

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD MISSION GOALS**

At the Annual Congregational Meeting of First Evangelical Lutheran Church in October of 2007, Pastor Larry Cudmore initiated a conversation among the congregation concerning strategic planning for our future mission. The area of concern was around early childhood issues and parents and how we might help bring about healthier childhoods and healthier families. The idea was to teach people to fish for themselves rather than giving them fish. As a result of the conversation, a Strategic Planning Team was organized and they have met on a very regular basis since October of 2007. The invitation to the congregation over the ensuing months was to be seeking out God's will through everyone praying the prayer, "O Lord, what is your dream for our future?" An attempt has been made to keep the congregation informed through the monthly newsletter and regular reports have been given at Church Council meetings. The following is a result of their work. We are entering into this mission in obedience to a call from our Lord to enhance and nurture the lives of children and their families both at home in Idaho Falls (something for our community) and in the designated area of mission outreach in Ashton, Idaho (something for another community). Special attempts will be made to reach out to those people who could use a little extra support. While there is never any guarantee of outside funding for resourcing this congregational ministry effort, applications for funding will be made to Partners for Prosperity, Thrivent Financial, and other funding sources for Lutheran ministries. We have many gifted and resourceful people in our faith community and the hope is that we can build on our excellent, existing ministries with yet another ministry of this congregation that once again communicates our care for others. As we reach out to the community, we trust that as they see how much we care for them, they will care what we know. And what we know is that God's love is for all and through Jesus Christ we have come to know that love.

The proposal has three parts to it: A,B and C. We would suggest that both Church Council and Congregation vote on each part separately from the other two.

**A. Develop a Family Literacy Program that will operate out of First Evangelical Lutheran Church. In its first year, this program will serve 20 families with children ages 4-6 (Pre-School – Kindergarten) living in the Idaho Falls area.** Starting January 3, 2009 families will spend an hour on the first Saturday of each month (including the summers) listening to a story and engaging in activities that support reading development. Additionally, children will have the opportunity to pick a book each month to keep as their very own. This ministry would come under and be led the by the Christian Education Ministry.

#### Program Goals-Year One

- Provide free high-quality books to 20 children ages 4-6 (Pre-School and Kindergarten) in order to create a print rich environment in the home.
- Improve the quality and frequency of shared reading activities in the home environment, by providing parents with guidance and materials.
- Instill a love of reading at an early age.
- To help children feel valued and have an increased sense of self-worth.

#### **Action Plan**

- Develop a Family Literacy Program that will operate out of First Evangelical Lutheran Church. Family Literacy encompasses the ways parents, children, and extended family members use literacy at home and in their community. This hour long family literacy program would be instrumental in assisting families in understanding the importance of literacy in their lives, while at the same time helping their children to value reading. This program will be developed to not only benefit the child, but to also provide events and activities designed to assist and involve parents.
- Recruit 10 students for the Pre-School Group (ages 4-5) and 10 students for the Kindergarten group (ages 5-6) from local family support agencies (For example: HELP, INC., WIC, Health and Welfare, CASA and The Haven.) and Title I schools (Title I grants are allocated to schools according to a legislative formula based mainly on the distribution of low-income children. However, once the funds reach the participating schools, children in those schools are selected for Title I services on the basis of low academic performance, regardless of income. Program registration will be on a first come, first serve basis.
- Provide free, high-quality, age appropriate books to children ages 4-6 from Scholastic, the global children's publishing, education, and media company, for each child to take home and keep each month.

- Provide parents with guidance and materials to improve the quality and frequency of shared reading activities in the home environment. Suggested methods:
  - Give helpful techniques and confidence for reading with their children through modeling.
  - Calendars with literacy activities to take home each month.
  - Informational brochures from the International Reading Association for families to take home or to be discussed with parents.
  - Home and Back Again Literacy Totes
  - Making a Parent Resource Library available.
- Meet once a month (12 months out of the year) for one hour (10 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.) on the first Saturday of the month for two years (January 2009-December 2010). One parent or legal guardian must accompany the participant(s).
  - The registered Kindergarten families would be finished with the program in December 2009. The registered Pre-School families would be able to continue with the program through December 2010. Ten new students for the Pre-School group and any open slots in the Kindergarten group would need to be recruited for January 2010.
- Provide transportation (using the Congregation's van) to the program for families in need.
- Provide child care for families who need to bring children ages 0-3 with them to the program.
- Finance the program through donations, grants, and fundraising with no cost to families who participate.

### **Goals as to How the Congregation Can Support**

- Provide two Literacy Program Directors (volunteer positions). These directors would be responsible for, but not limited to the following: working with community agencies and schools, recruiting of the target population, program funding, organizing the volunteers, working with parents, and planning and organizing the reading sessions.
- Provide four volunteers each month for reading/activity.
- Provide three kitchen volunteers each month to provide a light snack for the families.

