

Q1. What is your congregation hoping for?

	Response	Frequency	Theme	Subgrouping
1	grow attendance	47	Organizational	
2	youth	36	Organizational	
3	engaging with our community	31	Spiritual	
4	deeper discipleship/transformational faith	25	Spiritual	
5	more participation	21	Organizational	Congregation
6	survival/stability	16	Organizational	
7	diversity(membership, worship, Spanish/English, outreach)	15	Spiritual	
8	new leadership (clergy and laity)	14	Organizational	Congregation
9	change/taking risk/open to new...	12	Spiritual	
10	financial viability	10	Organizational	Congregation
11	intergenerational involvement(elders helping with children so parents can participate	8	Spiritual	
12	dynamic worship	7	Spiritual	
13	fellowship/relationships among members	7	Spiritual	
14	less fear, more joy, keep thriving	6	Organizational	
15	welcoming/Reconciling in Christ	6	Programmatic	
16	cooperation with black churches/congregational exchange	4	Spiritual	
17	cooperative ministry	4	Spiritual	
18	help with transitions(from program to corp size, from SAWC to	4	Organizational	
19	smooth call process	3	Organizational	Congregation
20	permanent building/maintaining	2	Organizational	Congregation
21	Missional River	2	Programmatic	
22	healing hurt feelings	2	Spiritual	
23	community sharing	1	Spiritual	
24	Unity	1	Spiritual	
25	stronger Synod connection	1	Organizational	Synod
26	ELCA vision	1	Organizational	Synod
27	Disengage from ELCA	1	Organizational	Synod
28	Accountability	1	Organizational	
29	choir to sing more	1	Programmatic	
30	answers to why attendance is off	1	Organizational	

Q2. (voting slide) Which statement best describes your congregation's hopes?

Answer		Frequency
1/A	A place for transformational faith	26
2/B	More attendance and better participation	78
3/C	Openness to the future	17
4/D	Sadly, survival	11
5/E	A new, energized leadership	18
6/F	Enough money to meet the budget	5
7/G	Cooperative ministry	13
8/H	A neighborhood partnership	10
9/I	Other(write on your paper)	14



Q3. How does your congregation hope to respond to this opportunity for mission?

With what is your congregation struggling?	Organizational	Programmatic	Theme
membership/ attendance	cooperative ministry	start young adult class	Organizational
	renovating building to bring people back	start ecumenical activities	
		work on projects in the community	
aging membership		be involved in community activities	focus on what people can realistically do
		get youth involved to close the generation gap	be invitational without an agenda
		form groups for young adults	go down to their needs and levels of faith- WWJD
		letting them go out and do mission	empower members to do things outside the church
		start a young adult class	
focus/identity/sense of mission	cooperative ministries x 3	train and empower laity	"it's for you" x 2
	hire a staff to make us grow	missional river x 4	pray
	help other churches find their mission	invite people to church	serve outside our doors, think like a missionary
		LEAD process - annual roadmap	discover the reason why we go to church other than "it's our obligation"
			wash them in love without an agenda
			be available and share God's love without an agenda
			welcome without an agenda x 2
			don't overwhelm them with information, just say "it's for you"
building property/upkeep and expense	made renovations and now trying to pay for it		musical pews
			focus on an open door policy- all are welcome
			focus on mission and stewardship
support/finances	hard to support both building and staff		pay off debt while keeping focus on mission
	find creative ways to raise money		never going to be self sustaining but staying focused on mission to students
	generous to special projects but hard to fund general expenses		
	can't afford a building because rent is high		
no pastor/no full time pastor	create leaders with LEAD, ELCA, YouTube resources		
	need new dynamic leadership		
inactivity and apathy	celebrate dying ministries in order to raise up new/different ministries		recognize God calls people to serve in some way
	recognize people can lead without a title		continue reaching out to the community to share our faith
			provide services and support where they are needed
lack of community involvement	congregation exchange, shared VBS, have community worship services, working to build relationships with community groups that use the building		reach out
			extend welcome - no agenda
			be a ministry = serve a need

