for**  
5 **themselves.** Both the attitude which makes money not mission the focus and the level of offerings needs  
6 to be brought to the Lord's altar in repentance.

7 The Lord is facing you with some serious challenges in the next years in both reaching your  
8 community with the Gospel and in updating your facilities for the new century's ministry needs. The cost  
9 has been the focus. In case you have not noticed, the Lord has shown you how unfounded are your  
10 worries. When you set up your endowment fund, you thought it would maybe garner \$50,000 in the first  
11 three years of its existence. God showed you something which you need to listen to. He sent \$600,000.  
12 It is one of his ways of saying to you, money is really never the issue. The hearts and focus of God's  
13 people is. God has given you all you need to do what needs to be done. Personal willingness and  
14 priorities, not means, is the determinant.

15 The focus of St. John's needs to turn to people: children and adults. How can you best carry out  
16 the mission of Christ in your community is the determining question.

## 17 **PASTOR'S ROLES**

18 There is confusion among the members and, at times, even among the called workers as to who is  
19 responsible for what and what is a pastor supposed to do.

20 1. Take the last point first. What is the purpose for which God gives pastors to congregation?  
21 What role and responsibility does he give to them? St. Paul in Ephesians 4 writes that God gives  
22 his church pastors "to prepare God's people for works of service." That last word is best  
23 translated, "works of ministry." The Scriptures, our God, declares all members of his  
24 congregations responsible for accomplishing the works of ministry which need to be done in  
25 their service area. Pastors has the primary responsibility of training you for your ministry, not  
26 doing it for you. There is evidence in the surveys and in the interviews that many view the  
27 pastors as an employee hired to do the ministry for you. Instead of seeing the visiting of the sick  
28 and shut in, the comforting, the bringing of the Gospel to the unchurched, the follow-up on  
29 visitors, the spiritual education of the children as belonging to the members, many see this work



1 as the pastors alone and measure them by how well they do it, rather than on how well they  
2 train you to do it. This will need some study.

3 2. Who is responsible for what? Who among the pastors oversees the ministries of the Sunday  
4 School, Outreach, straying, etc.? We found no position descriptions in place which clearly  
5 delineate the oversight responsibilities for each pastor. This has caused confusion for members  
6 and workers alike with tasks easily falling between the cracks unwittingly. It has also created  
7 an expectation by many that both pastors should be at all events. This has cut deeply into the  
8 advantage which having two pastors gives to the ministry of a congregation.

9 3. Your pastors are doing way too much record keeping, administration, letter writing, and clerical  
10 work Trying to keep track of all the events going on in the congregation, tracking IOOs of  
11 people's spiritual and personal needs, setting up of visitation appointments, sorting the mail,  
12 making sure the right people have the right information at the right time — this is work best  
13 done by an administrative secretary. We strongly advocate the creation of the position of  
14 administrative assistant to the pastors so they can focus their time on preaching, teaching,  
15 training, leading and helping with visitation. This person could also provide some help to the  
16 elected leaders so they can focus their energy also on ministry issues rather than administrative.

## 17 **COMMUNICATION**

18 Communication is an important part of any organization but it is especially important in a church  
19 because the aim of a church is to communicate the law and the gospel of God's Word. Good  
20 communication makes sure that everyone is focused on the mission and priorities of the organization.

21 Good communication is a critical component for maintaining harmony in a congregation and satisfaction  
22 among the members. Any organization will be more efficient and effective through good communication.

23 Why is communication an issue at St. John's Lutheran Church and School. St. John's has a large  
24 communicant base involved in many activities. The staff is also rather large. Time constraints and busy  
25 schedules also make communication difficult. St. John's organizational structure lacks clear position  
26 descriptions for leaders on all levels which clarify and simplify communication within and without the  
27 organization. The church also lacks a communication center, an administrative secretary, as mentioned  
28 above, who has the assignment of coordinating communication.

1 The facility itself causes communication breakdowns because it separates people and groups and  
2 makes communication difficult. According to some parishioners, one result is a number of ministry  
3 activities are falling between the cracks.

4 Finally, it is very difficult to provide time for the pastors and principal to meet on a regular basis  
5 when the principal's release time coincides with the pastors' religion instruction in the school.

6 There are positives in this area to build on. Communication at St. John's has been improving. The  
7 church and the school newsletters are very informative and well done. The pastors provide many  
8 supportive church materials in the bulletin and in the back of the church. The morning faculty devotion  
9 provides time for the staff to organize and communicate. Finally, several recent efforts have been made  
10 to improve communication among the staff. A good beginning on a critical need.

11

### **EQUIPPING MEMBERS FOR MINISTRY**

12 The Apostle Paul tells us, "It was (Christ) who gave some...to be pastors and teachers to prepare  
13 God's people for works of service" (Ephesians 4:11-12). One of the parts of God's "job description"  
14 for his pastors is to prepare the members of the congregation to carry out the ministry he has entrusted  
15 to them. The members of St. John's rank training and equipping of saints 8" out of eight, dead last, in  
16 priority ranking. The leaders when evaluating the membership did not think the members would even  
17 include it in their ranking and the leaders themselves ranked this category dead last. Pastors and teachers  
18 likewise did not place this in their ranking.

19 In spite of this low ranking, 257 volunteers give 746 hours of service per month at St. John's.

20 However one statistic that we did not have was how many different people this included. From  
21 other circumstances that we observed in the congregation it probably represents a very low percentage  
22 of the congregation's membership.

23 The program of having members visiting the shut-ins of the congregation is a step in the right  
24 direction if all the ministry which needs to be done in Red Wing is going to be accomplished. This  
25 visitation effort is very well organized at St. John's and is an excellent way for members to serve their  
26 Savior, Jesus Christ and demonstrate his kind of love to those at some difficult stages of life. The Prayer  
27 Partner program is also functioning very well but could probably use more participants. Having more  
28 than 50 ushers is a real blessing. However, their duties could probably be expanded. The secretarial help

1 in the elementary school is very good and volunteers come in to help in the classroom, and fold, staple  
2 and mail the highly regarded newsletter of the congregation. The new greeter's program is to be  
3 commended as it seemed to function very effectively in the service your parish assistance team attended.

4       However, much more could and should be done in the area of equipping the members. Your  
5 consultants saw the pastors setting up the screen and projector for the WELS Connection Video as  
6 rather symbolic of how much the congregation expects of its called workers. A real change in thought  
7 needs to occur at St. John's so that called workers are seen as trainers and equippers for ministry rather  
8 than as the primary doers. This is critical if a large congregation is to exhibit a warm, caring atmosphere  
9 and accomplish all the things that Christ would like to have done in his kingdom without wearing out  
10 your called servants.

11       Paul tells all Christians they are "created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in  
12 advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10). "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,  
13 a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into  
14 his wonderful light"(I Peter 2:9). All of God's people have been charged with the privilege of sharing  
15 the love of Jesus and serving in his Kingdom. Christ has "committed to us the message of reconciliation.  
16 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors" (2 Corinthians 5:19-20).

