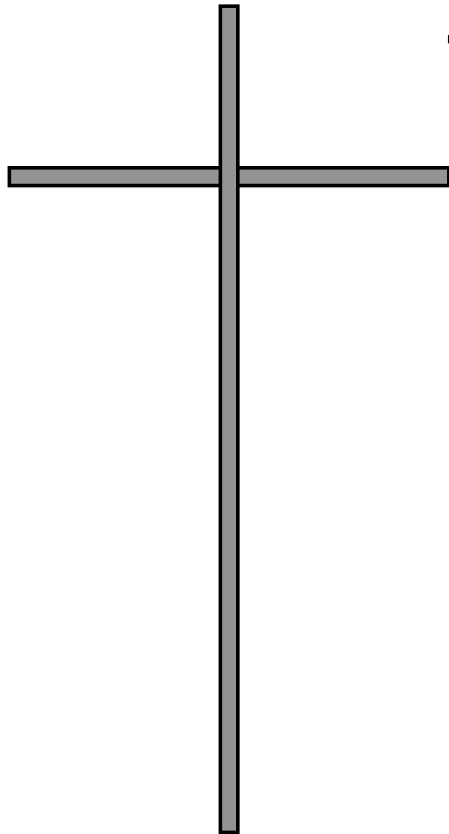


Assessing Ministry

... Enriching the Meal



*“... Whatever is true,
whatever is noble, whatever
is right, whatever is pure,
whatever is lovely,
whatever is admirable - if
anything is excellent or
praiseworthy - think about
such things.”*

by Allyn Langager for the Synod of Alberta and the Territories

Assessing Ministry ... Enriching the Meal

Assessing Ministry ... Enriching the Meal is intended for those who are about to evaluate what is happening in ministry in your congregation. It contains some suggestions for conducting performance reviews and for assessing the ministry of the congregation as well. *Assessing Ministry* encourages you to develop your own assessment project.

Assessing Ministry ... Enriching the Meal is designed to explain in simple terms:

- † The types of assessment that you might do.
- † The styles of assessment that could be used.
- † The targets of your assessment project.
- † The instruments or devices that can be constructed for assessment.
- † Taking control over the depth and scope of assessment.
- † Taking ownership of the content and processes.
- † Determining suitability for you and your congregation.
- † Developing your own materials from samples provided.

Philippians 4:8

“... Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things.”

Assessing Ministry

Assessing Ministry: A. Pastoral Performance Review

[Part 1 of 4]

This section briefly describes the types of assessment styles that may be used. It interprets ‘assessing ministry’ to be an assessment of the performance of the pastor in ministry. It understands that the congregation, having the same mission as its pastor, ought to assess its ministry as well. It briefly presents several outlines from which leaders may develop a ministry of assessing.

Assessing Ministry: B. Assessing the Congregation Too

[Part 2 of 4]

This document describes in more detail ways in which the ministry of the congregation may be assessed. It presents a framework around which leaders may create a process for their congregation. It moves from assessing to goal setting.

Assessing Ministry: C. The Checklists

[Part 3 of 4]

See the checklists for selecting what may be useful to you. This is an appendix containing examples and sample of checklists from which leaders may select and devise their own survey or questionnaire or discussion checklist.

Assessing Ministry: D. Tails

[Part 4 of 4]

This appendix contains details such as web sites, Do’s and Don’ts and references that are useful. It includes examples of bulletin inserts, sample goal statements and resources.

To the Reader.

This document is intended for those who are about to undertake an assessment of either the pastor of your congregation or an assessment of the ministry in your congregation. It believes that doing both is a more accurate reflection of what ministry really is. If conducting such an evaluation is a new or rare experience for you, the following ideas will quickly give you an understanding of the choices you can make regarding the type, style, format, size and purpose of the assessment. It assumes that you wish to be effective in doing an assessment, that you desire to improve some aspect of ministry and are willing to devote some effort to this project. Good results are possible without a great amount of time commitment. This document is based on an understanding that assessing is a ministry, that is, it is looking for that which is good and making it better. This is most effective if evaluating both the ministry of your leadership and of your 'follow'ship.

Assessing Ministry also assumes that you are willing to creatively adapt most of the suggestions given so that it suits your situation. You will find ideas and themes that you may expand upon in ways that make the assessment activity truly yours. It expects you to assess in ways that engender growth and enhancement.

The first thought that comes to mind when assessment of ministry is considered will likely be assessing the 'performance' of the pastor. The other branch of assessing ministry is that of assessing the ministry of the congregation.

Still another branch of this same tree is provided by a Mutual Ministry Committee which gives on-going response to the ministry of both the pastor and the congregation, albeit from a pastoral advocate's perspective. Information about Mutual Ministry Committees is available from the Synod of Alberta and the Territories.

Assessment ought to be a nurturing [nutritionally sound] adventure that may take the form of completing and counting responses to a survey or it might look more like a heart-to-heart discussion.

To feed yourself, you may learn to cook or you may learn to follow recipes. Learning to cook allows creativity and freedom, though recipes can be quite useful.

Your Attitude as You Begin the Assessment Venture

1. Have This Mindset: Make Good Things Better.

The most powerful approach to assessment is to identify strengths, then work with that person to empower and enable those strengths, and to employ those talents and enhance them. Identifying weaknesses is occasionally productive when the person's strengths can be used to grow in that area or compensate for a weakness. Resist spending much energy on 'weaknesses'. Rather, seek out that 'apparently missing' talent in someone else and put it to use in tandem with your pastor's talents. Always work from people's strength.

The meal will be so much better if you concentrate on using the best part of each ingredient and the sweetest section of every vegetable.

2. An Exhortation to Assess.

Assessing is not only inevitable, but also desirable.

Philippians 4:8

"... Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things."

Paul calls for them to assess what they are doing, to make choices AND to look for the good things and practice doing such things.

Go shopping for the best fruit, vegetables and ingredients.

3. Hold This Presumption: It is a Team Effort.

Effective assessment presumes the pursuit of the more excellent way, assumes genuine commitment to make things better and celebrates that which is praiseworthy. Effective assessment requires creativity and effort by all involved. Both the one being assessed and the one assessing ought to be partners in the design, selection, use and interpretation of the assessment. Both will learn and grow.

Relish the tastes along the way. Sample the goodness. Expect a sumptuous feast.

Preamble:

Before you begin to cook, or tryout a recipe, there are a few ideas you should think about before you turn on the stove.

This document describes a number of options in a continuum from which you may select components to develop an assessment activity that suits you and the conditions at this time in your congregation. Creating an assessment plan that is yours will increase its value. Ownership of the process is important.

Your cooking must fit your situation. It may be to quickly snack on something tasty and nutritious or it may be to present an elegant multi-course feast.

Creating an assessment activity that matches your situation will assure more useful information. The process of constructing your own search for information is in itself a helpful endeavor. Fitting assessment to your place is important.

Doing your own cooking, even as you learn, is a profitable experience.

Holding beliefs about looking for that which is good, about looking for the gifts God has placed among you and about looking for ways and means by which to encourage and enable people to offer their gifts in response to God's goodness to them, is a VERY powerful approach. Having such a ministry attitude is important.

Looking for the best flavours, aromas and colours in the produce on your counter will help you select the best spices to enrich the meal.

Helpful Hints

- † Begin with easy, small, non-threatening topics so that trust may be nurtured as experience is gained.
- † Trust, sincerity, honesty, helpfulness and courage are important elements that will lead you to get helpful results.
- † Creative problem solving and collaborative planning is required.
- † The “assessing” in **Assessing Ministry** may be either verb or adjective.
- † Accept the fact that you cannot ‘do it all’. To do a small assessment well and receive useful information is preferable to gathering a mountain of details that overwhelm.
- † Philippians 4:8 “... Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things.”
- † If an employment contract is at risk, contact the church officers regionally or nationally for information about legalities and constitutional requirements. They need to be aware of your situation.

