



# Ministry Planning Optimizer

Good Shepherd Lutheran, Downers Grove, IL

Person responsible for the completion of this Optimizer:

Pastor Jon Bergemann

Key partners in completing the Optimizer: Ministry Coordinating Council, Women's Ministry

Completing the components of this Ministry Planning Optimizer will help you:

1. compose your proposed Ministry Plan
2. develop general consensus on its contents
3. acquire voter approval of your proposed Ministry Plan
4. implement your ministry goals purposefully and pragmatically

**URGENT: Read and discuss the book TRACTION (see final page of this document).**

From the Diagnostic Analysis – Date entered: 10-28-2020

Strengths on which to Build	Significant Issues to Address
1. God's Pure and Powerful Word	1. Your Members' Spiritual Health
2. Your Core of Committed Members	2. Your Challenging Transition
3. Your Lutheran Academy	3. Your Academy's Future
4. Your Emerging PMM Program	4. Prioritize Community Outreach
5. Your Organized Women's Ministry	5. Staffing to Maintain or Grow
6. Your Pastor, Faculty, and Support Staff	

## 1. **Core Values** (what you care about the most, your guiding principles)

Date entered/revised: 9-18-2021

Use the Clarifying Core Values materials (provided by Crossroads) or gather with leaders to identify your congregation's actual (i.e., authentic) and aspirational core values. List your four or five most highly ranked core values which currently influence decision making.

- ❖ An uncompromising commitment to the Word of God as the source, guide, and strength for all we do
- ❖ Vibrant worship which seeks to balance reverence and relevance
- ❖ Equipping all members (both men and women, youth to adult) to use their gifts in service to God and others
- ❖ Fostering fellowship which nurtures a community of Christian love and trust
- ❖ Christian education

**Aspirational Values** (biblical values which you hope to acquire in greater measure in the future)

*Embedded in your ministry goals*

- ❖ Creating a comprehensive culture of outreach and evangelism which focuses on sharing law and gospel with the unchurched in every aspect of our ministries
- ❖ Reclaiming the strayed and straying from all ages of membership
- ❖ Discipleship opportunities for all stages of life
- ❖ Embracing creative change which recognizes what must never change (the message and mission), what may change (everything else), and what needs to change (anything that gets in the way of the message and mission).

## 2. **Core Mission** (your central focus, cause, passion, why you exist)

Date entered/revised: 9-18-2021

This is what your congregation is all about. It's best if this is stated as briefly as possible (three to seven words is ideal) so that it's memorable. If you have a longer mission statement which you want to preserve, make this your congregation's compelling motto or slogan.

- ❖ **To grow in the Word and to go with the Word**

3. **10-Year Target(s)** (what you are aiming to become, with God's blessing, by 2031)

Date entered/revised: 9-18-2021

This is your challenging long-term goal – what you intend to become – that everyone is working toward. Use one or two statements and strive to make this target crystal clear (i.e., measurable, if possible).

[Good Shepherd is] A gospel centered community that actively gathers around the Word and intentionally goes with the Word to our surrounding community, focused on using every resource we have to equip the saved and ~~find~~ and evangelize the lost.

- ❖ By God's grace, in 10 years, we will have expanded and enhanced our facilities for excellence, added staffing positions for growth, engaged 80% of our members in worship, Bible study, and service, average 400 or more in attendance at worship, and created intentional strategies in both church and academy to reach out to the lost and to strengthen the found.

Clarification (Add some bullet points if clarification is needed on your 10-Year Target. Make these measurable, if possible.) *Bullet points created from above paragraph...*

- ❖ Organize and align all of our ministries and members in a common vision, goal, and plan (creating intentional strategies in both church and academy to reach out to the lost and to strengthen the found) *We are working to accomplish this through our ministry planning process and by drafting a clear and compelling ministry plan.*
- ❖ Acquire additional facilities, especially a multipurpose center, to support growth
- ❖ Acquire additional staff, especially an additional pastor or staff minister, to support growth
- ❖ An average of 400 or more in attendance at worship
- ❖ 80% of all members is/are engaged in worship
- ❖ 80% of all members participate in Bible studies
- ❖ 80% of all members is/are actively involved in ministry