17       Whenever there is a lack of volunteers in a church, the reasons usually center around one or more  
18 of the seven items below:

- 19       1.     Lack of spiritual oower. People are not filled with the Holy Spirit. They are not solidly and  
20             regularly connected to the Word.
- 21       2.     Lack of ovportunity. People either do not know of something that meets their interests or  
22             desires or no such program exists.
- 23       3.     Lack of training and equipping. People are hesitant to become involved in something where they  
24             are not confident they know how to do it.
- 25       4.     Failure to appreciate. Nothing kills volunteer spirit quicker than a failure by leaders and co-  
26             workers to appreciate what has been done. While we as Christ's servants do not work for  
27             rewards, the failure to express thanks to the Lord for gifts given can bring hurt both in heaven  
28             and on earth.
- 29       5.     Lack of personal encouragement to participate. People need to be asked — personally, not as  
30             a point of pride but as a point of love. It's a way of saying we care enough about others to want  
31             them to have the blessings that come from serving. Especially new members need to be  
32             consciously guided into ministry.
- 33       6.     A inappropriate congregational culture. A culture in the congregation that tends not to  
34             recognize service in God's church is one of the highest privileges God gives.

1 7. A controlling leadership where the emphasis is on keeping things under the proper guidance  
2 rather than equipping and enabling people to accomplish the work God has given them. Both  
3 need to occur. When control is the dominant it weakens and frustrates leaders and members.

4 The idea that ministry is something only the pastors do needs to be changed to the biblical concept  
5 that ministry is something that has been entrusted to all of us with one of the chief roles of pastors being  
6 to train and equip members for ministry. This is a huge shift in thinking for many. To upgrade this area  
7 takes energy and the blessings of the Spirit. The energies, focus, and time of called workers will need  
8 to shift more from the doing of ministry to the training and equipping for ministry. Effective lay service  
9 may also have staffing implications in the future for the congregation.

## 10 **THE STRAYING AND INACTIVE**

11 This should be an area of major concern for St. John's congregation. On the average only 34% of  
12 the membership is in worship each week. Out of 1044 souls, 497 members did not worship at all during  
13 the four week worship survey. The leaders of the congregation give themselves a C- in winning back  
14 the straying and inactive. This well might be one of the major areas where the pastors will have to focus  
15 some serious training efforts of the laity. At present we were told there are only three elders working  
16 on this overwhelming task. The fact that each one spends three to four hours a week on task could only  
17 make a small dent in reaching the large number of straying souls at St. John's. A program with about  
18 33 trained elders, men and women(women working with women), would be a good goal for the  
19 congregation.

20 A new program of sending out mailings to the inactive is a small step in the right direction but the  
21 leadership needs to realize that a "people to people" effort is much more effective than a "paper to  
22 people" program. There also needs to be a change in approach. Research has found that personal  
23 contact within six weeks of a change in a worship pattern is the most productive. People who are  
24 contacted quickly, receive help before a negative pattern sets in. Likewise, research has shown it to be  
25 most difficult to reclaim those who have been inactive for more than six months. Patience isn't always  
26 a virtue. Think of the false sense of security that may be given those inactive members. It is easy when  
27 unchallenged to fall into thinking that as long as I have my name on the membership list I'm all right.  
28 When this work is neglected, it is easy for many members to view their congregation as a place they go  
29 for baptism, marriage and burial, a hatch, match and dispatch mind set. But God's Word clearly shows  
30 us that the church is to be at the vital center of a Christian's total life.

1 Prevention and intervention strategies will need to be carefully set forth in your vision for the future.  
2 They will be vitally important. The Chief Shepherd has great concern for wandering sheep. We would  
3 encourage a focus which first seeks to lead these people into practical Bible study as a way to meet both  
4 their immediate needs and ultimate needs.

## 5 FACILITIES

6 Whenever facilities were mentioned at St. John's, it was followed by mention of some type of  
7 deficiency. They are well known: stairs confront child and adult at every level, no place to fellowship  
8 after church where everyone can easily go, woefully inadequate bathrooms located in places that those  
9 who cannot do steps can't get to (If you have to go, don't go to church), a teacher has to vacate her  
10 classroom 12-20 times per year during the school day to accommodate special events (unintended  
11 message: kids don't count here), no space geared for adult spiritual education and training, facilities are  
12 old and the cost to maintain them will only go up, no office complex for pastors and secretary that  
13 provides private, professional study and consultation places as well as coordinated communication,  
14 school is not wired for electronic age, heating and cooling inadequate, hostile to handicapped and on  
15 and on the list goes. St. John's is turning young families away and handicapping its ministry with its  
16 current facilities.

17 The very serious question which faces St. John's is what kind of facility do we need to have to carry  
18 out our ministry in this new century. We have heard all kinds of options: fix up the buildings, stay where  
19 we are, move school to new property, tear down present school and build a fellowship hall, build new  
20 church and school, tear down the present school and build a child care center next to church while the  
21 school goes to new property, hold worship at two sites: one downtown, the other at new school site,  
22 etc.

23 In truth, in the analysis of your consultants, **the present school facility should receive no further**  
24 **investment.** To put any significant dollars into that facility is to send good money after bad. It is an  
25 hopelessly out of date facility with design deficiencies on many levels which meets almost no need well.  
26 **No amount of investment can fix its inherent unworkability for future ministry.**

27 Buildings are tools, and only tools. They can be assets or liabilities. If the tool is getting in the way  
28 of the Gospel instead of helping it, if it is limiting who you can serve and when you can serve them,  
29 serious attention needs to be given to them.

1 If all St. John's does is look at what you have and ask what shall we do with it, there will be mixed  
2 and even divisive answers. The key question is how well is this tool accomplishing its goal and what  
3 kinds of tools do we need for our future ministry? Some of those questions can best be answered in  
4 Phase III of this planning process when you determine your vision for the future ministry of this  
5 congregation. The only thing clear at this moment is that if you desire to reach and serve young families  
6 by continuing with a Christian Elementary School program, you will need a different facility.

7 KEY: Who are you going to serve in this new era?

8 Once the vision is done, the members today, old and young alike, will face the challenge of  
9 developing the physical plant tools for this new century. This issue should be decided with the all the  
10 ministry needs and programs in mind which the congregation will need to carry out Christ's work in Red  
11 Wing for the next 25 years.

## 12 CONSENSUS

13 The question in this section is "how agreed are you?" Is there a clear sense of priorities among  
14 the members and leaders as to what is important? How close do member priorities align with Christ's  
15 priorities for his church?

16 Each elected leader in advance of our coming was asked to identify the top five major needs in the  
17 congregation. They identified 27 of which only five received more than one vote and two, church  
18 maintenance and more members involved ministry, received more than three mentions.

19 These same leaders were asked to identify any "hot" topics. They identified 11. Only two: finances  
20 and new church and school received more than one mention.

21 On Saturday morning during our on site visit, we met with the leaders as a group. They were asked  
22 to identify in three lists: what they considered the blessings that God had placed on this congregation,  
23 the adds and improvements they think need to be made as you head into the future, and the barriers that  
24 get in the way or prevent the God's work from being done. When we were done formulating these lists  
25 as a joint project, each leader was asked to rank in order of importance the top three items in each  
26 category. In the category of "adds and improvements" which they felt were needed for St. John's to be  
27 a better servant of Jesus in the coming years, they listed 28 items. When they were done they were asked  
28 to individually prioritize the top three in order of importance. 15 of the 28 items were prioritized.

1 In the two graphs which follow this page you see first the comparison of how the various groups  
 2 within the leadership and the congregation ranked program priorities and in the second graph how they  
 3 ranked the pastors' time. In the first one you can see how the leaders ranked areas of ministry, how they  
 4 thought the members would rank it and how the members actually ranked them.