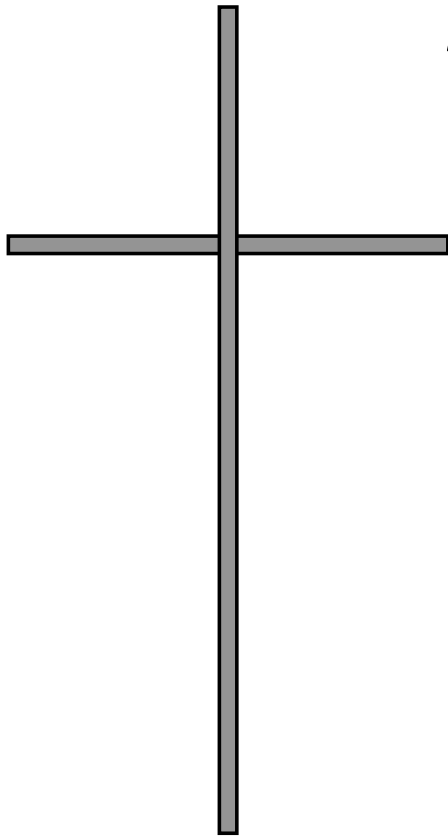
Beliefs:

- † Intentionally desire to grow, to improve ministry, to become more mature in faith. Paul intimates to the Philippians that all of us ought to have that intention as we live in ministry.
- † Attention to change and growth is a professional responsibility.
- † An employee has the right to know the employer’s assessment of performance, as the employer has the responsibility for the conditions in this workplace.
- † All members of your congregation are called to ministry and that ministry is open to assessment as well.

Mother’s love makes muffins marvelous!

Assessing Ministry

A. PASTORAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW



*“... Whatever is true,
whatever is noble, whatever
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Allyn Langer for the Synod of Alberta and the Territories

A. Assessing the Performance of the Minister

In partnership with your pastor,

- ✠ select a style of assessment,
- ✠ select an object or area of interest,
- ✠ set the 'size' of undertaking and establish a timeline,
- ✠ select or create an 'instrument' to use.

Following the advice given above, focus on strengths, gifts, and talents. Concentrate on being encouraging, on enriching and enabling whatever is good. Since growth is your main goal in this assessment, a beginning and an ending assessment event is desirable in order to have indicators of change so that you can discuss the growth achieved.

Select a theme that might be chosen:

- ✠ From any area of the descriptors of the mission of your congregation, or the areas of Worship, Service, Support, Witness or Learning, Letter of Call or
- ✠ From any checklist of pastoral behaviors or job descriptions.
- ✠ Perhaps review the Letter of Call.

Select the simplest and smallest topic you can define. The less experience you have in doing assessments the greater the need to be clear, simple and small. If this is your first experience, it is highly recommended that you choose an area within the strengths of the pastor.

Choose a simple kind of meal. Select a part of the meal that can be a focus of your special efforts. Decide how large this meal will be. Aim to bring out the best in each food.

1. Types of Assessment

Formative Assessment

“Formative assessment”, the focus of this document, is those activities done with growth or improvement as the intent. Fixing ‘weaknesses’ might be your first inclination, but it is far more effective to work on strengthening strengths. This approach requires more creativity and energy, but the payback is worth it. Start small and be specific.

Every cook’s effort is directed towards making the food tastier, more nutritious and more satisfying.

Summative Assessment

A “summative assessment” would be used when considering continuation employment. Summative assessment is used in situations that involve a determination of meeting minimum requirements for a contract or insufficiency to retain a contract. Call the synod office if the assessment is being conducted to determine competence or if the situation feels overwhelming. The model constitution in fact, requires a call to the bishop.

If it is beginning to stick to the pan, or looks like it is on the verge of bursting into flames or you can’t get the spoon out, ... call your mom.

2. Styles of Assessment

This list is a scale from the least intrusive to the most intrusive. The styles in the center of the continuum are likely to be the most effective in bringing about growth. The ends of the spectrum of styles are more difficult to conduct and achieve growth. For example, self-assessment is difficult because of our tendency to be either too critical or too inaccurate. The clinical and supervisory styles require an experienced and/or expert observer. Such a person is not often available. The supervisory or clinical style would be suitable when considering continuing or discontinuing the employment. It is important to remember that the greater the desire to improve, the easier it will be to achieve growth.

A Continuum of Styles

Self-assessment
Peer assessment
Mentoring
Friend@fireside
Coaching
Modeling
Supervisory
Clinical

Self-assessment requires the most drive and commitment to improve of any of the styles. In a perfect world this would be the only style from which to choose. Unbiased self-observation is difficult and may be too self-critical. However, for certain elements of ministry it may be very appropriate to use self-assessment [An example is in areas of ministry that require confidentiality and privacy].

Peer Assessment requires a fellow clergy to be selected who can use the tools of observation, make suggestions or give hints that may be mutually beneficial. A colleague can be a most effective partner in this learning and growing activity. Peer assessment may be reciprocal. The flavour of this assessment partnership may be a lot like a mentor, a coach, a friend or a model. You are fortunate if such a person is available.

Mentoring requires selecting an admired colleague who likely has more expertise than the pastor, uses methods of mentoring effectively, uses skills of listening and dialogue and can gently question. Mentoring is effective in an internship / apprenticeship setting where the emphasis is on dialogue, listening, discussion and pondering. A healthy mentorship may last a number of years. The mentor is neither judgmental, nor prescriptive. Mentoring is an excellent style of assessing and produces significant growth.

Friend@fireside

The pastor would meet with a trusted member of the congregation for an afternoon or evening to chat about certain aspects of the ministry. The aim would be to celebrate what is going well, to consider alternatives or additions and to set one or two goals for enriching or enhancing the ministry. A fireside chat of this nature has the potential to alert one to areas of strengths. A part of this chat would include brainstorming for ways and means and for names of other people and other gifts among you that could be directed towards complementing the strengths of your pastor. Near the end of this chat, write a few sentences naming a goal or two that will be an additional focus for the next few months. Professional expertise is not required to the same degree in this style of assessment as in most of the other styles. Therefore, a lay person can assist more comfortably.

Coaching uses a more direct overseeing relationship to the partnership than the styles described above. The coach is an acknowledged successful practicing professional. A coach is more apt to instruct or tell, encourage trial and error, even guide and direct. Often coaches insist on ‘unlearning’ a skill before teaching the better way of doing it. In this case it may feel like it gets worse before it gets better. Many personalities suit this coach style both as the advisor and as the learner.

Modeling means showing or demonstrating a new or better way of doing something. The one who models is admired because of the ‘track record’. Such a skilled person would likely be adept at coaching and mentoring as well.

Supervisory style refers to a direct approach. The supervisor tells the other how to do it, when to do it, however pleasantly that might be said. The supervisor would normally have direct authority over the other. Although this may produce quick change, it doesn't often create a long-term improvement. There may be times when this style is most appropriate.

Clinical approaches are based on the expert practitioner determining strengths and weaknesses of the professional skills required by the one being evaluated. The expert is usually expected or required to make a determination of proficiency and competency. The one being assessed has little or no input into the process or outcome. This style is based on the understanding of the best practices by the most highly skilled.

These styles as described have fuzzy differences and show a good deal of overlap from one to the other. Each style has its strength, focus and usefulness.

3. Targets of Assessment

The focus of your attention for growth should be fairly specific [e.g. Make one more home visit per week than last year.] Choose no more than two or three such goals. Goals may focus on behavior or on outcomes.

Behaviors: [The following sources may help you select a specific behavior on which to focus.]

Faith habits, mission / vision beliefs, and philosophy.

Duties listed in the "Letter of Call".

Checklists of duties.

Outcomes: [The following lists will help you select themes on which to focus.]

Functions of the congregation.

Ministries of the congregation.

Programs of the congregation.

Your skill at cooking may be assessed by how you cut, fry, blend, or stir; or it may be assessed by how one of the dishes tastes or looks.

4. Instruments for Conducting Assessment

An instrument is the little package of what will be used during this assessment [a list of behaviors to watch, outcomes to consider, and possibilities to try]. It is particularly powerful to create one's own instrument for use in your situation in order to ensure a "good fit". You'll find much more effective conclusions when you do so.

Creating an Instrument

- ✦ Choose a behavior or an outcome [e.g. Improve the singing at worship.]
Choose an aspect or a contributing factor as your specific goal [I'll choose more songs that the organist can play with gusto.]
- ✦ Develop plans that will support reaching that goal [Council might pay for some music lessons for the organist, send the musician to a 'worship' conference.]
- ✦ Create a measuring instrument and acquire some help. [Get an usher to judge the singing of each hymn or song on a five-point scale. The instrument in this case might simply be a list of the hymns.]
- ✦ It may be useful to share this activity with a trusted friend, peer or superior. This approach lends itself to a pre- and post- measurement. This approach can also be used for such broad and lofty goals as making each sermon more obviously reflect the gospel.