4. **Focus Questions** (marketing strategy for gathering/growing audiences for the Gospel)

Date entered/revised: 9-18-2021

A. Who is your target audience(s) within your ministry area (your “target market/the list”)?

**\*Highest priority**

❖ Families with children

B. What makes your congregation stand out (your “three uniques”)?

❖ Centered on God’s Word with theologically sound called workers (i.e., **confessional Lutheran congregation**)

❖ Biblical balance of law and gospel

❖ Member Ministry Program

❖ Christ-centered PreK – 8th Grade education

❖ Talented number of musicians

❖ Engaging presentation of Word in preaching

C. What is the path you promote (your “proven process” which could be diagramed and displayed) for connecting people to Christ and helping them to grow, serve, and witness?

❖ Outreach/Online Presence/Academy/Worship Guest (Initial Relationship) ⇒ Grow and Farm Prospect and Straying Lists ⇒ Bible Information Class ⇒ Membership ⇒ SHAPED class ⇒ ongoing worship, Bible study, service, witness

D. What can people – both members and prospects – count on you to deliver every time (your “guarantee”)?

❖ Message of salvation by grace alone through faith in Jesus

❖ Value and care for each soul we make contact with

❖ A spirit of hospitality and Gospel-generated joy

5. **3-Year Picture, 1-Year Plan, and Quarterly Goals** (aiming at your 10-year target)

Date entered/revised: 9-18-2021

3-Year Picture – what your ministry will look like in three years

1-Year Plan – what you will accomplish the first year

Quarterly Goals – what you will accomplish during each quarter (establish quarterly)

Picture what you are working to become and/or accomplish (with God's blessing) so that what you envision inspires others to work with you. Consider your congregation's strengths, challenges, and ministry context as you plan how best to gather and grow audiences for the Gospel and pursue Christ's make-disciples mission. Commit to making quantifiable progress every quarter as you "*live in a 90-day world*" (Gino Wickman – Traction).

**Whenever possible, design your goals to be measurable.**

A. **Facility Expansion** Primary Owner: \_\_\_\_\_ (person or position)

**10-Year Target: Construct additional facilities, especially a multipurpose center, to support growth.**

**3-Year Picture**

- We have made key decisions regarding facility expansion and have started construction.

**1-Year Plan**

- Begin to establish scope of future facility expansion.
- Begin facility enhancement planning.
- Collect, analyze, summarize, and share the findings of all available information relative to past planning efforts.
- Validate with the Village of Downers Grove what construction is possible.

**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter**

- Determine position description of Facility Expansion Task Force.
- Identify individuals who would be assets on a Facility Expansion Task Force.
- Establish the Facility Expansion Task Force.

B. **Staffing** Primary Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

**10-Year Target: Acquire additional staff, especially an additional pastor or staff minister, to support growth.**

**3-Year Picture**

- We have studied our staffing needs and filled needed leadership positions.

**1-Year Plan**

- Prepare position descriptions to clarify roles and expectations.
- Decide which additional positions are needed and by when.
- If timing is right, call and/or hire additional staff.

**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter**

- Evaluate our current and future staffing needs.
- Make the case for adding to staff, e.g. Executive Director/Business Manager.

C. **Worship** Primary Owner: Worship Committee

**10-Year Target: We have an average of 400 or more onsite attendance in worship and 80% of all members is engaged in onsite or online worship.**

“engaged” = participating in an average of 75% of available worship opportunities.

**3-Year Picture**

- We have an average of 225 or more in attendance at worship.
- 50% of all members is/are engaged in worship.
- The new hymnal has been implemented.