**PROGRAM PRIORITIES**

	Leaders	Leaders on Congregation	Congregation
Fellowship			
Mistry to the Straying			
Worship			
Equipping Members			
Nurturing Children			
Adult Spiritual Growth			
Member Care			
Outreach			

5 Observations:

- 6 1. The elected leaders and members are in complete agreement on the top three priorities: Worship,  
 7 nurturing children and member care.
- 8 2. While the leaders did not think the congregation would prioritize outreach, they in fact prioritized  
 9 it higher than did the elected leaders.
- 10 3. There is a significant gap between the importance leaders see in the adults of the congregation  
 11 growing spiritually than what the members themselves place on it.
- 12 4. Leaders place a considerably higher value on fellowship than do the members.

PASTORS' TIME USE

	Called Workers	Leaders	Members
Counseling			
Worship Prep			
Teaching Children			
Visiting Unchurched			
Visit Straying			
Teaching Adults			
Administration			
Personal Growth			
Leadership			

1 Observations:

- 2 1. Called workers, elected leaders and members all agree on worship preparation as the number one  
3 priority for their pastors' time.
- 4 2. Members rank counseling as the second most important activity.
- 5 3. Visiting the unchurched is not a high priority by any in this congregation. Concern for the lost is  
6 low.
- 7 4. Teaching adults and personal growth were seen differently in priority by members and called  
8 workers. Called workers placed a significantly higher value on these.
- 9 5. Members expect more leadership to come from their pastors than di the elected leaders.
- 10 6. The priorities of St. John's are focused inward.

11 Below are the results of the group interviews. As you read through the lists keep in mind that  
12 each of these is an expression of an individual at that time. There was no debate allowed, all thoughts  
13 were considered valuable. These are instantaneous expressions, not statements made after lengthy  
14 thought. People were asked to list the things they liked and considered blessings in this congregation.



1 Then they were asked what they thought should be improved or added to the work of St. John's as  
2 you head into the future in order to be a more effective servant of the Lord and his purposes. Finally,  
3 they were asked to list the "barriers" — the things that from their perspective get in the way of getting  
4 the Lord's work done in your midst. These are the perceptions listed:

5 **Blessings** - Pulse Group (a cross section of members)

6 What blessings, strengths, opportunities does St. John's have from God as you prepare to  
7 enter the next century? What do you like about your congregation.

- 8 1. A Christian Elementary school
- 9 2. Good pastoral leadership
- 10 3. Good teachers
- 11 4. True Word of God
- 12 5. Large membership
- 13 6. Worship facility
- 14 7. Members that get along with each other
- 15 8. Pastors that do memorable and exciting worship
- 16 9. Loving teachers
- 17 10. Two pastors
- 18 11. Very open and accepting congregation
- 19 12. Freedom to worship
- 20 13. Many opportunities for Bible study
- 21 14. Calls for workers have been accepted
- 22 15. Members willing to serve
- 23 16. Available housing for workers in small town
- 24 17. Financial means
- 25 18. Active Sunday School
- 26 19. Ladies Guild
- 27 20. Choice of when to worship
- 28 21. Opportunity for youth to get involved in youth group
- 29 22. Talented organists
- 30 23. Lots of musical talent
- 31 24. Opportunity to spend my life in church with same people
- 32 25. Funeral committee
- 33 26. Two worship services on Sunday
- 34 27. The care given to shut-ins by the pastors
- 35 28. Our association with WELS
- 36 29. Family fellowship activities
- 37 30. Sunday school teachers
- 38 31. Members themselves have been well blessed
- 39 32. Choir
- 40 33. Don't have to rent space for our school
- 41 34. Vacation Bible School
- 42 35. Cards, meals, emergency help, visits, driving patients to doctors—the services we are  
43 able to provide
- 44 36. Being able to keep school for 50 years

- 1 37. Many friendships among the congregation
- 2 38. Care committee for called workers
- 3 39. Location of church
- 4 40. Once a month shut-in communion
- 5 41. Rides to church
- 6 42. Able to update facilities and equipment
- 7 43. Speakers in basement and mother's room
- 8 44. That we are re-looking at ourselves
- 9 45. Our church council
- 10 46. Prayer network
- 11 47. Evangelism committees
- 12 48. Active parent teacher organization
- 13 49. Fans in church
- 14 50. Ushers stability of teachings

### 15 Adds/Improvements - Pulse Group

- 16 (As we head into the future, what are the adds and improvements which you think will be
- 17 needed in your church in order for you to become a better servant of your Savior as you
- 18 head into the future?)
- 19 1. Improve worship attendance
- 20 2. The Christian instruction of those children who are not enrolled in the school
- 21 3. Larger facility for the school
- 22 4. New school building
- 23 5. Air conditioning for the church and school
- 24 6. Church secretary
- 25 7. Handicap accessibility
- 26 8. Ask city for closer handicap parking
- 27 9. More female involvement and input into decision making
- 28 10. New worship facility
- 29 11. Better anticipation of expenses
- 30 12. Find ways to make on LES students on an equal acceptance level
- 31 13. Expand the number of leaders in the church — opportunities for more to serve
- 32 14. More effort to bring back the strayed and straying
- 33 15. Educate our community about our church
- 34 16. We need to know where the WELS is going in the future
- 35 17. Expand lay visitation (involve more men and women)
- 36 18. Make Monday night worship a year round event
- 37 19. There should be clear rationale for any answer or decision we make
- 38 20. Train members for visitation
- 39 21. More money to do ministry
- 40 22. Reach out to other cultures coming into our community

**1 Barriers - Pulse Group**

2 (What keeps your congregation from doing what God wants it to do? What gets in the  
3 way?)

- 4 1. "Me.me,me"
- s 2. Poor prioritization of time
- 6 3. Prioritizing of money
- 7 4. Lack of money coming in
- 8 5. Handicap accessibility
- 9 6. Burnout of leaders
- 10 7. Unwillingness to serve
- 11 8. Fear of change
- 12 9. Set in our ways
- 13 10. Lack of voter participation
- 14 11. Lack of communication between people and between ministry units.
- 15 12. Our present facilities, both church and school
- 16 13. No place to expand in present location
- 17 14. We do not agree on location

**18 St. John's is...** (The first word that came to mind to complete this sentence)

- 19 1. Easy access
- 20 2. Friendly (2)
- 21 3. A WELS congregation (2)
- 22 4. "My church" (7)
- 23 5. Where I hear the true Word (3)
- 24 6. Important in my life
- 25 7. Where I come for comfort
- 26 8. Will always be here for me
- 27 9. God's house (2)

**28 Words the people of Red Wing use to describe St. John's**

- 29 1. True word of God
- 30 2. Narrow minded
- 31 3. Conservative
- 32 4. They think they are the only ones going to heaven
- 33 5. Strict (6)
- 34 6. Church on the corner
- 35 7. Too strict (3)
- 36 8. Lutheran (2)
- 37 9. Too set in their ways to change
- 38 10. Never heard of it
- 39 11. Strict German Lutheran
- 40 12. Don't participate in ecumenical activities

## 1 Words you use to describe Red Wing

- 2 1. Tourist place
- 3 2. Cliques
- 4 3. Multi-cultural
- 5 4. Beautiful
- 6 5. High taxes
- 7 6. Historical
- 8 7. My town
- 9 8. Pleasant place to live
- 10 9. Great place to raise a family
- 11 10. Community oriented
- 12 11. Fairly friendly
- 13 12. On the Mississippi
- 14 13. Smalltown
- 15 14. High regard for education
- 16 15. Beautiful bluffs
- 17 16. Home
- 18 17. Many churches