Choosing a Checklist

- ✦ A checklist can be a useful devise.
- ✦ It might locate a mission or activity that is missing.
- ✦ It might identify a skill that is a strength.
- ✦ Checklists are not particularly good at showing growth or change unless a skilled observer conducts both a pre- and a post-assessment.
- ✦ Checklists are often very long and the typical tendency is then to adopt too many goals or too grand a set of expectations. Use them cautiously.
- ✦ The appendix has sources from which to choose.

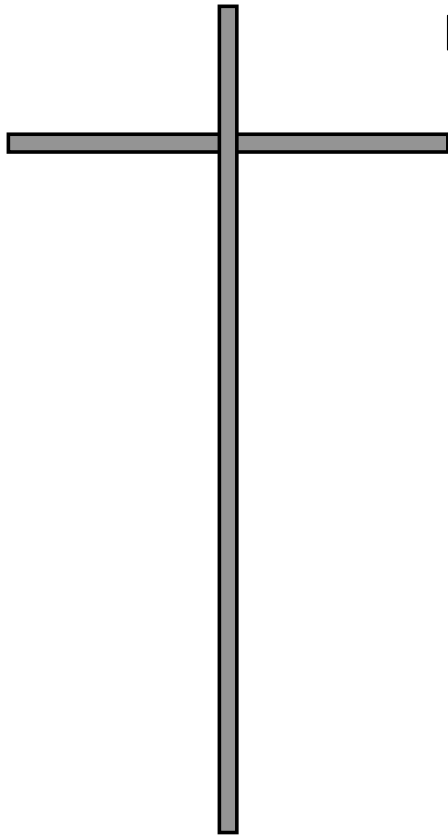
5. Invite Direct Feedback Once a year provide the council or board or review committee with a list of questions that is written by the pastor regarding the council's opinion of various aspects of ministry. Give the council time to discuss and respond in the absence of the pastor. Ask one person from the council to report back to the pastor the general reactions to the questions left by the pastor for the council to consider. Confidentiality applies here too.

6. Mutual Ministry Committee The role of the Mutual Ministry Committee is to provide assessment of the ministry from an intentionally proactive supportive stance. Such a committee evaluates continuously. Please contact the Synod of Alberta and the Territories if you are interested in developing or renewing a Mutual Ministry Committee.

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Assessing Ministry

B. ASSESSING THE CONGREGATION TOO



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B. Assessing the Ministry in a Congregation

Assess the ministry in your congregation too. We are all ministers.

1. The Basic Questions.

A full assessment of your congregation's ministry ought to gather information about three areas for consideration. Ask yourselves:

What is good and should be retained?

What could be enriched or enhanced?

What might be added?

It is possible to expand each of these areas if time, talent, treasure and topics warrant. These questions might suit a discussion format, or survey, sampling, or interview format.

You'll benefit by finding out what is of value to your members and what they appreciate about what is happening in your congregation. Perhaps a part of this assessment could be noting highlights of the history of the congregation. It helps newer members understand the congregation. Find out what could be enhanced, enriched about how things are done among you. Find out what new elements may be worthy of consideration. Condense these into a few priorities and discuss them as a congregation before acting officially.

As simple as this might sound, this approach can generate a great deal of information, involve a high percentage of your members and set a common direction for the congregation covering the next several years.

2. The Process.

An effective process is to set up opportunities for people to say what they value, what they think or dream. It is encouraging for others to hear their values and thoughts. Information gathered in this way by leaders is very useful. The setting you use for such discussions may be to gather as the whole congregation, or as small discussion groups that share with the large group, or small gatherings in homes. This may happen via potlucks, home meetings, mailings or phone surveys. It will be useful later if someone keeps notes of the contributions [on post-its, on question sheets or by secretary.]

A second feature of the process is to gather the ideas [notes from your discussions or surveys] and summarize them [the committee's job] and communicate them to the congregation [post them, newsletter, verbal announcement] as the process continues.

If you have more than one occasion to gather people's ideas, you will rewrite a new summary later as new ideas are given. This keeps the thinking alive between sessions and it reassures your members that the process is open.

For example, you may meet to think about 'worship' on the first meeting [What is worthy of retaining? What might be enriched? What might we try new?] Then summarize and report back to the congregation.

At another meeting, perhaps in a different setting, discuss 'witness' and 'service'. Answer the three questions, add to the summary and report back to the congregation.

Certain topics may be better suited for survey or questionnaire, or perhaps use the Bible study approach.

You may gain useful information if your members share some of the important themes from the history of your congregation. Consider hearing about what your newest members felt when they arrived. What do new members need to understand about you that is 'unspoken'?

Or your congregation might be able to discuss enough of these themes at one gathering to give your leaders plenty to consider.

To summarize the process:

- ✠ Form a group to devise a plan to gather people's thinking.
- ✠ Gather input from every member.
- ✠ Summarize the information gathered.
- ✠ Convey the information to your membership.
- ✠ Prioritize.
- ✠ Rewrite the priorities with several specific goals included.
- ✠ Obtain approval from the membership. This becomes a statement of direction. Some congregations develop mission statements from this input others create vision declarations or purpose statements.
- ✠ In 2 or 3 years, repeat the process.

3. Critical Elements of Assessing the Ministry of the Congregation

A. Purpose:

Your real pursuit is to discern God's will for your congregation now and into the near future. The planning committee should keep this as their focus and priority. Surround this process with plenty of prayer and talk with others.

B. Presumptions:

Believe that God may work through everyone and through each one, so it is powerful to hear from all members. A great deal of active listening is required. Believe that God may work through the voice of one for the benefit of all, any single contribution might contain the critical message for your congregation.

C. Celebrate:

Remember your blessings. Honour what you have, for that becomes the foundation for what comes next. Reflect on the present. Listen to recent arrivals to your congregation.

D. Vision:

Think far ahead. Plan. Pray. Pray a lot!

4. Tools for Assessment

It is helpful to the participants if their discussions can be somewhat focussed by the event leaders. Choose certain aspects of congregational life on which to focus the talk. This helps them be more specific and exact in their thinking and it helps the committee organize the information. Below, in section 'C', are a few sources from which the planning committee could select the agenda for gathering information. The 'tools' of assessment may be selected from these sources as well as others:

1. Based on the Functions of Ministry from the model constitution [worship, witness, learning, services and support] can be used as discussion starters or as a source for discussion guides or survey questions.

2. Based on the Elements from Acts 2 is a different categorization of activities [koinonia, kerygma, didache, diakonia] of a congregation.

3. Based on Checklists

May be best to use a portion of a list or create one from the various lists.
May be used twice over time to show growth.
May be useful to review job descriptions
May be an excellent source of themes / topics for discussion.

The Steering Committee

To begin the assessment event, select a small committee to oversee the creation of the project. The steering committee's task is to design the size, length, depth, style and content of the assessment. In most congregations this would mean presenting a proposal to the governing body. Keep all members apprised of the progress. This steering committee will acquire, collate and consolidate the responses so that the membership can deal with a smaller number of details in an organized way. Be sure that good ideas are not overlooked. God works with both vocal majorities and with the quiet, single voice. The membership needs to prioritize the ideas in some way. The prioritized list, which may be in the form of a statement of direction rather than specific motions to be voted on, will need to be officially adopted at a duly called meeting of all. Be as open and communicative as possible. This will allow everyone to take ownership of the decision s and the direction. There should be no surprises.

The congregation's council ought to deliberate over the results before they are presented as priorities for the congregation to discuss and decide about. The council is responsible to determine if the implementation of any proposed new idea might have a damaging effect on other aspects of life in the congregation that are deemed worthy of keeping. They need to foresee issues of costs, of timing of implementation or of conflicting priorities. The membership must be alerted to these potentially harmful effects.