**1-Year Plan**

- We have an average of 180 or more in attendance at worship.
- 38% of all members is/are engaged in worshiping.
- We have recovered numerically from the negative influence of the pandemic.
- Determine strategy for acquiring and introducing new hymnal
- Conduct congregational seminar on the principals and various practices of worship
- Begin study among worship leaders on blended worship styles

### 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter

- Begin to track and report monthly on average worship attendance and the percentage of soul membership that is engaged in worship.
- Begin to outline what additional specific actions will be taken (who will do what by when) to grow worship participation in the coming months and years.
- Research costs and steps needed to acquire new hymnal

## D. **Bible Study Participation** Primary Owner: Spiritual Growth Coordinator(s)

**10-Year Target: 80% of all communicant members participate in Bible studies.**  
“participate” = attending, in person or online, an organized, church sponsored group study.

### 3-Year Picture

- 25% of all communicant members participate/s in Bible studies.

### 1-Year Plan

- Strategies to grow Bible study participation are designed and implemented.
- 15% of all communicant members participate/s in Bible studies.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter

- Review past and current Bible study opportunities, draw conclusions, and report findings.
- Begin to track and report monthly on Bible study participation.
- Begin to outline what additional specific actions will be taken (who will do what by when) to grow Bible study participation in the coming months and years.

## E. **Member Ministry** Primary Owner: Personal Member Ministry Coordinator and Core Team

**10-Year Target: 80% of all members (including teens and young adults) are actively involved in ministry.**

“actively involved in ministry” = advancing mission of congregation by using gifts in church or in community

### 3-Year Picture

- 80% of our communicant members have enrolled in our PMM SHAPED classes by the end of 2024.
- The mentality (where it’s needed) has shifted from *“I’ve done my time”* to *“I’ll joyfully serve my Savior all my days for the good of his kingdom.”*

- 50% of all members (including teens and young adults) are actively involved in ministry.
- We have designed service opportunities for all stages of life.

#### 1-Year Plan

- 30% of our communicant members have enrolled in our PMM SHAPED classes by the end of 2022.
- 30% of all members (including teens and young adults) are actively involved in ministry.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter

- Determine what percentage of members is currently actively involved in ministry.
- Begin to track and report monthly on the number of members who are actively involved in ministry.
- Begin to outline what additional specific actions will be taken (who will do what by when) to increase the percentage of people who are actively involved in ministry.

### F. **Tracking Systems** Primary Owner: Mission Resources

#### 3-Year Picture

- We have developed and implemented effective systems to capture and track in-person attendance, online attendance, and the straying. (“straying” = absent from worship for 4 weeks)
- We have enhanced communication at every level so that it is timely and relevant to various identified audiences.

#### 1-Year Plan

- We have evaluated and designed effective tracking systems for in-person attendance, online attendance, and the straying.
- The tracking data is shared monthly with the MCC and quarterly with the congregation.
- Determine how best to measure progress with enhancing communication, design enhancement efforts, and implement them.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter

- Begin to explore (by doing research and identifying viable options) how best to track in-person attendance, online attendance, and the straying.
- Determine how to, then evaluate where communication is lacking at every level.
- Determine how best to measure progress with enhancing communication.
- Determine capabilities of current software to complete the above.

G. **Organizational Structure** Primary Owner: Task Force (possibly Guiding Coalition)

**3-Year Picture**

- We focus on embracing creative change which recognizes what must never change (the message and mission), what may change (everything else), and what must change (anything that gets in the way of the message and mission).
- We have reviewed and modified (as needed) our organizational structure.
- The MCC has transitioned from primarily *controlling* to primarily *facilitating* ministry.
- Guided by Scripture, we are utilizing females in more ministry opportunities.
- We have positioned area-of-ministry teams of men and women (worship, outreach, etc.) to assist with carrying out the congregation's ministry goals.
- We have identified, recruited, and equipped new leaders.

**1-Year Plan**

- The key questions on change (i.e., must never, may, must) are reviewed annually when the ministry plan is updated.
- In view of our approved ministry plan, our organizational structure is analyzed and proposed changes are brought to the MCC and voters for review/approval.
- Leaders have explored the question, "Are women fully enabled and encouraged to use their tremendous gifts and energies in biblically appropriate roles (here at Good Shepherd) as we work together to accomplish God's will?"
- We have thought through how best to form teams of men and women to assist with carrying out the congregation's ministry goals.
- We have new, young leaders positioned to serve in various roles.