## 19 Blessings (strengths of congregation) - School faculty

- 20 1. Member involvement
- 21 2. Faithful to God's Word
- 22 3. Two different but uniquely gifted pastors
- 23 4. Very friendly
- 24 5. Resourceful
- 25 6. Well organized
- 26 7. Many financially smart members
- 27 8. Many money sources
- 28 9. Core of dedicated lay leaders
- 29 10. Verbally responsive members who provide frequent feedback
- 30 11. Many worship and Bible study opportunities
- 31 12. Location of the church
- 32 13. Organ, organists and musicians

## 33 Concerns (congregation) - School faculty

- 34 1. Congregation is split on change
- 35 2. Negative attitude about spending money—verbalized frequently
- 36 3. Lack of awareness of ministry opportunities
- 37 4. Unwillingness to Grow
- 38 5. Lack of awareness of behind the scenes work
- 39 6. Lack of fellowship spaces
- 40 7. Physical plant condition
- 41 8. Lack of younger people. Young people feel out of place.
- 42 9. People take congregation for granted

1 10. Location limits expansion and parking

2 11. No long range planning

### 3 **Strengths of school** - school faculty

- 4 1. Good staff
- 5 2. Flexible and supportive parents and staff
- 6 3. Good congregational support
- 7 4. Good kids
- 8 5. Resourceful
- 9 6. Long time teacher on staff
- 10 7. Volunteers
- 11 8. Good organization, routine
- 12 9. Tradition
- 13 10. Dedicated staff willing to make tough choices
- 14 11. Teacher's aid and secretary
- 15 12. Pastoral involvement
- 16 13. Faculty devotions
- 17 14. Improved communication
- 18 15. Continuing education and staff development
- 19 16. Busing
- 20 17. Good unified discipline
- 21 18. Supportive Board of Education
- 22 19. Money to support students who cannot afford school
- 23 20. Hot lunch
- 24 21. Location is handy to educational programs
- 25 22. Willing to work with other LES
- 26 23. PTO
- 27 24. Title I
- 28 25. Technology coordinator
- 29 26. Music program
- 30 27. Home visits

### 31 **Concerns for School** - School Faculty

- 32 1. Classroom in the basement
- 33 2. Lack of playground
- 34 3. School heating
- 35 4. Poor lighting
- 36 5. Handicapped access
- 37 6. Lack of time for administration
- 38 7. Lack of storage
- 39 8. Classroom size
- 40 9. Technology updating
- 41 10. Amount of personal time required of teachers
- 42 11. Special learning needs of students
- 43 12. Kids seem to know less

- 1 13. Curriculum development
- 2 14. Staff turnover
- 3 15. Building interferes with communication
- 4 16. Picking up children after school
- 5 17. Support and follow through by the parents
- 6 18. Lack of parent involvement
- 7 19. Cleaning service
- 8 20. Slow maintenance

**9 Blessings - Elected Leaders**

- 10 1. We hear the truth of God's Word here
- 11 2. Pastors: flexible and have a strong walk with the Lord
- 12 3. Members we can fellowship with
- 13 4. Christian elementary school
- 14 5. Good teachers at Elementary school and Sunday School
- 15 6. Dedicated volunteers
- 16 7. Worship center
- 17 8. We are in a Christian community
- 18 9. Organists
- 19 10. Great opportunity for Bible study
- 20 11. Our historical roots in our community
- 21 12. Beginning outreach effort
- 22 13. Financial backing of congregation
- 23 14. Member and pastor visitation of shut-ins
- 24 15. People who care about called workers
- 25 16. Location (our proximity to downtown and towers)
- 26 17. The love we have for each other — the caring we bring to each other
- 27 18. Affiliation with WELS
- 28 19. Good elders
- 29 20. Variety of worship
- 30 21. Prayer chain
- 31 22. Choirs — Junior and Senior
- 32 23. Leaders willing to give generously of time for the Kingdom
- 33 24. Proximity to sister congregations
- 34 25. Parent Teacher Organization
- 35 26. Affiliation with St. Croix
- 36 27. Opinions are respected
- 37 28. Affiliation with Lima and Nursing homes
- 38 29. Chapel of the Air
- 39 30. Women have a voice
- 40 31. Very low debt
- 41 32. Ladies Guild
- 42 33. Spiritual growth of the leadership
- 43 34. Youth groups
- 44 35. Endowment fund
- 45 36. Willingness to work at and do new things

- 1 37. Land we own
- 2 38. Called workers that work well together
- 3 39. Economically strong community
- 4 40. More elderly people to reach with the Gospel
- 5 41. Council has mixed age
- 6 42. Community resources are available for outreach

**7 Adds and Improvements - Elected leaders**

- 8 1. New facility in prominent location
- 9 2. Grow the spiritual focus of the entire membership
- 10 3. Train people in the stewardship of giving
- 11 4. Activate and provide more members with the opportunity and privilege of serving
- 12 5. Adjust our priorities as a people of God to give a higher place to the Word of God
- 13 6. Add a church secretary
- 14 7. Improve retention of youth
- 15 8. Define our ministry
- 16 9. Train more lay leaders
- 17 10. Reach out to members who have fallen away
- 18 11. Make better use of the resources (blessings) we have
- 19 12. Improve gathering of input from the women of the congregation
- 20 13. Improve our visibility in the community
- 21 14. Upgrade salaries
- 22 15. Find ways to encourage more of our youth to enter the ministry
- 23 16. More friendship Sundays
- 24 17. Part-time/full-time youth leaders
- 25 18. Connect people with their church on more than the worship level
- 26 19. Build positive attitudes
- 27 20. Build consensus
- 28 21. Strengthen relations between members and pastors
- 29 22. Distribute the ministry among more people (members)
- 30 23. Improve openness to change
- 31 24. Stop dragging stuff out — get it done
- 32 25. Lead by example
- 33 26. Improve relations with community
- 34 27. Initiate community activities (activities which serve the community)
- 35 28. Practice Christian life in the workplace

**36 Barriers - Elected leaders**

- 37 1. Misplaced priorities
- 38 2. Limited facility
- 39 3. Weakness of faith
- 40 4. Perception that there is a lack of money
- 41 5. Apathy
- 42 6. Fear of rejection
- 43 7. Lack of time

- 1 8. Resistance to change
- 2 9. Failure to resolve hurts and conflicts
- 3 10. Inability to express our faith
- 4 11. No church secretary
- 5 12. Communication breakdowns
- 6 13. Lack of fellow up and follow through
- 7 14. Technology deficiencies

8 The bottom line is that there is not strong agreement on what is important here at St. John's  
9 other than worship. Fortunately, your leaders have recognized this and engaged the congregation  
10 in this process to help everyone come closer to agreement as to the key priorities for St. John's as  
11 it heads into the future.

12 III  
13 PROGRAMS

14 1. **Adult Spiritual Growth**

15 We have already spoken pointedly about the key area of adult spiritual growth in a previous  
16 section. The Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod and its congregations are faced with a striking  
17 contradiction at this point in our history. We confess that the Bible is the Word of God, inerrant and  
18 inspired, the source of life and hope as the revealer of Jesus Christ, and the norm and standard for  
19 all doctrine and practice. Yet, the vast majority of our members are very limited in their biblical  
20 knowledge and understanding. The Bible is a book largely unused and unknown in the daily and  
21 weekly lives of many of our people. In a pagan culture, such as the one we are currently living in,  
22 having so few of our people diligently and regularly using the Scriptures in their lives is to put them  
23 and our synod at risk.

24 The focus on adult Bible studies, types provided, times offered, methods used and locations  
25 held needs to be expanded. Fortunately, you already have started down this path. But with only

26 8.7% of your confirmed members currently in study, a challenging future lies ahead.