Q4. What is the role of the synod?		
Answer		Synod = synod office, bishop, staff --- O or Synod = all the congregations--- C
1	financial support	O
2	clarify terms, new methods of calling pastors	O
3	need reconciliation	O
4	overcome barriers, language and others, between southern most and other areas	O
5	more guidance on communion of young children	O
6	dealing with part time pastors	O
7	resources only; bring resources to us and help with ministry support; be a source of resources to congregations who don't know how to proceed;	O
8	provide trained leaders, financial aid, Spanish lessons including culture	O
9	guide and support; be a guide; offer support and guidance;	O
10	provide emotional support	O
11	offer support for developing churches	O
12	promote diversity in the church - why old German stuff?	O
13	help/keep encouraging witness and fellowship	O
14	leave politics out of it	O
15	accompaniment	O
16	listen, look at the context, connect	O
17	cease to be an expert and a model for achieving a goal. Facilitate the resourcing and struggling with a world whose models no longer work.	O
18	offer new vision	O
19	celebrating, connecting, seeing beyond walls	O
20	encourage individual congregations to interact with their community in the hopes that will raise interest in membership	O
21	have Synod staff visit each congregation to explain how to do outreach	O
22	open communication, leadership	O
23	need support from Synod in the form of resources, training, ppl and programming for grass roots efforts to attract Latinos	O
24	be aware of a church's actual needs and ability to support a pastor when matching prospective pastors	O
25	be aware of wildly different skill sets needed in different congregations	O
26	facilitate and train pastors and councils to assist in their education and maturity;	O
27	provide encouragement and permission	O
28	catalog listing of congregations that have worked through issues with point of contact for different issues	O
29	enable/support congregations and conferences	O
30	be more involved in the daily life of congregations	O
31	equip churches in their context to be the hands and feet of God and then push them to do it.	O
32	support congregations in finding the right leaders in the right place	O
33	help leaders with vision for the future	O
34	give guidance to the church	O
35	teach, mentor, resource and equip	O
36	train and equip	O
37	facilitate educational conversations	O

Q4. What is the role of the synod?		
	Answer	Synod = synod office, bishop, staff --- O or Synod = all the congregations--- C
38	model faith growth opportunities	O
39	lead by example as the synod is already doing	O
40	provide tools to assess situations and guidance to address them	O
41	visit as much as possible.	O
42	develop a common dialog	O
43	identify opportunities for cooperative efforts	O
44	be honest and upfront	O
45	don't be racist, be equal, provide common language	O
46	don't try to reconcile into a single model; connect, support and question; be accountable to the Gospel; be a resource	O
47	provide a common language to discuss difficult subjects	O
48	synod and churchwide are disconnected from our varied parishes	O
49	lift up and resource best practices	O
50	resource leadership development	O
51	organize meaningful continuing ed for clergy	O
52	help us navigate change by offering connections, resources and encouragement	O
53	help celebrate successes	O
54	reframe the sin of racism - this is not personal	O
55	model accompaniment - like YAGMS	O
56	write liturgies for reformation and transformation. Teach congregations about the different spiritual needs by generation - boomers, genX , millennials	O
57	be a resource for our diversity	O
58	updated clearing house that is like what workingpreacher.com is for preachers	O
59	deliberate, cooperate, share	O
60	provide resources but let it be the responsibility of the churches to go out and serve and welcome the strangers around them	O
61	share info from churchwide, make churches aware of what the synod does	O
62	synod can help us set our differences aside	O
63	be a one stop resources for all congregations	O
64	be an accompanying partner	O
65	advise, support and pray	O
66	listen to the needs of congregations on a one on one basis. Sometimes rules need to bend	O
67	communicate what the synod does	O
68	Can Triumphant Love help the Synod by helping other congregations?	C
69	talk with other denominations of faith and ask them for help	C
70	don't have to have extreme changes	C
71	be supportive in efforts of inclusiveness, encourage difficult conversations no matter how big or small; help with language to use in those conversations; be supportive of alternatives to the traditional ways; be proactive in sharing information throughout.	C