**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter**

- The MCC discusses the differences and commits to transitioning from primarily *controlling* to primarily *facilitating* ministry.
- Identify Bible study materials to educate membership on the Biblical principles and applications of the roles of men and women.
- Form task force to review current organizational structure and begin to study new structure possibilities.

H. **G.S. Lutheran Academy** Primary Owner: School Committee

**10-Year Target:**

**3-Year Picture**

- We are intentional with taking steps to ensure the viability of our Academy.
- We see the benefits of our school harvest strategy with 20% of non-member families becoming a part of our church family.
- We have \_\_ students enrolled in our Academy (\_\_ in K-3 to K-5, \_\_ in grades 1-8).

**1-Year Plan**

- We have brainstormed on identifying additional steps to take to ensure the viability of our Academy.
- Our harvest strategy has been designed and implemented, and we are tracking the number of non-member families that join our congregation.
- We have \_\_ students enrolled in our Academy (\_\_ in K-3 to K-5, \_\_ in grades 1-8).

**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter**

- The harvest strategy is designed and implemented.
- We consistently track and report on the number of non-member families that join our congregation through our Academy.
- Solicit job descriptions from WELS congregations with female principals/administrators.
- Study alternate models of school administration for multi-site campuses.

I. **Outreach** Primary Owner: Outreach Coordinators

**3-Year Picture**

- We have created a comprehensive culture of outreach and evangelism which focuses on sharing law and gospel with the unchurched in every aspect of our ministries (and lives).

**1-Year Plan**

- We annually design and implement a well-defined and comprehensive outreach strategy with goals and measurements.
- We are working on creating a comprehensive culture of outreach and evangelism.

**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter**

- Define what a comprehensive culture of outreach and evangelism looks like and how you will know if you are being successful.

## J. Shepherding

Primary Owner: Shepherding Coordinators

### 3-Year Picture

- We are consistently reaching out to our straying members as soon as they begin to stray (i.e., after they are absent from worship for 4 consecutive weeks) and until they return to worship or leave our congregation.
- We have reclaimed the strayed and straying (from all ages of membership) so that ideally 100% of our soul membership is in worship at least once per month.
- We are overcoming our geographical spread of many members by locating them on a map, discussing location patterns and key people within them, and envisioning geographic ministry efforts (with other ministry team leaders) that would benefit our congregation's nurture and outreach ministries.

### 1-Year Plan

- We have designed a reclaim-the-straying strategy and have enlisted the assistance of TBD additional people to work with our Shepherding Coordinator.
- We have reclaimed the strayed and straying (from all ages of membership) so that TBD% of our soul membership is in worship at least TBD per TBD.
- We have explored and implemented ways to connect our members who live in specific geographic areas.
- We annually design and implement a well-defined and comprehensive assimilation strategy with goals and measurements.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter

- Determine the percentage of members that is currently straying.
- Track worship attendance on a weekly basis, review members' attendance records monthly, and assign contacts (providing whatever direction and training is desired).
- Use MissionInsite People Plot to locate on a map where members live.
- Identify key people in each area who might be able to assist with connecting members geographically in some way.
- Define what an "assimilated" member is and use this definition to measure progress.
- Evaluate the need for additional people to work with Shepherding Coordinator.

K. **Financial Support and Management** Primary Owner: Treasurer

**3-Year Picture**

- We have enhanced the financial support and management needed to promote expansion and growth, e.g. facility expansion and additional staff.
- We regularly monitor the finances of our congregation, including the balance of church- and school-related costs.
- Every year we promote planned giving via wills/bequests, and every three years we bring in a WELS Christian Giving Counselor to do the same.

**1-Year Plan**

- We annually teach/review God's principles and practical applications related to Christian giving (e.g., via sermons, Bible classes, cottage meetings, every-member visits).
- Explore financial seminar possibilities with invitation to church and community.
- We annually pursue alternative avenues of support for our church and school.
- We annually promote planned giving.
- We annually consider the cost of church and school ministry (both in dollars and percentages) as a part of our budget preparation process.
- We explore options to clearly and effectively communicate our congregation's financial picture to a broad base of our members.