27 The development of a sequential curriculum for your members would be helpful in advancing  
28 their biblical understanding and life practices to ever higher levels. In today's world, more than ever,  
29 Christians need and want to progress beyond an 8th grade Christian educational level (confirmation  
30 level). Once again, an intensified goal to encourage one another in such a way that all members go  
31 through the pastors' class of basic instruction would seem to be an appropriate place to begin.  
32 Consider this important as you plan for the future. This is one effort which can begin very quickly.



## 1 2. Worship

2       Worship, as you have just read, was ranked #1 in program priority and #1 in priority for the  
3 pastor's time by members, called workers and elected leaders. 78.9% of those surveyed stated that  
4 they found worship at St. John's "usually helpful" or "consistently inspiring." That is four percentage  
5 points above the norm for congregations that have engaged Parish Assistance.

6 During the four week survey, of those who did attend church,

- 7       13.8% attended all four Sundays
- 8       20.8% attended three of the four Sundays
- 9       25.9% attended two of the four Sundays
- 10      39.3% attended one of the four Sundays
- 11      59% did not attend at all in four weeks

12      In the chart below you will see a comparison between the percentage of members at each age  
13 group and the percentage of that age group that actually worshiped during the four week survey.  
14 Included is the percentage of that age in United States.

# Worship Analysis

15      Has anything changed in the last ten years? We took a look at worship attendance in 1989. In  
16 that year worship attendance averaged 469 souls per Sunday, 109 more than the average for 1999  
17 (360) even though the congregation is for all practical purposes the same size. That is a N~ drop  
18 in attendance in the past ten years. A significant change in member life patterns.

1 It raised a question in our minds. How many of the older members are shut out by steps even  
2 though there is a ramp to the church doors? How many of the younger families are turned away  
3 because of a lack of child care for either worship or Bible study?

4 One of the things we try to do when we worship over the weekend of our visit to think what  
5 it would be like for a young family with a couple of children, one in diapers, to visit your church.  
6 This is what we found. The first thing that happened is we accidentally drove by your church. The  
7 sign was small enough and there were so many churches in the area. We missed yours. Once we  
8 discovered our error, we found it surprisingly easy to find parking and were greeted warmly when  
9 we entered the worship center.

10 I looked for signs to indicate where the bathrooms were (an important item for parents with  
11 tiny children) but saw none. I asked about child care for our restless 2 year old but discovered there  
12 was none. I then asked if there was a nursery where I could go if my child needed to be taken out  
13 and was told it was through the door at the front of the church (in front of everyone). They did give  
14 me a bulletin but when I looked down the aisle there at first did not appear to be any open spaces (2  
15 minutes before the first service there was one pew end open in the center aisle and five on the left aisle  
16 and none on the right aisle.). Fortunately I noticed space on the left side. (No one helped me find a  
17 place.)

18 At the beginning of the worship we were all greeted very warmly and it set a nice tone for the  
19 worship. It was also helpful how the pastor gave clear directions at each point as to what to do next.  
20 Trouble came when my littlest one began to smell and I took her out. An usher helped me find the  
21 men's room, but once I got there, there was no changing table.

22 All went fine the rest of the service until the close of worship. Then I did not know what to do.  
23 Some people got up and left. Others stayed seated. Were we supposed to leave or not? Then I  
24 noticed the ushers but they just stood there and did not motion us to leave. People seemed to be  
25 leaving all over the place, yet many were remaining seated. Finally the ushers began ushering us out.  
26 People smiled and welcomed us on the way out. Since we were new, we were hoping to meet some  
27 folks but everyone just seemed to walk right out and keep right on going.

28 That is what it felt like as a young family coming to your worship on the day we were there.

### 29 3. **Child Discipleship**

30 The ministry to children is an extremely important part of the ministry of St. John's Lutheran  
31 Church. All of St. John's staff is involved with discipleship of children in some way or form. Of the  
32 seven full time called workers, five are teachers. The congregational survey which was to rank in

1 order of importance the work of the church listed, “Nurturing children with the Word of God”,  
2 second on the priority list. Even the members listing of how the pastors should spend their time  
3 listed teaching children second behind preparing sermons. Most of the budget of St. John’s is used  
4 to disciple children. 46% of the confirmations involved children.

5 During the last several years, approximately 20% of the souls at St. John’s are children. This  
6 is lower than the district average of 23% and many WELS congregations who are above 25%. There  
7 are 186 children. Of the 77 students at St. John’s Lutheran School 66 are from the congregation.  
8 The average Sunday School attendance is 45. This means that **the percent of children involved**  
9 **in the discipleship of children at St. John’s is only at 59%**. Of the eligible Sunday School  
10 children, 45% attend regularly. Moreover, of the eligible grade school children approximately 500/o  
11 attend the Lutheran elementary school. The conclusion which can be reached from these figures is  
12 that while the congregation feels that discipleship to children is very important, it is missing almost  
13 half of its children. **This is the largest gap we have seen.** This will need critical attention when you  
14 establish your vision for the future.

#### 15 The Lutheran Elementary School

16 St. John’s Lutheran School has been an integral part of the ministry of this church for almost  
17 50 years. Included in its history are several starts and stops prior to 1952. This may indicate some  
18 weakness in support by the congregation as a whole for Christian education. Yet today, St. John’s  
19 is the only Christian elementary school in the immediate area surrounded by many churches. Your  
20 Lutheran Elementary School fills an important ministry niche in the community and has attracted a  
21 number of young families to the community and the church. It appears to be a tool with a lot of  
22 future potential for reaching new families.

23 God has richly blessed St. John’s Lutheran Church and School. In the pulse groups the school  
24 was consistently listed as one of the top blessings of the congregation. The teaching staff is very  
25 optimistic as indicated on their surveys. The present staff works well together in a spirit of Christian  
26 purpose and love. St. John’s is blessed with the leadership of a young, energetic, dedicated, and  
27 spirit filled principal. The school parents and congregation can feel confident in his leadership.  
28 Supportive parents and volunteers are blessings which were noted on the parent surveys and  
29 interviews. The faculty is working hard to improve the quality of education with curriculum study  
30 and the purchase of new texts. The availability of a school secretary is an important asset in today’s  
31 school. Several technological improvements have been made in the school with the addition of  
32 computers, internet access, video projector, and a digital camera. Having a technology coordinator  
33 is another special blessing. With the use of the Title I program help is being given to a limited

1 number of God's special children. The students are involved with the worship services on a regular  
2 basis. The faculty noted the support for the school by the congregation as a special blessing. Finally,  
3 the visibility of the teachers in the congregational and worship life is another blessing.

4 Through the pulse groups and interviews several issues or concerns surfaced. The facility is  
5 undersized, broken, restricting enrollment, and simply not meeting the needs of a contemporary  
6 educational program. This point was made first and often among the leaders, parents, and many  
7 congregational members. The lack of proper ventilation is breaking building code requirements for  
8 a school and spreading illness. There also is a frustration among the parents and staff over a lack of  
9 structure and organization in the school because of the unclear lines of authority, communication,  
10 and responsibility. This is directly related to the lack of position descriptions for the athletic director,  
11 technology coordinator, secretary and an operations manual for the faculty and school board.