Q4. What is the role of the synod?		
Answer		Synod = synod office, bishop, staff --- O or Synod = all the congregations--- C
72	make effort to fully include south Texas congregations in synod activities	C
73	provide bilingual support	C
74	provide advisory services	C
75	leadership in being open to all issues and conversation without fear	C
76	be aware of other cultures and participate	C
77	to guide the direction of the church; be welcoming to all; to be RIC; to be a voice against racism and sexism and standup against injustices	C
78	equip and teach local congregational leaders of ideas of integration; encourage this to local leaders	C
79	to get to know a culture you have to get familiar with the language	C
80	diversity for the churches is a blessing	C
81	look more like early church - pool resources, be the Robin Hood and have wealthy churches help struggling churches	C
82	synod needs to be honest about change and that old models do not work. Explore what's new	C
83	raise up lay leaders	C
84	together we are the synod, together we must pray to inspire each other	C
85	be creative in doing mission	C
86	the congregations of the synod should work together better	C
87	build connections	C
88	be aware of other cultures, don't hide from them.	C
89	how can we overcome documentation points so undocumented lay members can attend events and synod assemblies	C
90	model diversity	C
91	reaching into a Latino community is difficult. Even if the church is open and welcoming, Latinos may not want to leave their comfort zone for fear of what friends and family might think	Good insight, but doesn't answer the question of what can be done about it
92	synod is doing a great job	nice to hear, but doesn't answer the question

**Q5. What is one positive step we can take together, as a synod, to shape our future?
Themes: Organizational, Programmatic, Spiritual**

Responses		Theme
1	more women in leadership roles	0
2	provide leadership training for council members	0
3	open honest dialog and discussions	0
4	put our dollars and our energy into our strongest demographic(old people) and our best hope for growth in youth and young adults	0
5	have more conversations, more events, more gatherings to help build relationships	0
6	KISS	0
7	clear honest communications	0
8	simple clarity on purpose of synod. In a twitter culture, we need a short list/elevator speech/video, whatever is helpful	0
9	should we consider being 2 synods - geography seems to be a barrier	0
10	need a stronger connection between all the churches in the synod so everyone feels welcome	0
11	raise up, train and support leaders who better represent the population of synod. Representation matters	0
12	The synod is "us". Us needs to work together	0
13	Don't talk about synod as "them". Remember is it us.	0
14	Ask congregations if they are willing to partner financially and accompany spiritually emerging and struggling congregations. Synod can set guidelines, boundaries, expectations and structure intentional conversations	0
15	develop and encourage a sense of trust and respect from congregation to synod to churchwide	0
16	help congregations know what's good for them.	0
17	more leadership in smaller congregations involving all ethnicities	0
18	respect for all opinions	0
19	listen to both sides	0
20	help struggling congregations towards their future choices	0
21	more assistance to seminary students	0
22	financial aid to seminary students	0
23	synod as education and facilitator and resource for each indiv congregation and pastor/deacon	0
24	work together to be church in a new reality	0
25	move synod headquarters to more relevant diverse neighborhood. Ask what synod can do for congregations, not what congregations can do for synod.	0

**Q5. What is one positive step we can take together, as a synod, to shape our future?
Themes: Organizational, Programmatic, Spiritual**

26	communicate and listen both ways	0
27	visit the churches, not just on special occasions	0
28	continue bringing voices together to talk about the struggles of the radically changing role and our call to live and love in and through it	0
29	be involved, make more personal steps with congregations	0
30	leadership should visit congregations more as leadership than as courtesy visits	0
31	set goals tailored to individual congregations	0
	assign collaborative partners between churches in different churches	0
32	focus of congregations inside the synod instead of just verbalizing ideas	0
33	draw us together, work for same goals	0
34	communication/inclusiveness	0
35	it will take the congregation to shape the synod, not the synod to shape the congregation	0
36	continue ecumenical dialogs, dialogs with other faiths, and open communication with border churches	0
37	more direct contact with indiv churches, more literature, more training	0
38	do more grass roots instead of focusing on churchwide	0
39	if you don't have 90%+ behind you, forget it	0
40	synod planning groups should always be diverse - in culture, gender, language, generation, etc.	0
41	be open to diverse conversations going on in diverse congregations	0
42	staff visits to congregations	0
43	help small congregations face the facts	0
44	take on problems individually as individual churches	0
45	focus on our youth	0
46	quit talking about the synod as "them"	0
47	train leaders to lead the big questions. Hold pastors accountable for having conversations about how God is calling us to do new things	0
48	create a positive focus - energy together	0
49	more agile in the approach of ministry in specific contexts	0
50	listen to needs of congregations	0
51	think differently about structure, relationships, mission, ministry, church, be original in your thinking	0

Q5. What is one positive step we can take together, as a synod, to shape our future?
Themes: Organizational, Programmatic, Spiritual