**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter**

- Set the schedule for the annual events cited above and determine when the WELS Christian Giving Counselor will come on site to promote planned giving.
- Begin discussing how the above annual events will be carried out.

L. **Church Community Builder Software** Primary Owner: Mission Resources

**3-Year Picture**

- Our Church Community Builder software is understood and embraced by 100% of our leaders and 75% of our other members.

**1-Year Plan**

- Our Church Community Builder software is understood and embraced by 75% of our leaders and 50% of our other members.
- We have designed and implemented a strategy to help our leaders and other members embrace the use of our church software.

**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter**

- Church Community Builder software training completed by 100% of MCC and Women's Ministry.
- Church Community Builder software education included during one Sunday morning Bible study hour for general membership.

M. **Online Presence** Primary Owner: Joe Garretto

**10-Year Target:**

**3-Year Picture**

- Every three years (at a minimum) we review and enhance our website and social media platforms.

**1-Year Plan**

- Evaluate, redesign and update church website.
- Optimize church website for mobile use
- Determine social media implementation needs (including administration)
- Align church and Academy websites

**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter**

- Update our website (and wherever else is needed) with our new core mission, i.e., To grow in the Word and to go with the Word.
- Audit our website to determine what needs to be added, removed, or redesigned, e.g. assure that all areas of ministry are represented.
- Establish a team to establish priorities and plan for website overhaul.
- Determine platforms for social media presence
- Research WELS consulting resources for social media, website design, and rebranding.
- Research church and Academy website alignment.

N. **Sunday School** Primary Owner: Spiritual Growth Coordinators

**3-Year Picture**

- We have increased participation in our Sunday School program.
- We have reviewed and enhanced our Sunday School program, possibly by launching a new initiative for children on Sunday morning.

**1-Year Plan**

- Implement any changes in curriculum, format, or model of Sunday School
- Identify and recruit additional staff needed
- Determine measurable for Sunday School participation.

**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter**

- Study alternate models, methods, and organization of Sunday School from other WELS congregations.

O. **Teens/Young Adults** Primary Owner: Spiritual Growth Coordinators

**10-Year Target:**

**3-Year Picture**

- We have created consistent opportunities for spiritual growth, fellowship, and service targeted for teens through young adults.
- We have partnered with other local WELS congregations to enhance youth ministry as it makes sense.
- We have leaders in place to facilitate current ministry, and are planning what future leadership positions are needed to promote growth of teen/young adult ministry.

**1-Year Plan**

- Create plan for youth ministry that includes spiritual growth, fellowship, and service opportunities.
- Identify leadership/facilitator positions needed for teen ministry.
- Actively identify and recruit needed leaders
- Actively identify and recruit teens/young adults

**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter**

- Begin to study successful teens/young adults models of ministry in WELS
- Connect with local WELS congregation who have thriving teen ministry to both learn strategies and explore possible partnerships.

*(Add as desired... copy and paste)*

**See Barriers below... Primary owners?**

- 6. Communication Plan** (how you will communicate, develop consensus, acquire approval)  
Date entered/revised: \_\_-\_\_-20\_\_

The dual objective is to develop a strategy that effectively (1) helps your members fully comprehend and embrace your congregation's Ministry Plan, and (2) positions as many members as possible to participate in accomplishing your ministry goals.



- 7. Evaluation Plan** (how you will measure progress and hold each other accountable)  
Date entered/revised: \_\_-\_\_-20\_\_

It's important for you to measure what you want to improve. Also, ministry context keeps changing (within the congregation and community), so making needed adjustments is essential.



- 8. Remove Barriers by Solving Issues** *Use the Issues Solving Track – Identify-Discuss-Solve (IDS)*  
Date entered/revised: 9-18-2021

1. Inconsistent representation across all ages [Has this been addressed?]
- ~~2. Lack of young leadership~~
- ~~3. Lack of volunteers/members in service~~
- ~~4. Utilizing females in more ministry opportunities~~
- ~~5. Overcoming geographical spread of many members~~
- ~~6. Get rid of "I've done my time" mentality, promote joyful service throughout life~~
- ~~7. Same people tend to do things (20% do 80% of work)~~
- ~~8. Further develop data base and system of member ministry~~
- ~~9. Financial support and management needed to promote expansion and growth~~
- ~~10. Reorganization of organizational structure~~
- 11.