12 While school public relations is improving, some individuals felt that more could be done to  
13 highlight the unique blessings of St. John's Lutheran School in the community and the congregation.  
14 Inadequate administration time is provided for the principal. The WELS parish education board  
15 recommends one half day of administration for each 100 students. At the present only four hours  
16 each week is available opposite the religion classes taught by the pastors. Moreover, this scheduling  
17 restricts the principal's teaching of the Word of God to his class. Of the 77 children enrolled in the  
18 LES, 11 are from churches other than St. John's and 1 is unchurched. This brings the percent of  
19 enrolled member children to around 50%. The issue here is that St. John's is investing much of its  
20 financial and personnel resources into a ministry that only affects half of its children. A very focused,  
21 long term effort needs to be maintained in educating the members and parents of St. John's in the  
22 benefits of a full-time Christian education. The argument that "If it was good enough for me it is  
23 good enough for my child." doesn't work in today's more communicative and less stable world.  
24 Moreover, very little outreach is being accomplished through the LES.

25 Another issue is that St. John's offers no child care or preschool for its children and the  
26 community. It is located in a prime area close to the down town and municipal buildings. At its  
27 present site it is ideally located for an early childhood/pre-school ministry. Concern also has been  
28 expressed over the fact that St. John's has no part or full-time custodian to provide regular repairs  
29 and maintenance.

30 Finally, while the costs of sending a child to your school should not be so high as to restrict  
31 a family from sending a child to St. John's, the current cost sharing done by the parents through  
32 school fees is exceptionally low in comparison to what other WELS school's are finding helpful  
33 for sustaining a quality program. These low partnership fees appear to restrict the growth of the

1 quality of Christian education offered at St. John's Lutheran School while at the same time  
2 restricting other ministries of the congregation because the congregation is doing so much to help  
3 the parents.

#### 4 Sunday School

5 The Sunday School is a blessing to St. John's Lutheran Church. The pastors' and principal's  
6 leadership is to be commended. The new "Christ Light" religion materials for instruction is being  
7 well received. Regular staff meetings are being held to teach and train the staff. Attempts are being  
8 made to bridge the perceived gap between the LES and the Sunday School. The involvement of  
9 the principal helps this and so does the joint day school! Sunday School Christmas Eve service.

10 Several concerns were raised about the Sunday School. While the average attendance at  
11 Sunday School was reported to be 45, the day we observed it was 30. This is approximately 50%  
12 of the potential not counting LES children. All of the children of the congregation should either  
13 be in the Sunday School or the LES or both. The Sunday School parents should be modeling the  
14 importance of continued Christian growth by attending Bible class opposite Sunday School. Many  
15 parents appear to drop off their children from Sunday School but not stay for worship or Bible  
16 study. Some parents expressed concern that the public school children did not have enough time  
17 for Christian education compared to the previous Saturday School.

18 Little effort is apparently made to connect the Sunday School children to the Youth  
19 Program. All of the Sunday School children attend public school and have little connection to the  
20 church for spiritual growth and development. For many children at St. John's the LES or Sunday  
21 School are terminal spiritual educational programs.

#### 22 Youth Discipleship

23 The discipleship of young people of post confirmation age is extremely important. With St.  
24 Croix Lutheran High School almost one hour a way, commuting to a Christian high school is  
25 almost impossible for many. For the members of St. John's, St. Croix is a boarding school and  
26 requires a high level of commitment and support. Therefore a majority of the high school age  
27 students are attending public school. For them Sunday worship and Young People's Society  
28 (YPS) their only opportunities for spiritual growth.  
29 St. John's is blessed in having approximately 50 young people available for the YPS and  
30 Bible study. Approximately 50% of those young people are graduates of St. John's Lutheran  
31 School. The YPS has enthusiastic, spirit filled leaders who want to have young people grow in  
32 their love for the Lord and to have good Christian fun.

1 Another important blessing is that the congregation and pastors realize the importance of  
2 nurturing high school age young people. This was demonstrated on a number of surveys. Many  
3 of the young people continue to live and work in the areas. The surveys indicate this to be about  
4 50%. This is a blessing in that this provides opportunity to reach them.

5 There is still much to be done. The attendance at YPS is only about 20% of the potential. 6 Often only 10  
young people show up for activities. The activities are irregular and on Sundays.

7 St. Croix students can't attend. There is no weekly Bible study for young people to let God speak  
8 to their struggles and issues. Because of the lack of room in the school and church, they have no  
9 place to meet for relaxation and talk. Other churches with active young peoples groups are pulling  
10 the members of St. John's to them. Their friends from other churches invite them to their church's  
11 activities.

12 An advantage St. John's has that is seldom seen any more is that the community of Red Wing  
13 sets Wednesday evenings aside for church activities with young people. Practices are cutoff Some  
14 teachers even give less homework. Many area churches have several activities for young people  
15 on Wednesday evenings. The blessing is that this time exists. The downside is that St. John's has  
16 adult Bible classes scheduled for Wednesdays with no time or place for young people to meet.  
17 This is a crucial opportunity lost due to no available facility.

#### 18 **Vacation Bible School**

19 While the attendance at Vacation Bible School was not available, several exciting activities  
20 are going on. First, St. John's is conducting a Vacation Bible School. Canvassing was done to  
21 encourage families who are not of the church to utilize the VBS. The new material from  
22 Northwestern Publishing House was viewed as excellent. The Vacation Bible School appears to  
23 have significant potential as a tool to reach out into the community and as well as to nurture your  
24 own members.

#### 25 4. **Outreach**

26 As God's people, we understand that we have been saved by grace. This simple life-giving  
27 message is our treasure, a treasure which begs to be shared with others. Do we really have on our  
28 heart and mind the dire condition of those who are outside the realm of God's saving grace?  
29 We have all kinds of ways of softening the message such as 'They're lost,' 'they go to the  
30 other place,' or 'they're really going to be hot.' The straight truth is "THEY GO TO HELL!"  
31 They will live in eternal separation from God gnashing their teeth in unending punishment for their  
32 sin.

1 We have the rest of the story. Jesus Christ paid for all sins through his suffering, death and  
2 resurrection. Filled with the true joy of this message and really appreciating the lostness of the lost,  
3 God's people cannot help but share the glorious gospel message whenever and wherever they are.

4 Your church in its downtown location sits in the midst of a ghetto of churches. At one time s you may have felt  
that Red Wing was highly churched and you may have been right. But no more.

6 A recent religious survey indicates that between 25% and 31% of the population of Red  
7 Wing is unchurched. The statistics we were given indicates that you have as few as 20 to 30 names  
8 on your prospect list. With that many unchurched it would seem reasonable to expect that with  
9 some outreach efforts into the community you could develop a prospect list of more than 200 so  
10 that you could start a regular mailing to these people with the cheaper rate of a bulk mailing  
11 permit.

12 Another very interesting statistic we were given is that in the congregation there are 141  
13 people "cautiously interested" in getting involved in outreach. There were 60 that indicated they  
14 would be "available" if some efforts were started and eight are "ready to sign up." That is an  
15 excellent response. The faithful preaching of the gospel over the years is producing fruit.

16 Now those willing servants need to be organized and directed into some specific efforts from  
17 canvassing to organizing a Friendship Sunday, to follow-up calls on visitors, to bringing people  
18 to the adult instruction class, and to help assimilate new members into the congregation so that  
19 they don't come in the "front door" and go right out the "back door."

20 Part of the careful harvesting is care of the crop taken in. There is need to help people  
21 become connected and feel a part of the congregation. We know from experience that every  
22 member needs to be connected regularly in at least two points to remain active: worship and one  
23 other group activity such as a Bible class, service projects or fellowship events. We have found  
24 the need for this has grown across the country in recent years. It used to be that people wanted  
25 to know what you taught first, then how much you care. Today, people don't care how much you  
26 know until they know how much you care.

