

NeXST Strategic Planning Team Report Highlights

Introduction

Standing for **New Creation in Christ Strategy Team**, the **NeXST** strategic planning advisory team was formed by King of Kings Council in the fall of 2009. King of Kings' Constitution requires that such a committee should be formed at regular intervals to help determine the strategic direction of this congregation according to our call as disciples of Christ, and guided by our church body, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (SE Michigan Synod), the church Council and with the support of the congregation as a whole, especially through their intercessory prayer.

NeXST Team Charge from Council

At our Nov. 30, 2009 meeting, the NeXST team refined the charge from Council and adopted it, which was endorsed by the Congregation Council in December of 2009:

As called disciples of our Lord, Jesus Christ, we are a New Creation and ambassadors for Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:16-20)

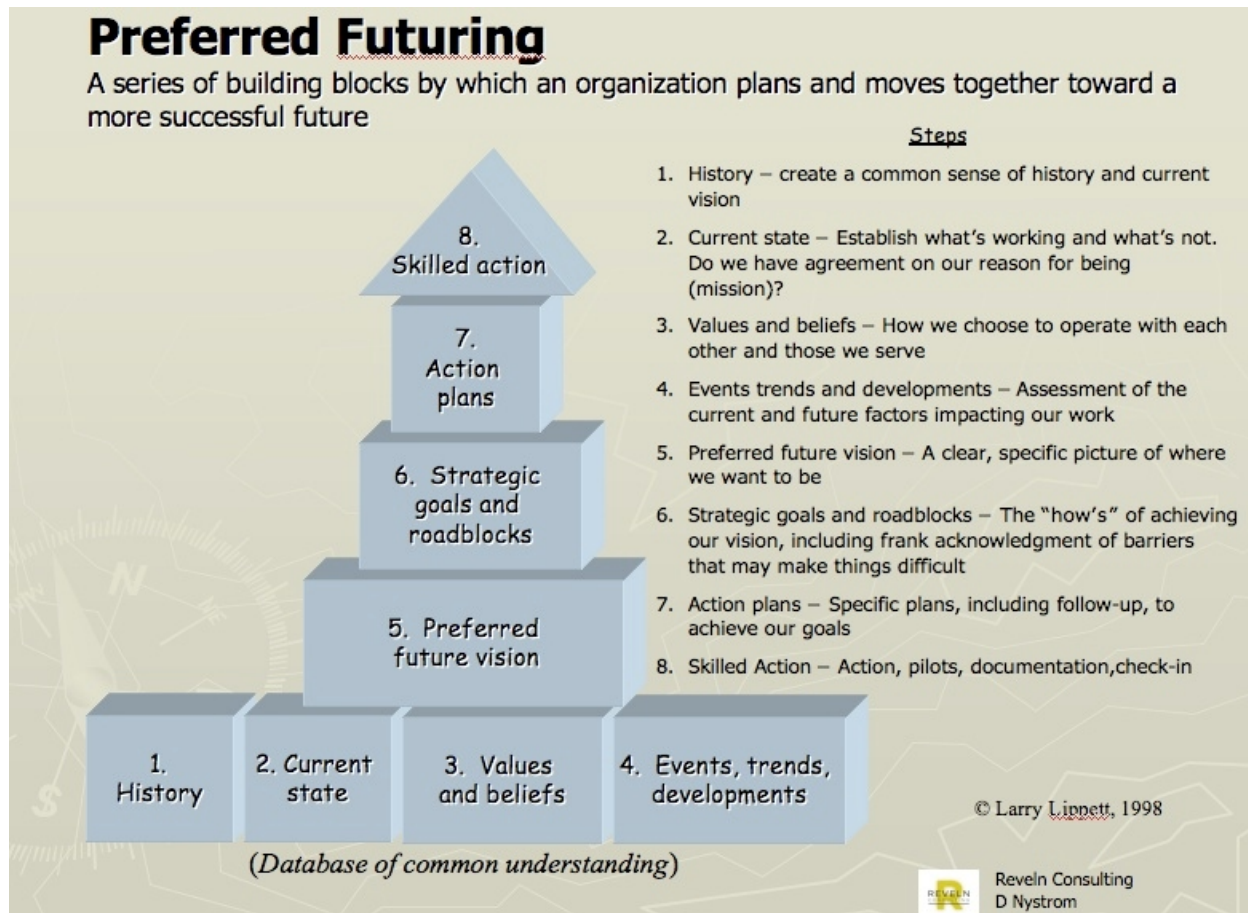
Therefore it is our responsibility to reflect the love and grace that God has given us in the way we act as individuals and as a King of Kings (KoK) Community. Our King of Kings Church Council, after prayerful consideration, has charged this group, the King of Kings' Strategic Action Team with facilitating a process for the KoK community to discern where God is leading us, who God is calling us to be, and what God is asking us to do. This process will enable and assist us to examine and update our current mission and vision and to have a clearer sense of our identity and ministry as a congregation. To help this happen, the team is expected to deliver a final strategic plan that will enable the KoK community to clarify our ministry and calling as a congregation, rooted in our mission, incorporating our attention to existing areas of ministry and structure, which includes adult Sunday school, youth, welcoming of new members, member enrichment, outreach and evangelism and technology.

