



The Way Forward Report

EASTERN WASHINGTON – IDAHO SYNOD COUNCIL

September 6, 2013

Team Members

- ⊕ Martin Wells – Bishop
- ⊕ Gary Gemar – VP EWAID Synod, Co-Chair of The Way Forward
- ⊕ Pastor Dean Stewart – Co-Chair of The Way Forward
- ⊕ Stephanie Tesch – EWAID Synod Council
- ⊕ Pastor Phylis Stromme – EWAID Synod Council
- ⊕ Pastor Phil Misner – EWAID Synod Council
- ⊕ Pastor Helga Jansons – DEM EWAID Synod
- ⊕ Pastor Mark Nelson – Region 1 Coordinator for Ministry
- ⊕ Todd Kraft – Thrivent Agent, former President at King of Glory Lutheran, Boise
- ⊕ Bonnie Calhoun – Parish Administrator Advent Lutheran, Spokane Valley
- ⊕ Susan Berg – Synod Relations Administrator, NW Washington Synod
- ⊕ Deborah Chenoweth – VP Oregon Synod, Churchwide Council and LIFT Member
- ⊕ Marcia Riggers – School Administrator and Representative from SW Washington Synod
- ⊕ Pastor Tom Lee – Former Assistant to the Montana Synod bishop
- ⊕ Cathy Steiner – Administrative Secretary

Introduction

The Way Forward (TWF) task team met a total of 6 times between November 2, 2012 and June 29, 2013. We spent approximately 72 hours meeting face to face and considerably more time between meetings reading and reviewing books, blogs, articles, reports and Ted Talks to familiarize ourselves on ways the church is changing or needs to change in today's world. There are no magical solutions that will immediately change how the organized church should conduct ministry. We did learn many ways that congregations, synods and the national churchwide structures need to change behaviors and approaches to support each other to build mission vitality. Some of the discoveries are:

- ⊕ Innovative leaders are needed everywhere
- ⊕ Leadership development is critical
- ⊕ Innovation needs to be pervasive
- ⊕ Innovation does not come in isolation
- ⊕ Every Pastor is a mission developer
- ⊕ Every Pastor is trained to be part of a team
- ⊕ Every Leader is part of a team
- ⊕ Think Growth! Think Team!
- ⊕ Church needs to be more collaborative, conversational, connected
- ⊕ Change can be scary and messy but that is okay



- ⊕ Structure needs to be non-hierarchical
- ⊕ Diversity, openness, accessibility are important
- ⊕ Trust is inherent
- ⊕ Missional networks spread by losing control: the church will be full when it is empty
- ⊕ Transparent communication is vital
- ⊕ Focus on the bright spots in your ministries
- ⊕ Embrace new technologies
- ⊕ Congregations should reflect the communities they are located in
- ⊕ Building and strengthening caring and supportive relationships among members, neighbors and community is foundational
- ⊕ Congregations need to be in renewal all the time. A major component of renewal that all congregations can and should pursue is to develop their identity
- ⊕ The Spirit needs to be alive with hope

Through this discovery our challenge was to determine what the Eastern Washington Idaho Synod's essential functions should be to support congregations' mission vitality and what the structure of the Synod should look like to best accomplish this support.

As we went about our work we continually asked ourselves if we were just refining or changing established practices (technical change) or if we were truly establishing a new way or practice (adaptive change) in how the Synod should function moving forward.

Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, The Way Forward Team presents the following recommendations to the EWAID Synod Council.

Recommendations

Phase I

TWF team's studies and thoughtful deliberations along with the support of the surveys from the 2013 EWAID Assembly voting members and Synod Council members determined that the essential functions of the Synod to support our congregations/ministries should be:

- ⊕ Leadership Development
- ⊕ Mission Planning
- ⊕ Care for leaders and congregations

We recognize that call and candidacy processes along with resolving conflict needs to continue to be supported, but the three essential functions need to be the primary focus of the Synod in order to support congregations and our other ministries to live out God's mission of serving our neighbors. Therefore, we propose a flatter organizational structure for the Synod so all the support does not come solely out of the Office of the Bishop.