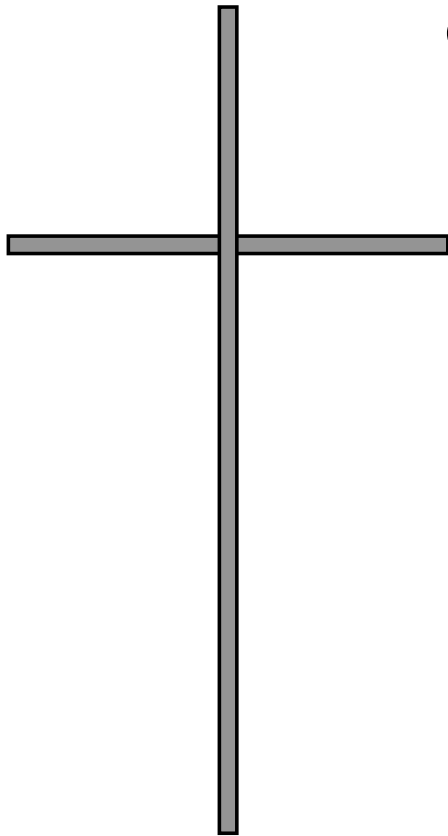
From this brief outline, good and creative people in your congregation can deliver an Assessing Ministry event that will encourage your members, enrich the ministry around you and inspire new missions among you. Invest a lot into making the assessing activity genuinely a celebration of the good things as much as it is about visioning and enriching. This assessment committee is advised to be very open and clear about this process, and to understand that it is a continuous activity. And that the statements or goals will be reviewed perhaps yearly by the congregation and more often by the council.

Summary of an Assessing Ministry Event

1. Obtain congregational approval and commitment to an assessment / planning / visioning event.
2. Create a steering committee to lead the event.
 - ✠ Set the scope. Eg. Use only items from the 'Koinonia' list.
 - ✠ Set the style. Eg. Small groups in homes.
Eg. Discussion format, all members invited.
Eg. A summary of all ideas will be posted.
Eg. These suggestions will be grouped by 'importance'.
 - ✠ Set the schedule. Eg. Announce scope and style on four Sundays.
Eg. Hold an open meeting for anyone unable to attend the home meetings on afternoon Oct. 26.
Eg. Accept additional suggestions in writing till Nov. 4.
Eg. Prioritize on Sunday Nov 18 by all members.
Eg. Steering Com. Summary posted Nov 30
 - ✠ Set vote date. Eg. After any further revisions, present to Annual Meeting January 27 for approval. Portions of this statement may take the form of descriptions of 'directions to take', or parts of it may be in the form of directives, or maybe some parts may easily be delegated for quick action.
 - ✠ Set review date. Eg. Progress will be reviewed at the next year's Annual Meeting and an assessment of the 'kerygma' elements will follow the next year.

Assessing Ministry

C. THE CHECKLISTS



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Checklists

These checklists are intended for the steering committee to use as they select topics for discussion or for creating surveys for the whole congregation or for a portion of it. The pastor and friend @ fireside may use these lists as an agenda for their discussions. Consider using a portion of any list below in one year and other portions on following years, conscientiously touching all areas of ministry in a 3 or 4 years cycle.

Checklists may be used to set an agenda for discussion in a one-on-one setting, or used to create a survey for all of your membership, or a sampling of the members of your congregation. The use of checklists is suited for finding missing elements in a program or ministry, or an aspect of ministry that could be enriched. Though no list is ever complete, these lists should be helpful in setting the breadth of topics to discuss.

The use of surveys is suited for measuring growth or change. Therefore, you would conduct an assessment at the beginning, to set a 'baseline', followed by an intervention in the program, and then at some time shortly after your intentional effort to change or improve some aspect of your ministry, the second survey would be conducted. The purpose would be to determine how much change or improvement occurred.

Things to be aware of regarding checklists and surveys:

- † Be sure people understand how this will work.
- † Surveys may be quite effective in testing the opinions held, especially by a fairly large group. The smaller the group sampled, the less reliable the results.
- † The wording of each question or statement is critical. Have several friends proof it. Clear questions are difficult to write.
- † Some concerns may be unintentionally left out. At least have an 'Other concerns' category for respondents to add their thoughts.
- † Be intentional about investing time and energy. Devote thought and prayer to this project.
- † Plenty of information can be gathered on a single page. If you get 100 returns having 25 items with 5 response options, you will create $100 \times 25 \times 5 = 12\,500$ bits of information. Plan ahead how the results will be tabulated and what they might mean.
- † Consider limiting the number of questions. A one-page survey is much easier to respond to and tabulate. Be sure to include items that will generate some very positive responses.
- † Create your own list to suit your people at this time and place.
- † Be aware of the need for confidentiality. Consider having respondents submit written comments on a separate sheet. Consider having the steering committee offer to reply to any signed written comment or question. If you do reply, respond thoughtfully yet in a fairly generic way at this time.
- † Be deliberate about investing time, energy and spirit, acknowledging what is going well among you.

- † Some of these lists are composed with the mission or ministry of the congregation in mind. The others are written with the performance of the pastor or other staff member as the focus. It is useful to hold the belief that the congregation's ministry is essentially the same as that of the paid professional staff's ministry. It is highly recommended that your assessment activity focus on your ministry as a partnered enterprise. The role of paid staff is usually defined by a job description and therefore needs to be addressed differently.

A Summary for Developing Checklists

If you create your own survey or check-list:

A. Determine a Focus

Select an aspect of ministry -[ex. elements of service]

Or select a role of the pastor -[ex. spiritual and administrative leadership]

Choose an approach to the assessment -[ex. survey mailed to all]

B. Response Format of a Survey

Consider forced choices: [These are a little easier to tabulate.]

Two choices - [ex. 'yes' or 'no', 'satisfied' or 'not satisfied' {*simple*}]

Three options - [ex. an 'average' with 'above' or 'below']

Four options - [ex. 'never', 'seldom', 'often', 'always' {*forces choice*}]

Five options - [Permits a center / middle response, {*quite complex*}]

Comments:

Each item ought to have space for them to add their thoughts.

Will there be an ending 'other comments' space only?

Will there be a separate sheet or other opportunity for input?

Submit to / by:

Set one place and one deadline. Make it sooner rather than later.

Samples and Examples of Checklists

The following lists are consolidated from a wide variety of sources. Each reflects a different categorization of elements of the calling to ministry. Make the checklist short rather than long. Each checklist you administer will generate a few goals. Each of those goals will branch off into many smaller goals.

Deliberately design the assessment project and the creation of any checklist so that it will be used for improvement. The expectation of checklists is that they are all inclusive – they usually are not. Seriously consider selecting just a portion of a given checklist to narrow the focus. This will take less time and energy to administer, provide results are that are more manageable, and outcomes which may be more easily addressed without discouragement or hurt. This is especially important if the checklist is to be used to assess the performance of an individual. It is so easy to assume that an individual would or should have all the qualities itemized on the checklist or have them all in equal amount. This leads naturally to identifying a variation as being a weakness that needs attention. Few congregations will have leaders [or staff] of such excellence in all the varieties of elements of ministry that you can expect high approval in every area. As leader of the assessment, it is much more difficult and is harder work to emphasize strengths than it is to notice ‘weaknesses’, but it is worth the effort.

The rest of the section ‘C’ is devoted to a variety of checklists from which you can create your own. Use portions of these as you see fit. A good deal of wisdom is needed in using checklists and surveys, particularly when interpreting results. Checklists used as surveys can easily become too large and overwhelm you with information. Checklists can lead to a numerical assessment that gives the appearance of accuracy and this may stifle discussion. Checklists might easily identify more aspects, and expectations, than a person could realistically be expected to address.

Types of checklists included in section ‘C’

Checklists from a number of sources are included below. They have been significantly modified to suit congregational use or they have been reworded to apply to ministry. Most importantly, they are written so that you will need to rewrite them [the lists are not photocopier-ready] for actual use. Hopefully, this will ensure that they will be constructed for use at your congregation, by your steering committee.

Checklists Based on FUNCTION

- Job Description
- Duties of the Office
- Roles of the Ministry
- Styles of Leadership
- Preparedness for Ministry

Checklists Based on MISSION

- Ministry Areas
- Concerning the Ministry
- Mission of the Congregation -Acts
- Mission of the Congregation -Constitution
- Mission Prioritizing

Checklists Based on PERFORMANCE

- Effectiveness
- Usage of Time

Checklists Based on FUNCTION

These checklists focus on the job, duties, roles, styles and preparation of your pastor. Few of the items on these lists are exclusively the pastor's mission. Every member has some responsibility for each mission as well.