Additionally, this new strategic plan will clarify the outcomes KoK wishes to achieve, identify the broad strategies that will enable achievement of those outcomes, and identify ways to measure progress of how we fully use our gifts and strengths.

The process will be permeated by prayer, be fully representational, engaging as many members of our KoK community as possible, focus on strengths and our collective preferred future and help us understand the change needed. The resulting strategic plan will set forth clearly how we plan to achieve our mission via new strategic goals and priorities and a suggested implementation plan with desired milestones.

NeXST Team Selected Methodology

The NeXST Team adopted the "Preferred Futuring Model" © Larry Lippett, 1998, as their methodology



NeXST Team Process

Following the model, we explored our **history** (through congregation-inspired time line analysis), our **current state** and **values & beliefs** (through our launch event, surveys, & review of existing King of Kings data), and **events, trends, and developments** (through our launch event, surveys, and review of other secondary resources). These building blocks were referenced as the congregation began to create a preferred future vision at the all-member **visioning events** on two weekends in October 2010.

Throughout this process we have prayed and asked for all those involved in King of Kings ministry to pray for us and for this effort. We've asked those who participated in our process to ask for God's blessing and for prayerful discernment, so that we may find the path that God wants for his ministry as expressed at King of Kings.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Draft Strategic Goals

Analysis of all the data that was gathered has led the NeXST team to identify and advocate for the following draft strategic goals for King of Kings.

Draft Strategic Goal 1: Develop intentional programs and systems for inviting, welcoming, and integrating new members and guests using current methodologies and evolving communications technology, led by our King of Kings mission.

- Integrate the King of Kings Mission Statement into all we do. Consider minor revision of mission statement as appropriate. *(Based on survey results, there has been no intentional engagement with the mission statement in a practical way in many years.)*
- Strengthen member integration
- Plan and launch intentional evangelical efforts, including training for members.
- Provide tools to acclimate new members and guests, including photo board, name tags, expanded worship bulletin, etc.
- Plan and take action to be intentional in integrating and inviting traditionally marginalized segments of society, including racial minorities, those of varied socio-economic backgrounds, LGBT members, and others as appropriate. (Also see relevance of draft Strategic Goal #2).

Draft Strategic Goal 2: Explore different forms of Christ-centered worship that are comfortable, welcoming, appropriate and challenging to both unchurched and those born and bred in the Church.

- Consider revising worship bulletin to make it more user-friendly. (For example like the outdoor service bulletin that is all-inclusive.)
- Look at more “modern” liturgy or worship service formats focused on youth and young adults, including music, service length, family meal, integrated Bible study/education, etc.
- Consider additional, alternative time for services, including Wednesday, Saturday or Sunday evening.
- Consider more modern / gender-neutral language in worship services

Draft Strategic Goal 3: Sharpen and systematize our volunteer leadership methods, including recruitment, development and maintenance to create effective, robust, evolving, and welcoming ministries (internal and external).

- Look for models outside of King of Kings and adapt other's best practices to fit King of Kings' needs.
- Gather creative ideas from congregation members for new volunteer services (e.g., conflict resolution team)
- Consider a much-strengthened volunteer coordinator position, that would obtain and maintain written procedures, position tenure (length of time in volunteer job), and leadership development and potential. It is anticipated that this position needs to be at the Council level, and on a par with Secretary or Treasurer.
- Consider apprenticeship program for positions to maintain stability, change and an appropriate amount of healthy turnover.
- Make strategic decisions about what programs and services King of Kings will provide and which need to be provided by other churches and social service agencies, consistent with our evolving mission.

