

Plans ^{the} I HAVE
FOR YOU
PLANS TO **PROSPER** YOU
NOT HARM
YOU PLANS
TO GIVE YOU A
HOPE & FUTURE

• **JEREMIAH 29:11** •

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Planning Process—Shared Identity
August 20, 2017**

Introduction

Devotion: Acts 9: 1-19

³ Paul said, 'I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated strictly according to our ancestral law, being zealous for God, just as all of you are today. ⁴I persecuted this Way up to the point of death by binding both men and women and putting them in prison, ⁵as the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify about me. From them I also received letters to the brothers in Damascus, and I went there in order to bind those who were there and to bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment.

⁶ 'While I was on my way and approaching Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone about me. ⁷I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" ⁸I answered, "Who are you, Lord?" Then he said to me, "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting." ⁹Now those who were with me saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me. ¹⁰I asked, "What am I to do, Lord?" The Lord said to me, "Get up and go to Damascus; there you will be told everything that has been assigned to you to do." ¹¹Since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, those who were with me took my hand and led me to Damascus.

¹² 'A certain Ananias, who was a devout man according to the law and well spoken of by all the Jews living there, ¹³came to me; and standing beside me, he said, "Brother Saul, regain your sight!" In that very hour I regained my sight and saw him. ¹⁴Then he said, "The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear his own voice; ¹⁵for you will be his witness to all the world of what you have seen and heard. ¹⁶And now why do you delay? Get up, be baptized, and have your sins washed away, calling on his name."

Biblical Identity

It is helpful for a church to have a common Biblical Identity. This is where they see their congregation fitting into the Gospel story. It gives a community purpose and meaning and enables them to be part of the biblical story.

As our name is Holy Trinity, we need to link our name and our witness to the witness in the bible. Because our name is not in the bible, this process is not as easy as saying we are little St. Paul's spreading the Gospel to the gentiles. But nevertheless, we can come up with a Biblical identity. Here are a few readings that have something to do with the Holy Trinity. We could ask how do we identify with the Holy Trinity---what are the common characteristics we have with the Holy Trinity as we know it. With this information, write a couple sentences of what you think our biblical identity could be as a congregation.

Scripture readings:

Romans 14:17-18

For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. The one who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and has human approval.

John 14:16-17

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

Matt 3:16-17

And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God

descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.'

2 Corinthians 13:13

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Matthew 28:19

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.

Can you write a sentence or two about what you think can be our Biblical Identity?

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church Identity

With any group, there are things that are implicit or explicit as a group's understanding of itself. This exercise is to identify the explicit that is outwardly revealed in us. (we are a church that believes in Jesus Christ). Also, we need to identify the implicit or not visibly shown but understood. We need to articulate both types of these characteristics so that we can make what we are completely explicit and transparent to ourselves and others. Answering these questions may help you with this.

- 1.) What do you like about Holy Trinity?
- 2.) Why do you come to this church?
- 3.) What was the best thing that Holy Trinity has done as a community?
- 4.) What would people on the street say about Holy Trinity?
- 5.) When were you proud of Holy Trinity?
- 6.) When have you felt a sense of belonging to the church family?
- 7.) What would the worst church in the world look like? How are we not like that?