An agenda for discussion may be developed from this set of descriptors based on functions of a pastor, also.

1. Job Description

Visionary

1. Teaches the membership to grow in faith.
2. Assists the congregation to fulfill its mission.
3. Supports the congregational vision and mission.
4. Helps the congregation and council achieve its goals and fulfill duties.
5. Works within the several constitutions applicable.

Spiritual Leadership

1. Sets an admirable example as a spiritual leader.
2. Encourages members to worship, study the scripture and grow in faith.
3. Identifies, equips and empowers the talents and gifts of the membership.
4. Shows grace and mercy, love and forgiveness to people.

Administrative Leadership

1. Oversees staff.
2. Provides direction to staff.
3. Delegates responsibilities and provides frequent direction.
4. Seeks to identify abilities of the members and promote their participation.

2. Duties of the Office

Preach

1. Preach the Word.
 - Administer the sacraments.
 - Conduct public worship.
 - Function in harmony with the faith and practices of our church.
2. Perform marriages and burials.

Educate

3. Confirm members.
4. Enable members to grow in witness and service.

Manage

5. Keep accurate records and report them to the appropriate bodies.
6. Direct and delegate duties and responsibilities.

Minister

7. Visit the sick and distressed.
8. Pray and counsel.
9. Lead a life worthy of Christ's calling.

3. Roles of the Minister

1. Worship leader and preacher.
2. Pastoral care giver.
3. Spiritual leader.
4. Teacher.
5. Visitor and evangelist.
6. Manager of programs of the congregation.
7. Administrator.
8. Advocate for the church at large.

4. Styles of Leadership

1. Who makes the major policy decisions for the congregation?
2. At what levels are other expenditure decisions made?
3. How is responsibility for success shared?
4. How is the budget developed?
5. Are there informal groups resisting the formal group?
6. How are decisions communicated?
7. How adequately is interpersonal communication performed?
8. How adequately is the communication of programs done?
9. How supportive is the congregation of the programs?
10. How collaborative is the leader?
11. How much initiative is shown?
12. How much is delegated? How much is that supported?
13. How much recognition/appreciation/guidance is given to lay participation?
14. How appropriate is the worship leadership?
15. How appropriate is the leadership of the education program?
16. How effective is the witnessing?
17. How is service to others evident?
18. How much support is shown to the organizations of the church at large?
19. Are those given duties enabled and supported in their work?
20. How eagerly is the leader sought out for support?
21. How is the "climate" among the leadership groups described?
22. How are differences dealt with?

23. Are resources provided for the duties to be carried out?
24. How much confidence is there between laity and leadership?
25. How much is the leadership admired and appreciated?
26. How are new initiatives introduced and promoted?
27. What continuing education programs/projects are pursued?

5. Preparedness for Ministry

1. Theology
Biblical and doctrinal learning.
2. Learning
Historical knowledge and pastoral skills.
3. Personal faith and spiritual growth.
Prayer life, continuing education.
4. Ministry skills
Preaching, teaching, leading worship.
5. Pastoral skills
Praying, counseling, accompanying.
6. Issues sensitivity
Keeps aware of cultural issues.
7. Growth in career and life changes
Self assessment, career workshops, current on pay and compensation components.

Checklists Based on MISSION

1. Ministry Areas

These checklists assume that both the pastor and membership aspire to the best in each item listed. And that much of the mission of your congregation is a shared aspiration. An agenda for discussion or a checklist may be developed from the descriptors of mission and ministry areas below. These themes reflect the five areas of mission named in the ELCIC's model constitution.

1. Worship
 - Quality spiritual and devotional life.
 - Inspirational messages.
 - High quality music.
 - Creative worship.
 - Respects heritage.
 - Sacraments administered.
2. Learning
 - Bible is taught.
 - Members are being educated.
 - Current issues are being interpreted.
 - Christian life-habits are being promoted.
 - Lutheran heritage and teaching are being learned.
3. Witness
 - Witness shown by personal living habits.
 - Members are being trained in evangelism and outreach.
 - Goals of groups within the congregation are harmonious.
 - Members are being encouraged and enabled to witness.
 - Participates in synodical and national evangelical efforts.
 - Participates in the Christian community.
4. Service
 - Christian faith is related to societal and justice issues.
 - Members are listened to and supported in their daily life issues.
 - Love is shown through prayer.
 - Identified groups of members are supported in their faith walk and growth.
 - People's needs are met.
 - Help is sought from other appropriate sources.
 - Other community sources of help are supported.
 - Education of root causes of injustice takes place.

5. Support

Skills and talents are developed for leadership and service.
Administration and leadership function in an orderly fashion.
Stewardship is fostered.
Planning for the congregation is clear and open.
Ministry for and by all is the norm.
The work of the whole church is supported.
Communication is intentional, complete and honest.

2. Concerning the Ministry

[Designed for the whole membership. This would suit a small group discussion style.]

1. Which activities and events contribute to the opportunity for members to grow?

How might you nurture that growth in other ways?

- TO LEARN 2 Peter 1: 3-11 “...he has given us ... precious promises ... for this reason, make every effort to add to your faith ... goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, ... [in order to be effective and productive] you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom ...”
- TO LIVE Ephesians 3: 14-21 “...Christ may dwell in you ... to grasp the love of Christ ... to Him be the glory.”
- TOGETHER 1 Thessalonians 5: 12-24 “.. to respect those who work with you ... in highest regard ... encourage the timid ... help the weak ... be patient ... be kind to each other ... be joyful always ... pray continually ... give thanks ... hold on to the good ... avoid evil ... “
- TO FULLNESS Ephesians 4: 11-14 “... some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors, some to be teachers ... to prepare God’s people for works of service so that the body of Christ might be built-up ... attaining ...the fullness of Christ.”

2. In what ways do you model each of the following aspects of God’s call?

How might your witness in each aspect of God’s call be enriched?

- TO MATURITY Ephesians 4:4-6 “...the unity of spirit ... bond of peace ... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ... it was he who gave [gifts] ...for works of service ... to become mature ... receive the fullness.”
- TO SALVATION Acts 2:38,39 “Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, ...that your sins might be forgiven... and receive the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you And all whom the Lord our God will call.”
- TO COMMUNITY Colossians 3:12-15 “...with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness ... forgive grievances ... put on love ... let the peace of Christ rule.”

- TO PURSUE 1 Timothy 6:11-12 “...pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, gentleness ... fight the good fight of faith ...take hold of eternal life. ... you were called.”
- TO IDENTITY 1 John 3:1-3 “...great love of the Father ... we are called children of God ... everyone who has this hope...”

3. In what ways are you and your congregation different now? How have you been changed? What remains steadfast?
 - IN RELATIONSHIPS Colossians 3:12 –17 “...as God’s chosen people ... put on compassion, kindness, gentleness, patience, love ... forgive, ... let peace rule in your hearts, ... let the word of Christ dwell in you, ... with gratitude in your hearts, ... do it all in the name of the Lord.”
 - IN FAITH Romans 8: 26-39 “...the Spirit intercedes for us ... in accordance with God’s will ... God works good for those that are called ... if God is for us, who can be against us? ... who shall separate us ...”

3. Mission of the Congregation -Acts

These functions of the congregation, as described in Acts, are a suitable source of themes and discussion topics at assessment events and/or planning meetings. Acts 2 names *koinonia*, *didache*, *diakonia* and *kerygma* [defined below] as the functions of a congregation at that time.

As an evaluation leader or steering committee, consider choosing one of the four functions [or limit the scope in some other manner] and construct questions or topics to suit your congregation. These descriptors may all be in statement form, or they may all be in question format. They may be open-ended questions, or they may be in the ‘forced-choice’ style of a survey. Each of the sub-topics below may be further sub-divided as time, creativity and desire permit.

There are basically three questions of the congregation that you would want to pose.

1. What is going well and should be retained?
2. How might this aspect of our congregation be enriched?
3. “What might be added? [What, if anything, could receive a lower priority in the future in order to accommodate the new addition? *This is possibly the council’s work.*]

The phrasing of the questions and/or statements you write ought to suit your people. When you compose, create and construct the assessment material, you take ownership of the assessment activity.