Draft Strategic Goal 4: Renew and rebuild pastoral, staff, and volunteer support systems.

- Implement systems for regular feedback, communication, and evaluation.
- Incorporate roles for external advisers.
- Take action to support continual pastor renewal and guard against burn out.

Discussion

1. What are your thoughts on the draft strategic goals?
2. What is your opinion of the priority of the draft strategic goals?

Potential Roadblocks

Analysis of the data has led the NeXST team to identify four potential roadblocks.

Roadblock 1: Cultural change could be challenging

King of Kings has a very “loosey goosey” culture, where people don’t formally commit to things, don’t sign up for things, figuring that “it will just work out”. Changing to a more responsible, committed and systematic culture will take a lot of effort, training, communication, and time.

Roadblock 2: Worship changes could be challenging

King of Kings has had very similar worship services for many years. Making significant changes or additions to worship will take some getting used to. Depending upon Council’s decisions, a new worship service may require an additional worship committee, musicians, etc.

Roadblock 3: Leadership

We’ve had recent periods of leadership shift both in presidents and pastor, as well as changes in the structure of staff and pastoral support systems including office support staff. Our pastor is also in his first call at the same time the SE Michigan Synod has been undergoing dramatic changes. We have struggled with filling ministry/committee chairperson roles.

Roadblock 4: Inability To Healthfully Deal With Conflict

Based on some of the survey responses and history, King of Kings may have difficulty dealing with conflict in a healthy manner. (For example, some survey and visioning data revealed possibly long-standing issues with church leadership that have remained unresolved for some time.)

Change and growth inevitably lead to conflict; to not deal with this conflict in a positive and decisive way may lead to stagnation and frustration in our ministries. One example of conflict avoidance could be hesitancy on the part of leadership to forthrightly request increased giving in response of financial shortfalls, due to concern of upsetting some members and the perception of focusing on money matters instead of ministry.

Events

May Launch Event - An initial small group discussion and historical timeline event entitled the King of Kings - Pentecost Strategy Event Sunday, was held before and after the 10:45 service on May 23rd, 2010. The purpose of this event was to jump start congregational planning by building a common understanding of King of Kings' history and to gather initial data about our past and current situation.

Congregational Survey - A congregational survey was launched between September 2, 2010 and September 25, 2010. Forty-seven (47) people accessed the online survey; three (3) completed the paper version. The survey was used to produce a themed report shared with all congregation members before the fall congregation-wide Visioning Event.

Visioning Event - A congregation-wide Visioning Event was held over two weekends, October 15-17 & 24, 2010, using an "Open Space" format. A key document produced from this event was the completed, clustered and indexed proceedings. The visioning data directly influenced the formation of the draft strategic goals. Thirty-six (36) congregational members signed the guest welcome page for the event.

In addition to holding these three major events, the NeXST team came together for 15 meetings to do the work of organization, preparation of materials, and data analysis, theme identification and report writing.

Next Steps

The NeXST Team was established and charged by Council as a strategic planning advisory team. Their report is "in service of the King of Kings Strategic Plan". Council greatly thanks the members of NeXST for their work and service!

Now that Council has received the NeXST report, our work as leaders and the congregation's work as disciples, **members of the "priesthood of all believers"**, begins. Informed by NeXST team's work (and other work as necessary), King of Kings Council will begin to develop the "Action Plans" and facilitate the "Skilled Action" (steps 7 & 8 of the Preferred Futuring model) that will help King of Kings fulfill our mission - to proclaim the Good News to all.

Council will begin looking at the draft Strategic Goals and developing our first action plan in February. We will report our progress in the newsletter and at upcoming congregational meetings. It's important to note that the implementation process will be a big undertaking for King of Kings, and will take place over the next several years, after which it will be time again to begin another cycle of strategic planning. There will be many opportunities for members to be involved, and we look forward to your participation and **use of your gifts** to help the King of Kings community **grow in mission** and **move towards our shared vision**.