27 St. John's has been placed in Red Wing for God's reason — to seek and to save the lost.  
28 This focus is currently very weak on all levels of the congregation.

## 1        **5. Fellowship and Group Life**

2        For the leaders and very active members of St. John there are probably sufficient  
3 opportunities to enjoy the company of fellow Christians, make new Christian friends and  
4 experience mutual Christian encouragement. That is especially true if the member is involved with  
5 the elementary school, likes to sing, appreciates the Special Communion service or the Ladies  
6 Guild. The last two opportunities would seem more likely to attract the senior citizens. **But for**  
7 **those outside the core of actively involved at St. John, for new members and young adults,**  
8 **St. John appears to have little or no activities or groups.**

9        The information returned to us indicated that only about 160 members or 19% of the  
10 communicant membership involved in some type of service role or task and only about 50  
11 members or 6% involved in some type of fellowship activity. This would appear to leave the back  
12 door wide open and as a matter of fact, over the past five years St. John “released” 73  
13 communicants from membership. The high number of members who are not active at St. John’s  
14 also may indicate there is no place for them in the life of the congregation.

15        At St. John’s about 25 people sing in the senior choir and another 15 in the junior choir.  
16 Seven sing in a chapel choir for funerals but those could well be some of the same ones who sing  
17 in the senior choir. About 40 attend the monthly Special Communion service and fellowship time  
18 every month and about 65 ladies hold membership in the Ladies Guild with an average monthly  
19 attendance of 40.

20        New groups should not just be started for the sake of having new groups, but you will find  
21 that vibrant, growing congregations have many as many as seven for every 100 people in worship.

22 Leaders of the congregation need to be attentive to the needs and interests of the membership  
23 especially the newer members. It is a fact that NEW GROUPS ATTRACT NEW MEMBERS.  
24 Groups need to be organized around other principles than simply age, gender and marital status.  
25 Groups often have short life cycles; they flourish and then fade as the need or interest that created  
26 them becomes less apparent or as people move on to other stages of their lives. Such groups  
27 should be allowed to die while new ones take their place.

28        From the geographical location of Red Wing it would seem that bus tours to our synodical  
29 schools might be a viable option, perhaps trips to interesting sites, perhaps a retreat or even sports  
30 camps might involve new people an interesting way.



1 Perhaps it would benefit the congregation to study some of the differences in generations in  
2 America to better understand the concept and importance of group life in the church. Take a good  
3 look at how difficult it is to start a new group. There is a perception at St. John's that every new  
4 event, activity or group needs to be approved by the pastors or church council before beginning  
5 and that it is not easy to get such approval. Such a perception can stifle creativity. In this arena,  
6 our Christian freedom allows for some of the amazing creativity that our members have as a gift  
7 from God. Leaders need to create the "climate of permission" that allows this to occur.

8 What makes this issue important is that FELLOWSHIP is one of the three ways in which  
9 people are assimilated into their church. Together with Bible study and service, fellowship is the  
10 "glue" needed to bond Christians to one another in the relationship of support and accountability  
11 Jesus had in mind for his Church.

## 12 **6. Financial Stewardship**

13 We heard repeatedly a great concern about the area of finances at St. John and well it should  
14 be. In the past 20 years offerings have increased quite a bit but, as indicated earlier, they have  
15 fallen 11% below the rate of inflation giving St. John's 15% less spending power than you had 20  
16 years ago. The members of St. John are actually returning to the Lord a smaller portion of their  
17 blessings than they did 20 years ago. In the past five years total giving only increased by about 3%.  
18 That should be a cause for great concern.

19 Per communicant giving at St. John is about \$45.00 below the average in the Red Wing  
20 conference and nearly \$300.00 below the per communicant average in the Wisconsin Synod. We  
21 acknowledge that averages can be deceiving in some cases, however it would appear that God has  
22 not slighted the city of Red Wing and particularly the members of St. John when it comes to his  
23 blessings.

24 From the statistical information that we received the Red Wing area has an Average  
25 Household Income of \$55,000 We counted about 430 households in St. John congregation. That  
26 means the total income of all households at St. John is \$23,650,000. The households of St. John  
27 are currently giving about 1.5% of their income for the work of the Lord. Just dream for a moment  
28 what St. John could do if they received 10% of the household income. What would St. John be  
29 able to do with a budget of \$2,365,000? I trust you remember that believers in the Old Testament  
30 were commanded to give 10% of all the Lord gave them. The Apostle Paul tells us in Galatians  
31 4 that in the Old Testament God treated his people as children under the law. Now we are adult  
32 sons and daughters in the kingdom and heirs of eternal life. If 10% was the standard for children  
33 what do you think we as adults should be doing?

1 We need improvement throughout our synod as synod-wide we are averaging about 3% of  
2 income, but even in that scenario, what could St. John do if their offerings were double what they  
3 are now?

4 Even as we heard the great concern about the financial situation. We also heard that there  
5 has only been about one really thorough financial stewardship program in the last eight years.  
6 Right now the Lord is giving St. John's congregation an excellent opportunity to apply clear law  
7 and gospel to their financial stewardship program. The Forward jt~ Christ Thankrffering material  
8 has some of the very best material completely laid out for you that has ever been developed in the  
9 WELS. It is a complete stewardship program to help raise the level of giving in every  
10 congregation. We would strongly recommend that a stewardship committee be formed and a  
11 thorough study of this material begin as soon as possible. When the committee has completed its  
12 study, the group could be broadened so that an every member visitation in the homes or a personal  
13 interview at the church with every family could be completed in the next year. After that an annual  
14 stewardship program should be used in the various forms suggested in the manual.

15 In our interviews we heard about your Trust Fund which was only started in recent years but  
16 has already received a bequest in excess of \$600,000. This is a wonderful blessing from a faithful  
17 Christian who wanted the blessings the Lord had given him to be a blessing for perpetuity for his  
18 church. That is certainly the privilege of every Christian to leave a final gift in his will and some  
19 general directions as to how it should be used. However without ongoing stewardship training,  
20 it is very easy for the membership and especially the church council to sit and look covetously at  
21 that money that is 'is just sitting there.' Well that money, properly managed and the income properly  
22 distributed, could be a blessing for St. John congregation for years to come. It could perhaps  
23 provide scholarships for young people preparing for full time work in the church or help with a  
24 building program or something of that nature. Perhaps others, seeing how well it is managed  
25 would be inclined to add some of their life blessings to it and the day could well come when the  
26 income from your endowment would fund a ministry in your congregation that would otherwise  
27 not be possible. That should be the goal of an endowment/trust fund. We would recommend that  
28 you have your WELS Gift Planning Counselor come back to your congregation again and review  
29 some of these points to help everyone keep them fresh in their mind.

30 In general, the area of financial stewardship at St. John needs attention. It all starts with  
31 people being in the Word and an improvement in the whole area of Adult Spiritual Growth. But  
32 improvement in financial stewardship isn't automatic even with more people attending worship  
33 and Bible classes. Remember Martin Luther spoke about three conversions, first the heart, then

1 the head and finally the pocketbook. God's word has many references to the stewardship of  
2 possessions. These need to be evangelically applied to the hearts and lives of God's people.

### 3 **7. Ministry Beyond St. John's**

4 In our interviews we also heard the concern that offerings to synod had been cut. Indeed that  
5 was the case. In 1996 the mission offerings were cut from \$42,750 the previous year to \$19,600.  
6 This is certainly a dramatic cut. However, we did notice that 1995 ended with a financial deficit.  
7 But 1996 ended with a plus balance and the mission offerings took another cut to 15,666. 1998  
8 ended with a substantial surplus but mission offerings only went up to \$25,000.