52	stop playing the numbers game and actually care about the survival of the congregation	O
53	average member does not understand what the synod does now	O
54	guide conversations so that all perspectives are heard and respected	O
55	build a relationship	O
56	more appeal to young adults	O
57	more human contact by synod reps	O
58	recognize synod is not Santa Claus x 2	O
59	create a clearinghouse for congregation ideas	P
60	encourage each congregation to participate in community service projects once a month. Ex. community garden; bible study; clean firehouse, food to nursing homes, ashes on the go; community concerts, welcoming everyone; blessings of the animals	P
61	learn and practice healthy dialog	P
62	support more synod gatherings, faith developing; relationship developing; beer and dancing	P
63	one visit by a synod staff or VP to each congregation over the next year.	P
64	anti racism training	P
65	missional river	P
66	Healthy Congregations	P
67	leadership training by vocation, lay leadership how to have a conversation with peers about the church, how to go out into the world	P
68	offer race identity workshops to pastors and staff	P
69	program synod assembly with greater eye towards leader development	P
70	provide more opportunities to come and work and play together	P
71	foster relationships with those experiencing issues - in those relationships we will become aware of the resources needed to solve the problem (poverty, documentation, etc.) those who experience the problem know what the solution is, what the lack is access to the needed resources.	P
72	Advocacy, CICBA	P
73	Make a list of resources synod has available	P
74	plan one cooperative mission or ministry event or activity with at least one other sister church	P

**Q5. What is one positive step we can take together, as a synod, to shape our future?
Themes: Organizational, Programmatic, Spiritual**

75	keep politics separate from church	P
76	actual visits with ideas for each congregation on the ground	P
77	help congregations deal with and understand resolutions	P
78	continue conversations with all neighbors, Lutheran and otherwise	P
79	have staff live in a rural community for a week and shadow the pastor	P
80	community/synod wide art project, esp an installation focusing on social justice related to synod, i.e. immigration, presented at assembly or in high profile place or roaming thru out synod through the year. EX research the crochet coral reef as part of the Institute For Figuring. WOW!! Google this, it's really cool.	P
81	training in Spanish language and culture	P
82	create opportunities for older congregations welcome the diverse youth	P
83	spend more time sharing ideas and stories across congregations	P
84	support learning Spanish by church leaders	P
85	present alternative solutions to problems faced by small churches. What are other churches doing?	P
86	teach our leaders Spanish	P
87	fund language classes	P
88	Q& A session with congregations outside worship services to get solutions beneficial to congregation	P
89	stop looking outward and actually step outward	P
90	congregations get together and brainstorm with synod representation	P
91	set aside some of the self focused work we are busy with in order to have important conversations to better know and honor our diversity; commit the time that such listening and relationship building requires	P
92	more support to Spanish speaking churches, they are as much a mission as Africa	P
93	change mindset to one of how we can serve you or help you?	S
94	open mindedness	S
95	always put God first	S
96	have an open mind, an open heart, reach out and learn from our neighbors	S
97	open eared and open minded	S
98	love people without an ulterior motive	S
99	synod means "walking together". Accept change	S

**Q5. What is one positive step we can take together, as a synod, to shape our future?
Themes: Organizational, Programmatic, Spiritual**

100	enter into a committed, intentional time of prayer, seeking the leading of the holy spirit. No canned or prewritten prayers please	S
101	open dialog on hard topics to create a sense of mission and be truly welcoming as Jesus would want	S
102	know thyself	S
103	develop our vision - do we need consolidation? Do we need to try new things? Think outside the box	S
104	help them reach out in their own indiv context	S
105	community to turn mindsets from fixating on the problems to focusing on the possibilities. What work does God want to place in our hands	S
106	change our mindset, don't just talk about it, do it, don't be judgmental, learn from our mistakes	S
107	pray	S
108	recommit to the cross of Christ	S
109	prayer	S
110	encourage and facilitate outreach	S
111	accept new changes	S
112	outreach and acceptance to communities, esp minority communities without an agenda	S
113	engage our communities with the amazing love and grace of God so that all may become committed followers of Christ	S
114	biblical truths, not our selfish ideas, comply with the word of God	S
115	love and reach out to others without expectations	S
116	remember that God loves all people of the synod, even conservative thinkers. Watch what you put into print. Some things are way too political.	S