

PARADIGMS FOR MISSION RENEWAL

What if the biggest challenges we face in the work of mission renewal are *adaptive* ones, not *technical* ones? What if we don't need to figure out a better way to do what we've always done, we need to figure out a new way to be who and what God is calling us to be? As congregations move forward, it is helpful to consider a series of paradigm shifts. Here is a concrete way of imagining the breadth and depth of renewal.

OLD PARADIGM	NEW PARADIGM
<i>Church</i> is a place assumed to be an important part of people's lives and the world. Therefore, we expect people to want to be part of a congregation.	<i>Church</i> is a community gathered by the Spirit and blessed to be a blessing. Church is less a noun, more a verb; less a place, more a way of life.
<i>The congregation</i> is an organization focused on serving its members. Membership is how one belongs to the congregation and how it belongs to you.	<i>The congregation</i> is a mission outpost and is therefore focused on serving its mission field (i.e., the neighborhood, city, and world).
<i>Ministry</i> is done through programs. Programs address perceived problems (e.g., "We don't have youth; we need youth ministry.") and are directed by Staff.	<i>Ministry</i> is about vocation. Vocation is living out the spiritual gifts given to us in baptism. Vocation happens in relationships. We are a priesthood of all believers.
<i>Outreach</i> is about doing nice things for others. <i>Evangelism</i> is about getting new members, because more members means more money, and more money means we can keep doing what we've always done.	<i>Outreach</i> is a combination of service, advocacy, and relationship building. <i>Evangelism</i> is about sharing our faith stories in spiritual friendships.
<i>Worship</i> is about expressing praise to God in a comfortable setting; it's also about fulfilling a religious obligation.	<i>Worship</i> imagines a world. Worship shapes us into the kind of people God is calling us to become. Liturgy is the "work of the people" and so it is diverse and contextual.
<i>Christian Education</i> is about learning the bible and passing on the Lutheran confessional tradition. But it's optional.	<i>Christian Education</i> is about making disciples of Jesus. It is centered on faith practices in the home, workplace, and together at church.
<i>Congregational Life/Fellowship</i> really means "social committee." It's about coffee hour and potluck dinners.	<i>Congregational Life</i> is about creating a culture of hospitality, service, discipleship, and prayer within the congregation. It's our collective spirituality.
<i>Stewardship/Finance</i> are essentially the same thing; it's about how we're going to keep the lights on.	<i>Stewardship</i> is about how we are using all the resources God has given us. <i>Finance</i> is about aligning our money with our mission priorities.
<i>Lay Leaders</i> serve out of duty; it's about whose turn it is to serve on council. <i>Pastors</i> work hard, trying to give people what they want. They are busy meeting needs, solving problems, and answering questions.	<i>Congregational Leadership</i> is a dynamic partnership between clergy and lay leaders that cultivates a new environment that fosters missional creativity. Leaders work together to ask the right questions, invite others to serve, and love people into a new way of being church.
<i>Decisions</i> are made by the leaders. Council delegates day to day tasks and programs to staff. The congregation votes on major things once or twice per year.	<i>Decisions</i> are made through spiritual discernment. The more participants in a decision-making process, the wiser it will be. Council and staff are lead-learners.

This resource was developed for congregational use. Please use freely! The compilers also welcomes questions, further conversation, and feedback:

Tim Snyder, *Outreach Architect* at Hope Lutheran Church (St. Paul, MN). Tim formerly served as mission developer of The Netzer Co-Op (Austin, TX). Contact: tknyder@gmail.com

Paul Erickson, *Director for Evangelical Mission*, Saint Paul Area Synod, ELCA. Contact: paul.erickson@elca.org