**IMPORTANT:** The components of this Ministry Planning Optimizer must be renewed annually prior to updating each year's council-proposed, and then voter-approved, Ministry Plan. Leaders in all areas of ministry will annually develop their own ministry plan guided by the congregation's updated/approved Ministry Plan.

## Area of Ministry: \_\_\_\_\_

**Leaders in each area of ministry (e.g., worship, outreach) will annually develop their own ministry plan guided by the congregation's updated/approved Ministry Plan.**

*Person responsible for the completion of this planning tool: \_\_\_\_\_*

*Key partners in completing this planning tool: \_\_\_\_\_*

- Begin by reviewing the congregation's updated/approved Ministry Plan.
- Whenever possible, design your goals to be measurable and determine who will do what by when.

### **3-Year Picture, 1-Year Plan, and Quarterly Goals**

Date entered/revised: \_\_ - \_\_ -20\_\_

A. Primary Owner: \_\_\_\_\_ (person or position)

**3-Year Picture – \_\_\_\_\_**

○

1-Year Plan

○

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter

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B. Primary Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

**3-Year Picture – \_\_\_\_\_**

○

1-Year Plan

○

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter

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C. Primary Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

**3-Year Picture – \_\_\_\_\_**

○

1-Year Plan

○

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter

○

D. Primary Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

**3-Year Picture – \_\_\_\_\_**

1-Year Plan

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter

E. Primary Owner: \_\_\_\_\_  
**3-Year Picture –** \_\_\_\_\_

1-Year Plan

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter

*(Add as desired... copy and paste)*

**Remove Barriers by Solving Issues**

*Use the Issues Solving Track – Identify-Discuss-Solve (IDS)*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

<b>Updated on __ - __-20__    Approved by Church Council on __ - __-20__</b>
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**Key Questions:**

- ✓ Are we communicating our plans and involving more members in ministry?
- ✓ Are we evaluating progress, addressing issues, and adjusting strategies as needed?
- ✓ Are we annually updating our ministry plan guided by our congregation’s annual Ministry Plan?

# Achieving Traction

**Recommendation:** Read and discuss the book *TRACTION – GET A GRIP ON YOUR BUSINESS* by Gino Wickman. The sooner you read and discuss this book the better.

As the title clearly indicates, TRACTION is a book written primarily to benefit businesses. Your congregation operates on the basis of some practical business principles but, of course, it's much more than a business. Your congregation is a gospel-centered ministry on a mission – directed and empowered by God's Word – that proclaims Christ to and for all. Still, as you now creatively draft and later strategically implement your ministry plans, you will be concerned about achieving *traction* so your Ministry Plan (under God) becomes a reality.

*“EOS consists of timeless, practical, universal principles that have been tested in almost every kind of organization.”* (TRACTION, introduction, page iv)

**Options:** This book is read by (1) each leader, (2) designated leaders, or (3) one leader. Then, ASAP, someone uses the provided *TRACTION – Summary* and facilitates discussion.

After reading TRACTION, gather and discuss each chapter using these questions.

1. Restate the key principle/points of the chapter. What does Scripture say?
2. With what in the chapter do you agree and/or disagree?
3. Determine what points (if any) should be implemented. If so, when and how?

Going forward, with God's blessing, you'll want to:

1. make decisions based on your core values
2. pursue your core mission
3. aim together at your 10-year target
4. focus on your marketing strategy questions
5. accomplish your 3-year picture, 1-year plan, and quarterly goals
6. communicate effectively
7. evaluate your progress regularly
8. remove barriers by solving issues

Evaluating progress includes:

1. clarifying specific roles and responsibilities
2. holding each other accountable
3. meeting regularly to measure progress
4. acknowledging God's gracious blessings
5. making needed adjustments
6. resolving concerns/issues that surface