1. Kerygma	[proclaiming the word, worship]	
Worship	Sermon	Witness
Sacraments	Music	Training
Scripture	Participation	Evangelizing
Confession	Involvement	Media
Absolution	Testimonies	_____
2. Didache	[teaching, learning, study, knowledge]	
Bible reading	Book talks	Workshops
Scripture studies	Sermons	Church literature
Topical studies	Library	Periodical reading
Sunday school	Video collection	Dialogue
Adult studies	Conferences	_____
3. Koinonia	[fellowship, friendship]	
Gathering	Eating	Helping
Visiting	Hospitality	Celebrating
Meeting	Caring	_____
4. Diakonia	[service, helping]	
Helping	Assisting	Poor
Feeding	Caring	Hopeless
Clothing	Youth	Helpless
Visiting	Aged	Victims
Supporting	Weak	_____

This description of congregational activities is based on Acts 2. These topics may serve as a beginning for consideration, study and assessment. Freely add detail to this list or prayerfully rewrite them as questions for yourselves. Expect to find themes where you'll want to increase your ministry. Be sure to acknowledge those areas where you are doing well. And celebrate them.

4. Mission of the Congregation -Constitution

The Five Functions of a Congregation are:

Worship Learning Service Witness Support

A. Worship

Elements of Worship

The major elements are word and sacrament.

Evidences of Worship

Gathering
Listening
Receiving
Responding
Remembering
Celebrating
Equipping
Speaking
Singing
Playing
Praying
Feeling
Thinking
Inviting
Sharing

Examples of Worship

Sacraments
Sermons
Music
Liturgy
Confession
Praise
Offering
Pray

B. Learning

Elements of Learning

The major elements are study and growth for knowledge and for faith and grace.

Evidences of Learning

Growing
Studying / Reading
Equipping
Training
Recruiting
Witnessing
Serving
Teaching
Leading
Praying
Worshipping

Examples of Learning

Sunday School
Adult study classes
Curriculum development
Retreats
Workshops
Conferences

C. Service

Elements of Service

The major elements are faith, equipping and advocating.

Evidences of Service

Caring
Loving
Sharing
Helping
Learning
Supporting
Walking with
Listening
Advocating
Understanding

Examples of Service

Involvement
Seeking justice
Applying fairness

D. Witnessing

Elements of Witnessing

The major elements are proclaiming and modeling.

Evidences of Witnessing

Inviting
Recruiting
Training
Proclaiming
Repenting
Welcoming
Motivating
Hosting

Examples of Witnessing

Visitation
Hospitality
Modeling
Telling
Serving
Supporting
Ecumenical
Understanding

E. Support

Elements of Support

Management
Administration
Orderliness
Communication

The major evidences are leadership and stewardship

Leadership

- Visionary
- Mission oriented
- Empowering
- Modeling / inspiring
- Kingdom-conscious

Stewardship

- Seeks giftedness and talents
- Delegates and enables
- Invests time, talent and treasure
- Responding to God's love and generosity

Examples of Support

- Congregation's office
- Local
- Regional
- National

You are reminded that this list is a starting point for your steering committee. Convert the items in the list to questions or statements that your membership could respond to or discuss.

It's a good idea to keep it short.

For example, create 5 questions, one for Worship, one for Learning, one for Witness, one for Service and one for Support. You may wish to provide your members with the above lists of elements, evidences and examples to give your members a hint of some of the aspects they could consider as they ponder their responses to the survey questions.

The most important information you want to gather is 'What is valued and needs to be kept? What might be enriched and enhanced? and What new ideas might be added?'

1. Mission Prioritizing

This activity is focussed on the mission of your congregation. Portions of this list may be discussed by council or by the full membership. Remember to pay attention to what is being done well and celebrate it. Plan to invest plenty of time preparing your members. Reassure them that a great deal of time will be devoted to identifying those aspects of your congregation that are valued and appreciated. Some time will also be given to sharing with each other ways and means by which certain things might be enriched. And that this is the time to raise the possibilities of new ministries.

This activity may be used to compare the importance of different ministries or programs within your congregation. [An activity's importance may be measured against how well it follows the gospel, or by how much time is invested in it, or by how much money is spent on it, or by how many people involve themselves in it.] Use this to generate discussion.

Does a program or activity receive more time / money than it ought to?

Does the program rate as being of 'high', 'medium' or 'low' importance?

Consider rating them according to the time spent in each.

Or rate them on that same scale for what time and/or money each ought to receive.

Rate them individually, then in small groups then in larger groups.

New insights and emerging consensus develops through discourse of this type.

The Missions of a Congregation

Grow in Faith	pray, read / study, learn, train
Worship	effective, sound, genuine, thoughtful and scriptural
Minister to others	awareness, participation and grace
Equip Leaders	recruit, motivate, delegate, support and appreciate
Visit	nurture, listen, visit at home or work or hospital
Administer	manage the affairs, records, business and staff
Teach	educate all ages, provide curriculum and quality teachers
Preach	scriptural, inspire, and challenge
Use the Arts	use music and other arts effectively
Care	support people in their crisis
Counsel	listen, empathize, assist, refer and help
Be in Community	represent Christ, represent the congregation's presence
Be Scriptural	shows understanding of scriptures
Plan	visionary, hold strong sense of mission
Innovate	use new, respect heritage, and enrich the ordinary
Grow in Family	model healthy activities
Cooperate	work well with others,
Manage conflict	listen, show wisdom, sooth relationships
Reach out	participate regionally and nationally
Study	read, take courses, workshops, conferences
Lead	develop programs for age and interest groups
Other _____	_____

Develop questions for discussion around some or all of these themes.

Checklists Based on PERFORMANCE

1. The ‘too’ survey

This list invites you to consider the model your pastor presents while reflecting on how you imitate that model. The word ‘too’ may be read ‘like my pastor’. The following may also be used as discussion starters in a ‘friend@fireside’ [See section ‘A’]. Response options in the survey style may be added for participants to mark and return for statistical information. Reword them as necessary. Create a method of responding or grading each item. It is not necessary to use all of these items each time, or for every group.

Devotional life of your pastor

1. Inspires you to live a godly life too.
2. Makes you want to pray too.
3. Creates a desire for you to read the Bible too.
4. Inspires you to live a life worthy of the calling too.
5. Stimulates you to grow in faith too.
6. Motivates you to come to the sacraments too.

Worship leadership by your pastor

7. Increases your understanding of scripture too.
8. Challenges you in the sermons too.
9. Makes the worship service meaningful for you too.
10. Stimulates a sense of family for you too.
11. Chooses elements [music, art, rites, drama] of the service that respect your preferences and heritage too.
12. Enables others to lead in worship too.
13. Applies theology to your life too.
14. Presides in ways that helps people feel other dimensions of worship too. [Celebration, penitence, community, forgiveness.]

Learning and teaching by your pastor

15. Seeks to relate current issues to Christian faith too.
16. Makes the gospel meaningful for me too.
17. Senses the unity in Christ too.
18. Increases comfort with change too.
19. Embraces Lutheran heritage as well as openness to contemporary theology too.
20. Increasingly lives out a genuine and authentic faith too.
21. Living a better balance in daily life [work/play, rest/exercise, and calm/stress] too.
22. Makes me eager to attend conferences, workshops and studies too.
23. Is making me more attentive to the giftedness of others too.

Service

- 24. Cares for other people too.
- 25. Visits those who need it too.
- 26. Sees the theological aspects of social issues too.
- 27. Uses or recommends the help available from our local helping agencies too.
- 28. Helps people from the community more frequently too.
- 29. Helps others see the root causes of poverty, injustice, ... too.

Witness

- 30. Lives a visibly Christian life too.
- 31. Equips for sharing the faith too.
- 32. Growing in trustworthiness too.
- 33. Increasing in concern for the marginalized too.
- 34. Becoming increasingly hospitable and welcoming too.