9 A principle that St. John needs to realize is that it is very hard for individual members to rise  
10 above the habits of their congregation. The scripture clearly teaches, "Whoever sows sparingly will  
11 reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously" (2 Cor. 9:8). If a  
12 congregation only gives to missions what is left over after the other things are taken care of at  
13 home, then leaders ought not be surprised to see the individual members doing likewise. At one  
14 point in recent history, St. John was directing about 15% of its offerings to ministries beyond the  
15 congregation. What a great model that was and certainly a level that needs to be reached for once  
16 again. Hopefully, when the whole area of financial stewardship is attended to as outlined in the  
17 previous section this concern will also be resolved.

### 18 **8. Ministry to and by Seniors**

19 Seniors are a large part of the community and of your congregation 27.3% of the congregation  
20 is over 60 years of age. In five years that number could move up to 40%. The seniors have been  
21 and continue to be one of the most faithful parts of the congregation. They have much to give in  
22 the areas of faith, knowledge, experience, time, skills and nurturing. They are the bulk of those  
23 attending Bible class and worship services. Seniors are doing visitation work with shut-ins. Many  
24 seniors are strong supporters of the Lutheran elementary school as indicated in the pulse groups,  
25 the surveys, and in the interviews. Seniors are deeply involved in the ministry to shut ins and other  
26 nurturing services including volunteer work in the school. The church is located close to several  
27 senior housing facilities. The most well attended Bible class is the senior class at Jordan Towers  
28 on Wednesday mornings at 10:00 AM. Finally, the special communion service in the church  
29 basement has been identified by many people as a blessing to seniors. And this is only a beginning  
30 of what could be.

31 There are several concerns though about ministry to and by seniors at St. John's Lutheran  
32 Church. First, the facility is not seniors friendly. It has too many steps, the rest rooms are in the  
33 basement, the seniors have limited places in the facility where they can serve, and hearing is rather

1 difficult in the church if there are other noises like children in the building. Again, as in some of  
2 the other areas, the organization and leadership by and for seniors is deficient. Considerable  
3 concern was voiced in the interviews over the frequency of shut-in visitation. At this point  
4 as we listened to you there appears to be more of this done than is perceived. A church office that  
5 tracks this work by all involved would be able to provide a needed communication of what is  
6 happening in this important care area.  
7 More could be done by and for this group with the proper training and organization. The  
8 senior group has a lot to offer. They are underutilized at St. Johns's. With the growth of the senior  
9 population, it is and will be even more so in the future, very important for St. John's to grow an  
10 active, strong senior ministry. Seniors need to be ministered to, but more importantly they need  
11 to be given opportunities to minister to others. Their life experience and exposure to God's Word  
12 have led them to a strong faith. Senior members could also be organizing and running the Bible  
13 classes.

14  
15

#### IV CHALLENGES

16 After looking back over this report, there are three key challenges we see St. John facing as  
17 it heads into the future. They are valid because they express God's will and, if there is anything  
18 we have learned as consultants it is this, God blesses those who pursue his purposes in their lives  
19 and congregations. The three goals or challenges we place before you are to:

20 **TO GROW** - to grow spiritually both as individual members and as a family of God. To so  
21 involve yourselves in God's word that he will, as promised, transform and empower  
22 your lives. All signs at St. John's with a few exceptions point to spiritual anemia as the  
23 most critical factor in the slow, steady drift that has so many concerned.

24 **TO GROW TOGETHER** - to grow together around Christ's purposes for your church. To set  
25 aside the personal and private agendas that so divide and focus on the purposes for  
26 which Christ has placed you in Red Wing.

27 **TO GROW FORWARD IN CHRIST** - to equip St. John's for the next generation. To equip  
28 St. John's members for the ministry God has given to all and to equip St. John's  
29 congregation with the facilities it needs to continue its historic ministry to the  
30 community of Red Wing in a new era.

31 We feel that God has uniquely prepared you for this spiritual and facility effort at this time  
32 in your history. He has given you outstanding called workers who work and serve well together

1 — who are truly a team for the Lord. Strong leadership is key in times of need. He has also moved  
2 you to undertake this long range planning process at just this point in time. And at the same time,  
3 he has caused serious questions to be raised about the tools (facilities) needed for the future work  
4 of your congregation in the Red Wing area.

## 5 **NEXT STEPS**

6 As you spend time in God's word in the months to come, pray for his Spirit to take over  
7 your hearts in ever increasing measure that you may have the wisdom and energy for the work the  
8 Lord has given you. Always remember: what the Lord wants to accomplish through you in the  
9 Valmy area and around the world is what's important. Keep your eyes on his goals and purposes.  
10 In fact, the total goal of this planning process should be to become the best servants of Jesus and  
it his purposes as you can be.

12 The next steps in the planning process will be our return on Friday, December 1, 2000, at  
13 7:00 P.M. to hold an open forum for all members on this report. On that night we will highlight  
14 this report and then receive your corrections, comments, questions and reactions. The goal that  
15 night is to reach agreement that this report as amended by you that night, accurately describes St.  
16 John as it exists today. This will then be your starting point for planning for the future. On the very  
17 next day, December 2nd (Saturday), we will conduct an all day seminar for all the members of St.  
18 John's, men and women. This seminar will lay the biblical and conceptual foundation for the next  
19 phase of your planning, Phase III, mission and vision setting. We will begin to address the question  
20 of what and how should Christians address a future they cannot see together with how do we  
21 make adjustments to bring our ministry into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

22 In Phase III the entire congregation will have an opportunity to become involved in setting  
23 the course you feel will best serve God's purposes as you head into this century. We will hope to  
24 involve the entire membership and leadership in clarifying the mission God has for St. John's in  
25 the era into which it is now moving. We will gather also from the leaders their vision of the future  
26 and submit a comprehensive set of recommendations from your consultants. The vision of the  
27 members, the input from the leaders, and the recommendations from the consultants will then go  
28 to a chosen task force who will actually put on paper a vision (a description) of what the  
29 congregation should look like programmatically and operationally six years from now. Once the  
30 congregation has publicly agreed on its goals and priorities, your consultants will help your leaders  
31 to assess any appropriate changes in your organizational structure and the staffing needs which  
32 your adopted vision will require. Those two things will be two of the last three steps of Phase III.

1 The last step in Phase III is a half day seminar for all elected leaders and called workers on how  
2 to lead transitions in God's Kingdom without giving Satan playtime. In Phase IV, the consultants  
3 will help the leaders to develop the strategies and action plans necessary to provide the greatest  
4 potential for completing the work our Father in heaven has set before you.

5 This report concludes the analysis portion (Phase II) of this planning process. We wish to  
6 thank the many, many people who graciously worked hard to prepare materials and enable the  
7 analysis to take place. If we missed or got some things wrong, we will look to those who know  
8 to clarify and correct when we return to you on Friday, December 2nd~ It is our prayer that this first  
9 step (with all the data the congregation now has developed) can serve as the starting point for a  
10 concerted effort to enhance the ministry which your congregation renders to its members and its  
11 community in Jesus' name. Don't forget the key seminar on December 2nd•

12 It has truly been a privilege for us to work with and meet so many of you. Special thanks  
13 needs to be given to the many individuals who gave of their time to gather and tabulate  
14 information, organize the on site visit and share their insights in the interviews. May the Lord use  
15 these findings to advance his work in your midst.

16 "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may  
17 overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" Romans 15:13.

18 **TO GOD ALONE BE GLORY!**