We envision a more distributed model of ministry with ministry partners working as teams across the Synod to accomplish goals. We recommend that 3 to 4 Net-Workers be called to work strategically across the Synod. They would support the bishop and congregations in the call process, coordinate resources for skill-building, training and leadership development, be a convener, listener and communicator, and facilitate new ministry development. The Net-Workers would report directly to the Bishop and work with other ministry partners throughout the synod and region. They can be either clergy or lay.

Candidacy would be supported by the Synod Administrative staff and Region 1 staff with support from the Bishop. Conflict management is best handled by contracted professional staff and would be coordinated by the Bishop.

We recognize that the clusters are not working as designed but they need to continue to be in place to constitutionally meet the obligations of nominating cluster representatives for Synod Council and candidates for bishop. TWF recommends that the Synod doesn't allow the cluster boundaries to inhibit ministry. Ministry needs to occur in regional areas and be supported by all the ministry partners. Encourage congregations to work outside their clusters in partnership to accomplish new ministry.

Looking at the accompanying organizational structure and the ministry partners descriptions, you will see many of the same positions. In order for the structure to be flatter, the ministry partners need to work as coordinated teams across the Synod. Therefore, we have redefined the responsibilities of each ministry partner so they can work as teams in a more distributed manner.

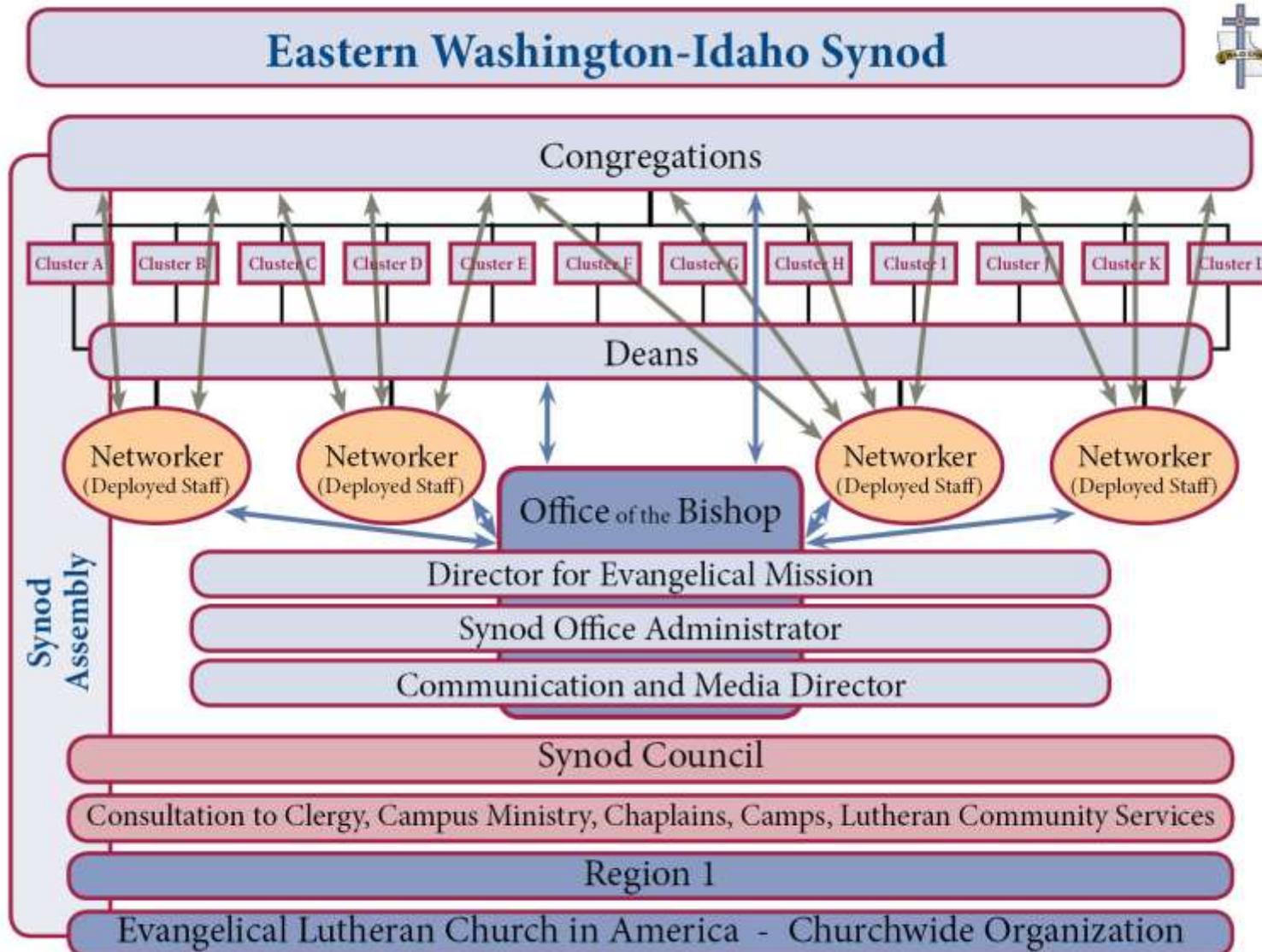
Our vision for the new Synod structure is as follows:

The Synod Ministry Partners are catalysts and resources, launching a new leadership network that creates, facilitates and supports intentional and collaborative processes for faithful creativity in future and mission-oriented ministries.

When the new structure and responsibilities are implemented, The Way Forward Team expects the Ministry Partners will assume the responsibility for moving forward to achieve the Synod's vision



Ministry Partner	Responsibility
Congregations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Identify mission and live out mission in Christ</i> 2. <i>Place of gathering, community and identity</i> 3. <i>Participate with others for mission advancement, including ELCA congregations and ecumenical partners</i>
Cluster Organizations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Facilitate relationship building between congregations</i> 2. <i>Support new mission opportunities</i> 3. <i>Nominate cluster representatives and bishop candidates</i>
Deans	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Provide personal and pastoral support for rostered leaders and spouses</i> 2. <i>Convene the cluster for business as needed</i> 3. <i>Cooperate with the work of the Net-Workers</i>
Net-Workers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Resource coordination for skill-building, training and lay leadership development</i> 2. <i>Convener/Listener/Communicator</i> 3. <i>Facilitate new ministry development</i> 4. <i>Support congregations in call process</i>
Synod Staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Administrative support for management, candidacy, communication, and resourcing</i>
Director for Evangelical Mission (DEM)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Stewardship coordination and education</i> 2. <i>Mission planning & congregational renewal</i> 3. <i>Evangelism and outreach support</i> 4. <i>Foster Latino ministry and other ethnic ministries as appropriate</i>
Bishop	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Spiritual and theological leader for Synod ministry</i> 2. <i>Synod Office operational oversight</i> 3. <i>Call process and ministry review support</i> 4. <i>Develop policy with Synod Vice-President and Synod Council</i>
Synod Council	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Develop and implement vision, mission and goals for the Synod</i> 2. <i>Provide oversight of Synod operations with Bishop</i> 3. <i>Facilitate Synod Assembly business, budget approval and elections</i> 4. <i>Bishop ministry review and accountability</i>
Synod Assembly	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Business/budget of the Synod, worship, learning, celebration and networking</i>
Consultation to Clergy, Camps, Chaplains, Campus Ministry, Lutheran Community Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Conduct ministry to distinct groups</i>
Region 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Financial Services Office (FSO)</i> 2. <i>Inter-synodical networking</i> 3. <i>Candidacy</i> 4. <i>First call and rostered leadership development</i> 5. <i>Mobility assistance</i>
Churchwide Expression	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Resources</i> 2. <i>Skill development</i> 3. <i>Networking</i> 4. <i>Fund revitalization and new ministries</i> 5. <i>Support Companion Synods</i> 6. <i>Global partnerships and mission</i>