- Provide two volunteers each month to staff the nursery for children ages 0-3.
- Provide a driver each month for the van.
- Seek to provide a volunteer grant writer.
- Provide classroom, nursery, kitchen, and permanent storage space for materials with utilities and insurance paid by Congregation.
- Provide the van for 12 months.
- Help with providing a light snack each month for the families at snack time (20 students plus family members).
- Supporting a child in the program for \$60.00 a year (covers the cost of 12 books and supplies for the activities)
- Supporting the program with additional monetary needs and start-up funds.
- Support and help with entertainment at fundraisers.
- Provide the Family Literacy Program with (worst case) \$3,008.00 through the budget.
  - \$2,074 for 122 background checks\*
  - \$900 for gas for the van
  - \$24 for printing costs/\$10 for paper costs
- Provide the Family Literacy Program with (realistic case) \$1,461 through the budget.
  - \$425 for 25 background checks
  - \$900 for gas for the van
  - \$24 for printing costs/\$10 for paper costs

\*Background checks for the needed volunteers (if we have different volunteers each month).

- Two adult Literacy Program Co-Directors
- Four adults for reading/extension activity x 12 = 48
- Three adults for the kitchen x 12 = 36
- Two adults/high school students for nursery x 12 = 24
- One van driver x 12 = 12

B: **Expand our current morning preschool at First Lutheran to add an afternoon program for 12 more children.** The total number of our preschool children would then serve a capacity of 24 children. Twelve of the 24 spots would be eligible for scholarship help up to 75 percent of the cost, to those who applied. Children who are members of First Lutheran would receive an automatic 25% reduction in their costs. This ministry would come under and be led by the Christian Education Ministry.

Goal 1: Increase our current preschool program by 12 students.

Goal 2: Hire two more teachers for the afternoon class.

Cost: 2 x \$450. = \$900.00 per month

Goal 3: Hire a director to oversee coordination between morning class and afternoon class.

Cost: \$200 a month. This person would probably be one of the four teachers (two in the morning class and two in the afternoon class).

Goal 4: Registration Fee at the beginning of the year is \$40.00. Monthly fee for three days a week/ half day class is \$95. a month. Cost to congregation if all 12 new slots received full scholarship help(75% of tuition cost plus half of registration cost):

\$240 for the year to help pay half the registration fee.

\$855 per month for 75% of the cost of 12 students.

Total Possible Maximum Cost to the Congregation

for September – December of 2009 \$4,000. (4 months)

Total Possible Maximum Cost to the Congregation

for January 2010 – December 2010 \$9,000. (9 months- summers off)

Assuming Tuition Fees rise to \$100. per month.

Goal 5: Support the parents of these children and literacy program children with the teaching of computer skills and providing use of computers for online classes.

### **Goals as to how the Congregation can support**

- Support the budget of no more than \$4,000 in 2009 and no more than \$9,000 for the school year 2010 – 2011.
- Help with refreshments for special events when parents are invited for programs.
- Support and carry out one fund raiser a year.
- Continue to provide classroom space with utilities and insurance paid by congregation.
- Donation of computers for computer stations to help parents learn computer skills while children are in preschool and maybe take online classes.
- Members to teach computer skills.

C. **We intend to enter into a partnership with Cornerstone Learning Center housed at Ashton Christian Fellowship Church for the mission of enhancing and nurturing**

**families with small children.** This would be similar to the partnerships we enter into with Idaho Falls organizations like the Food Bank, Fish, City of Refuge, etc. Cornerstone Learning Center is currently the only Christian Preschool/Daycare in Ashton. They are licensed with the state of Idaho. They are currently operating on a shoestring budget with no budget for maintenance or upgrading of their part of the building that is provided free of charge by Ashton Christian Fellowship. This mission would come under and be led by the leadership of our Mission Team. We felt called to consider Ashton because that is where the call for help has come from. It sounds to us like the call from Macedonia that Paul received in Acts 16:9 when in a vision Paul heard, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” Ashton has called for help. After a number of trips to Ashton and site visits by several people, this seems good and right to do.

This ministry effort would begin in January of 2009 and have a 2 year trial period.

### **Goals as to how the Congregation can support**

- Support a line item budget under Missions for \$2400. a year which would be \$200 a month. This would help with currently unmet maintenance issues. In addition, we would request \$540. for travel to and from Ashton over a years time.

### **Total amount requested for budget: \$2940.**

- Help organize and support a minimum of two work parties a year in which there could be painting, carpet laying, plumbing, carpentry work, etc. This could be a servant event organized by some group at First like, the Men in Mission prayer breakfast group, etc. and carried out by any volunteers at First, including the youth, etc. One of our Neighborhood Groups might even do a work party.
- Respond to appeals for materials like carpet, wood for shelving, paint, etc.
  - Ask the Local Missions group to work with Missions to designate one month of the year as Cornerstone Learning Center month as far as making an appeal for supply items on a need list at worship on Sundays.
- Seek to provide a grant writer from the First Lutheran.
- Pastor Larry and Pastor Jeff would each take one Thursday morning a month to provide a Chapel Service at the Center for the children. Included would be offering a pastoral presence by participating in the activities the rest of that morning. They would welcome volunteers from First to go along for support and participation with the children.

In the future as our literacy program develops in Idaho Falls, we may want to duplicate the same effort in Ashton.