Stewardship

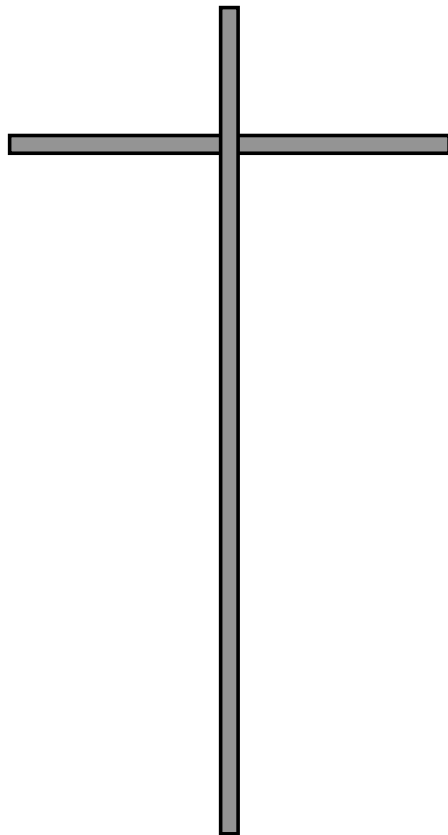
- 35. Respects the earth as being God's and manages resources accordingly too.
- 36. Honours the gifts and talents of others by appropriately using them too.
- 37. Clarifies duties and roles as part of keeping things in good order too.
- 38. Honours the contributions of others, past and present too.
- 39. Shares with others from the gifts God has generously granted too.

2. Usage of Time

- 1. Percentage of your time invested in:
Worship Learning Witness Service Support Administration
- 2. Assign a percentage to each to represent its importance to you.
Worship Learning Witness Service Support Administration
- 3. Discuss the anomalies with a trusted member(s). Discuss staffing, delegating, and deleting. Propose changes through the proper channels.

Assessing Ministry

D. TAILS



*“... Whatever is true,
whatever is noble, whatever
is right, whatever is pure,
whatever is lovely,
whatever is admirable - if
anything is excellent or
praiseworthy - think about
such things.”*

Allyn Langager for the Synod of Alberta and the Territories

ASSESSING Ministry: details, samples and examples

1. A Philosophy of Staff Development

The person responsible for staff, staff development and assessment of the performance of your staff will be more effective believing the concepts shown here.

A. “Seek excellence.”

Here are a few themes for the leaders of an assessing activity to notice about the presence of excellence. Where there is excellence there will be an eagerness for growth rather than a tendency to want to maintain the status quo. And growth is more likely to happen when attention is paid to talents that are already being effectively used.

Excellence is most likely to be evident when one is working within healthy relations. Talent flourishes in an interpersonal climate of empathy, where each of the staff uses cognitive and affective listening to be effective. Such a workplace is relatively free of defensiveness as relationships are driven by a need for rapport.

To activate learning [growth], nurture the desire to share, to innovate, to relate to each individual and to invest according to the ‘call’. The greater the ‘investment-drive’ the greater the power to affect others. The greater the focus on the mission, the greater the reciprocal energizing. Excellent performance is nurtured when it is talked about in this climate.

B. “Be aware of a person’s unique talent.”

Learn of the hobbies and leisure activities; talents and gifts show up where there is a love for doing certain things. Find out what energizes them; it reveals their passion, which points to their gifts. Ask them directly about their strengths. Seek out the perceptions of selected others who are able to identify strengths of your pastor.

C. “Evaluate from strength.”

Tell them the strengths you see in them, tell them often. Use examples of their behavior or their words. Describe the admirable beliefs they have expressed. Name their success. Affirm their goals. Be correct and accurate.

D. “Build on strengths.”

Identify a talent or strength of theirs and brainstorm about new ways to apply that strength. Convert a belief into an action based on that belief. That is, a belief will likely generate a new application of a talent or it may even identify a new talent. Using a strength increases the probability of success early in the attempt to change and improve, which feeds growth.

E. “Deepen the relationship.”

Growth and development will be enhanced when the mentor’s motive is in the best interests of the person, and the person is sure of that motive. The mentor must believe the person can, wants to and will grow. In this climate, both will increase their commitment to growth.

2. Other Resources Regarding Evaluation

A. Authors:

1. Jill M. Hudson's book "Evaluating Ministry: Principles and Processes for Clergy and Congregation" is available from the Alban Institute
2. A catalogue of books on many topics is available from:
Alban Institute
Suite 1250 West
7315 Wisconsin Avenue
Bethesda, MD
20814 – 3211 USA
3. C. Jeff Woods has a small but very useful booklet called "User Friendly Evaluation" done in 1995 that is also available from the Alban Institute

B. Internet:

Search words for useful sites.

- Use a variety of combinations of words like the following.
Performance Review Pastors Evaluating Ministry Evaluation
Ministry Assessment Clergy Appraisal
- Look for denominational sites. Ex – ELCIC, ELCA, Lutheran, Anglican
- Commercial sites with domains such as: soulbusiness pastornet clergy
- Links: <http://www.governancematters.com/index.htm>
http://www.aiias.edu/academics/sgs/info/v1n1/dimpudus_performance.pdf

C. The following pages contain samples and black-line masters for you to photocopy and use within the Synod of Alberta and the Territories.

Outline of Assessing Ministry in Our Congregation

1. Establishing a Mindset.

- ✠ That the process is one of discernment.
 - a) Discerning God's will,
 - b) Discerning God's will for us,
 - c) Discerning God's will for us here and now,
 - d) Discerning God's will for the future.
- ✠ That the process is democratic and human.
 - a) Each has the gift of the Holy Spirit,
 - b) Each contribution is heard,
 - c) The majority will apply.
- ✠ That the process is holy, yet human.
 - a) The Holy Spirit may speak through the single voice to all of us,
 - b) We listen to the lone voice and / or the minority as the will of God may become known in this way.

2. Gather and Listen to Each Other.

- ✠ Gather
 - a) As the whole congregation,
 - b) In small groups,
 - c) At the church or in homes.
- ✠ Listen
 - a) Share thoughts,
 - b) Express values,
 - c) Hear about what others value,
 - d) Imagine together what could be,
 - e) Consider the 'new'.
- ✠ Record
 - a) To have evidence of what was shared,
 - b) Note what receives high appreciation,
 - c) Keep note of concerns too.
- ✠ Consider
 - a) What is good and worth keeping?
 - b) What might be enriched?
 - c) What new elements and / or programs should be considered?
 - d) What might the implications be when adding the 'new' things?

3. Rewrite and Review

- ✠ Rewrite. Using the summaries, notes and lists of ideas gathered from all sources and meetings, write a summary of the contributions made. Think of this document as a statement of your direction for the future. It would likely highlight:
 - a) What is most valued among your congregation's members.
 - b) Suggestions for ways to enrich many of the good things already happening.
 - c) A short list of new or additional projects to begin sometime this year.
- ✠ Review and Distribute. Make the written document available to all in some way. It could be approved at a general meeting. The 'new' item may be stated as goals and adopted one at a time. The might be in the budget and adopted in that format if money is involved.
 - a) Celebrate the good things that you value. It will continue to require effort and prayer to maintain them.
 - b) Look around for gifts and talents that match the areas that you wish to enrich.
 - c) New projects require new people, time, talents and treasures. God will have provided the resources along with the vision.

4. Revisit.

Name a time at which you will rethink these statements. Perhaps each 'new' item or goal should be reviewed after a few months. Take a few minutes to reread the document before the next annual meeting. Do another assessing of the ministry in two or three years. It will have a slightly different focus and will likely take a little less time.

[An example of a bulletin insert during the first stages Assessing Ministry.]

Assessing Ministry at Luther Lutheran Church

We have gathered excellent information from you about how well things are going here at Luther Lutheran Church. Thank you for participating in the discussions and giving us your good ideas. We interpret the responses as telling us that most functions and activities at Luther are quite effective. The committee has received a number of creative and important suggestions about enriching our practices and several new ideas. Council will consider them over the next few months to see if the implementation of these ideas might in any way conflict or detract from any existing programs or features of Luther Lutheran Church. And then our council will make recommendations to you at the annual meeting before any significant changes are implemented.

Much of the information gathered was descriptive of Pastor Chris and the performance of the many duties as pastor of this congregation, particularly those in the Letter of Call. Pastor Chris has given your feedback preliminary consideration and will be thoroughly discussing it with the Mutual Ministry Committee. Chris is encouraged by the support and appreciation indicated in the responses. Two ideas that came up through this assessment will be discussed in some detail by the MMC in the next several meetings. The Mutual Ministry Committee has indicated that they are pleased that the terms of the "Letter of Call" continue to be most effectively carried out. During this assessment period, the committee chose to include the duties identified in the 'Letter of Call'.