Steps for Synod Council

The Way Forward recommends the Synod Council take the following steps to implement the vision outlined above:

1. Affirm TWF outcome proposal
2. Establish a process for implementation
 - ⊕ Create an implementation team
 - ⊕ Establish a timeline
 - ⊕ Create and update job descriptions of ministry partners as needed
3. Convene Finance Committee to determine feasibility of the number of Net-Worker positions and compensation
4. Develop a communication strategy
5. Assess implications for Synod Assembly for 2014
6. Assess Martin's suggestions for Mission Support
7. Train Net-Workers, Deans and other Ministry Partners in their new roles and expectations
8. Report progress and outcomes to neighboring synods, Region 1 Governing Council and the LIFT II task force
9. Conduct regular report outs at Synod Council meetings and make course corrections as needed
10. Develop an accountability process
11. Capture the "Bright Spots" and share them widely
12. Plan for future work that allows for more "Adaptive Change"

Phase II

The Way Forward recommends that the work of the Synod should not stop once Phase I is implemented. The Synod Council needs to continue to plan for future "Adaptive Changes" as the ministry environment in the Synod and Region evolves. Therefore, be diligent in looking at the following items:

- ⊕ How are Synods, Regions and Churchwide making changes over the next 5 years? Look to adopt some of the changes they recommend.
- ⊕ How might boundaries and partnerships of all our Synods in Region 1 need to change?
Consider-
 - Centralizing administrative functions across the Region
 - Creating Centers for Mission
 - Developing a Region-wide Candidacy Office
 - Conducting all Regional Convocations
 - Consolidating Synods
 - Using new technologies to meet and conduct ministry
- ⊕ How are theological preparation for candidacy and call for rostered and lay leaders need to evolve as new recommendations are made regionally and churchwide?



Concluding Comments

TWF's recommendations in Phase I are designed more around "technical change" but we feel if the ministry partners adopted the recommended changes in their duties and work more as a team across the Synod, congregations will be better suited to learn how to make "adaptive changes" in their ministries. Continue to explore the recommendations in Phase II because this is where revolutionary changes can be made that are truly adaptive. It will take long range planning to implement changes if other synods are involved so start encouraging regional conversations. These conversations can begin initially when the Region 1 Governing Council meets at the Bishop and Vice President level. Other ministry partners can be invited to these meeting as the discussions progress.

Finally, we recognize that change is difficult. In the Living into the Future Task Force (LIFT) and Patterns of Synodical Life that Effectively Support Congregational Missional Vitality (Kenneth Inskeep et al) reports, the following comments were made *"People like their congregations just the way they are", "Lutherans do not like change particularly with regard to long, well established, institutional practices and this institutional rigidity has become an obstacle to proclaiming the good news"*. It will be critical to understand how change can be done successfully. Therefore, we recommend that all ministry partners as part of their training and leadership development participate in a class on "Change Process". Use one of the following resources to guide the learning.

- ⊕ Switch – How to Change Things When Change is Hard – *Chip Heath & Dan Heath*
- ⊕ A Door Set Open – Grounding Change in Mission and Hope – (Chapter 4 – *The Challenge of Change*) *Peter L. Steinke*
- ⊕ The Fly in the Ointment – Why Denominations Aren't Helping Their Congregations and How They Can (*Chapter 14 – Leading and Managing Change*) – *J. Russell Crabtree*
- ⊕ Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive Through the Dangers of Leading – *Martin Linsky and Ronald A. Heifetz*

We want to thank the Synod Council for commissioning this task force. It was a Spirit filled and educational process for all of us. We encourage you to move forward boldly with the guidance of the Holy Spirit as you implement Phase I and explore opportunities in Phase II. The work of our Lord is never done. Continue to press forward as God is always making us new.

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and through grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, comfort your hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word.

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

Blessings in your upcoming work!