The Assessment Committee endorses this approach. And is eager to have all members of Luther Lutheran Church think about our promise to Pastor Chris contained in that same 'Letter of Call'. This is the pledge we made five years ago in our "Letter of Call" to Pastor Chris.

Our pledge included these themes:

- ✠ That we accord you the love and respect;
- ✠ That we pledge you the goodwill due the office you hold;
- ✠ That we uphold you in prayer;
- ✠ That we faithfully assist you in the work you are called to do;
- ✠ That we support the congregation, synod and the church;
- ✠ That we contribute to the benefit plans for you;
- ✠ That we provide house or housing allowance;
- ✠ That we review you salary and benefits yearly.
- ✠ [The 'Call' included moving expenses and that no longer applies. Working conditions have been upgraded each year since. Please take note of the yearly budget regarding the study allowance, the book purchasing {line 46}, holidays and sabbatical policy.]

The Assessment Committee asks you to prayerfully reflect on these promises. We believe that it is healthy for both parties to remember our mutual promises. On the Sunday following our annual meeting, the prayers for the church will include a set of petitions based on our promises shown above. This will be our public renewing of our pledges to Pastor Chris. If you have ideas about how to enrich our support, please call Allyn at 444 3333, or write a note and drop it off in the office.

[Here is an example of written yearly goals. Goals may be small, finite and easily observed, and simply recorded.]

Assessing Ministry

Date: Oct. 14, 2002

Review

Last year I had planned to conduct five services at the Sr. High-rise but managed only two. However, three of those seniors are now attending regularly here. My goal to use more singing at the opening of the worship worked very well according to the response from the sewing circle. The younger ones are joining in the singing with more energy too. I intended to keep the baptismal records right up to date, although I started out well, I didn't carry it through the whole year. Maybe I'll buy a 'guest-book' and have the parents fill in the information when we meet before the service for baptism.

New Goals

I'm setting as a priority in my ministry for the next six months:

- I shall visit one member per week at their place of work, That will help me know who they are.*
- The record of attendance will be done by a member. [I'll ask John]*
- I'll use a personal and poignant story in the Children's sermon.*
- And on the third Sunday of each month I'll use a 'modern' parable in my sermon.*

Authenticating results.

I'll have Marcia react to my children's sermon and let me know.

Mark the calendar for every workplace visit.

I'll check each Saturday for someone to count attendance ... perhaps I can get the ushering family to count and record.

Check back date: *Mar 15, 2003*

Examples of Survey Questions

Suppose the topic you choose to consider during this assessment event is ‘equipping for service’.

Sample survey questions might be:

Are you being equipped for service? Yes ___ No ___ Comment _____

Is preparation for service effective? Good ___ Poor ___ None ___ Comment _

Indicate which of these programs you have used to equip yourself for service:

- Saints in Service
- Stephen Ministries
- Stitching Servants
- Stew for the Hungry
- Cottage Studies

How effective has “Saints in Service” been in preparing yourself to serve others?

Extremely effective Very effective Effective somewhat effective not

[Use as little variety in the type of response format as you can.]

Sample discussion starters might be:

What are we doing to equip you for service to others?

What could be done to better equip you for serving others?

In the area of preparing to serve others, how are we doing?

Another approach may be to see which themes come up as an unsolicited topic.

What is going well?

What is good that we ought to keep as a feature of our congregation?

Share what is going well.

Build on what is working.

Be inspired by the vision of others.

The following pages contain examples of “discussion guides” that you may use to focus the discussion of ideas. Someone should record the responses for the committee who needs to collate at a later date. The input gathered here will be written into a statement of direction.

Koinonia

Fellowship and Community

What is good and worth keeping regarding the koinonia among us?

In what ways can you visualize our fellowship being enriched?

What other opportunities for fellowship might we consider?

Other:

Didache

Learning and Teaching

What is good and worth keeping in the area of didache here?

In what ways can you visualize our teaching and learning being enriched?

What other opportunities might we consider?

Other:

Kerygma:

Worship and Proclaiming the Word

What is good and worth keeping regarding kerygma at our church?

In what ways can you visualize it being enriched?

What other opportunities might we consider?

Other:

Diakonia: Helping and Serving

What is good and worth keeping regarding diakonia among us?

In what ways can you visualize our service to others being made more effective?

What other opportunities might we consider?

Other:

Consider using bulletin inserts. Perhaps use one per Sunday.

These are samples of short bulletin inserts that you might use as you approach the time of gathering to discern the will of God for your congregation. These inserts are intended to set an atmosphere of thinking that will give due attention to what is already going well, so that suggestions for additions, enrichments or new programs will be received as improvements added on to what is good. You will want to adapt these to your situation.

“Discerning God’s Will” for Luther Lutheran Church

Steering Committee Hopes

The “Discerning God’s Will” Program at Luther Lutheran has a steering committee. They have been:

- ✠ Praying about discerning God’s will for us and have been working at creating a way to hear what you have to contribute to our discussion about God’s will here, now and into the future.
- ✠ Preparing to lead us through a discernment process by sharing our visions and sense of mission with each other. The committee thinks of this as “Sifting out the will of God”.
- ✠ Preparing to ask each of you to be active and supportive in this project of uncovering God’s will for us.

“Discerning God’s Will” for Luther Lutheran Church Is happening because:

- ✠ We are at a size now that we need to make some changes in how we operate.
- ✠ We ought to affirm our best and adjust recent undertakings to suit the membership.
- ✠ It is good to plan ahead.
- ✠ It will help us in our working together to learn of each others’ vision and hopes for our congregation.

**“Discerning God’s Will”
for Luther Lutheran Church**

Timeline

FIRST September
We will meet in small groups in homes inviting all members to attend. Steering Committee members will lead each discussion.

SECOND October
We will meet as a congregation at church to reflect on our history to help us recall what has become important to us. This will be helpful for new members to understand us.

THIRD November
We will meet during the Coffee Fellowship hour to identify those practices and habits that we’ve developed here and describe how they might be enriched.

FOURTH January
The steering committee will have summarized the information gathered and the congregation will prioritize the main items. This list will be written as our Statement of Direction.

**“Discerning God’s Will”
for Luther Lutheran Church**

A Gathering

- ✝ To consider God’s will for us in community.
- ✝ Of ideas from all members willing to meet and share.
- ✝ Of information about who we were, who we are, and who we may become.
- ✝ Of our dreams and visions.
- ✝ Of callings and gifts and talents too.
- ✝ Of thoughts about discerning God’s will for us here and now.

**“Discerning God’s Will”
for Luther Lutheran Church**

Features Four Events

- ✝ Small group meetings in homes in September and October.
- ✝ Pot-luck Supper celebrating God’s goodness in our past before Advent.
- ✝ Coffee and dessert after church service to reflect on our practices in January.
- ✝ Congregational meeting to prioritize our valued practices and features before the Annual General Meeting.

**“Discerning God’s Will”
for Luther Lutheran Church**

Areas of Consideration

DIAKONIA A mark of the church evidenced by its caring for the nearby poor, outcast, hurting or needy people. How are we showing care and love?

KOINONIA A mark of the church evidenced by its fellowship, its hospitality, its love and mercy among its people. How are we showing fellowship?

DIDACHE A mark of the church evidenced by its instruction and education of its member. How are we learning and teaching?

KERYGMA A mark of the church evidenced by its proclamation of the gospel with its message of faith, hope and love. How are we at spreading the gospel?

In Conclusion

“Assessing Ministry” may help you discern God’s will for you. All of us have been gifted. All gifts to his people are for others. God builds using strengths to overcome weaknesses. It is a powerful spirit when we realize how much we’ve been given. Be determined to have a positive mindset. it energizes everyone. As we assess our ministry and the ministry of full-time ministers, imitate the grace-filled and loving approach God uses to increase goodness. People who worship the Living God are encouraged, enabled and enriched when their thinking is centered around those things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent or praiseworthy.

Use the creativeness you’ve been granted to build an activity to assess your ministry. Make it suit you and your people. Make it your vision to build up the body of Christ in this way.

God bless your ministry of assessing and your assessing the ministry!

Go now and serve the Lord!

Notes