

Streams in the Desert Lutheran Church



Mission Exploration Team Report

January 9, 2005

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Mission Exploration Overview

The Mission Exploration Process was introduced to the Streams in the Desert Call Committee and Council by a representative of the Grand Canyon Synod as a necessary first step to calling a new pastor. It was explained that a thoughtful exploration of where our congregation is and where we see ourselves in the future would be invaluable in choosing the right Pastor to lead our church.



In August, 2004, the task before us was explained in detail to the congregation and all were invited to join the Mission Exploration Team (MET). Meetings were held Sundays after the last service from August 29th through January 2nd, 2005. The meetings were two to three hours long and attendance ranged from eight to twenty with an average of twelve, generally including one or two members of the Call Committee. Each meeting included devotions, prayer, and personal sharing in addition to exploring

topics. This experience was a “first” for all involved, and we were amazed with God’s leading and with what God has done at Streams.

Beginning with a blank slate, our first decisions had to do with the goal and scope of the process. We began by differentiating the roles of the MET and the Call Committee. The group decided to loosely follow the Mission Exploration Process in chapter 5 of the Call Process Manual of the Greater Milwaukee Synod, found on the internet. Having established this rough guideline for our exploration, we began to gather and share information about our church and community using demographic studies, church history, materials from church publications, a community speaker, and observations of team members.

From the beginning our team agreed upon the critical importance of congregational input. We experimented with input gathering techniques such as a white board on the patio, and member interviews between services. We quickly learned that the congregation was most comfortable when responding in writing, answering one or two questions each week on a bulletin insert. Seven questionnaires with a total of eleven questions were distributed to the congregation and the responses proved to be a rich source of information. We also approached a number of committees and small groups asking “what are your hopes and dreams for your group?” The information gathered at these meetings was also instrumental in understanding who we are as a church.



To keep the congregation informed about our progress, team members gave a number of “Temple Talks” during the announcement portion of our worship services. We also communicated with the congregation through updates in our weekly bulletins, the monthly newsletter, and by establishing a website through which MET documents could be accessed.

As the information gathering phase of our exploration drew to a close we began to focus on setting goals. Four goals were identified in the following areas: opportunities for learning God's word, reaching out to neighbors, improving communications, and encouraging member support and full participation in the life of our church. Specific strategies to work toward these goals were also developed.



These goals and strategies are to be seen as rallying points for the congregation, supporting and enhancing current ministries as well as suggesting new approaches. It is our recommendation that the council encourage a committee or group to document accomplishments in each of the goal areas, and revise the goals and strategies as appropriate, for presentation to the congregation on an annual basis.

Supporting material for this report can be found in a companion binder that is available in the church office. We hope our work will be helpful to the Call Committee in the search for a new Pastor, as well as to the church council and the congregation as we continue our journey, growing together in God's love.



Section 1: History

"Water will gush forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert." Isaiah 35:6



Streams in the Desert Lutheran church has been serving God for almost 50 years. In the mid 1950's the Board of American Missions of the United Lutheran Church of America (ULCA) determined that another congregation should be established. The Rev. Garrett F. Genszler, D.D. and his family arrived in Tucson on March 23, 1955 after serving a congregation in Marinette, Wisconsin. They settled in the parsonage at 4311 E. Bryn Mawr Road.

The field work of house to house canvassing began April 1, 1955 and sufficient interest and support existed to begin services. The first worship service was held at the Ft.

Lowell School on June 12, 1955 with 52 worshippers. The sermon title was "A Drop of Water" or "Streams in the Desert" (from Isaiah). It was from this sermon title that the name of the congregation was eventually chosen.

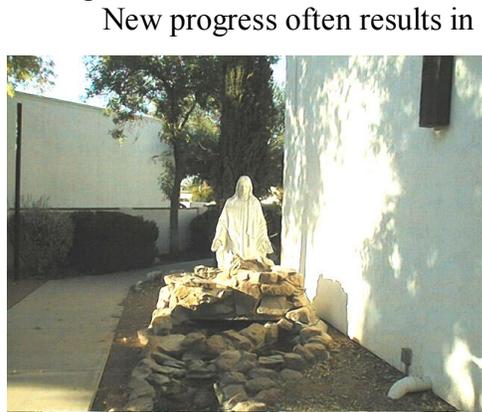


In July 1955 the Board of American Missions purchased the present church site at the cost of \$26,750. The site had a one-bedroom adobe house with a porch. A piano and a hundred folding chairs were purchased, and on Sunday November 6, 1955, the first service was held in the house-chapel.

During the months which followed, a Luther League was started, a choir was formed, a women's group began, Sunday School and Vacation Church School were conducted. The church was officially organized on Sunday March 11, 1956. Pastor Garrett Genszler was called and installed as the congregation's first Pastor.

In April 1958, ground was broken for a new chapel and it was dedicated in October. Due to health reasons Rev. Genszler resigned in September 1963 and Rev. Walter Fry became Pastor and served from January 1964 until March 1967. On August 6, 1967, the Rev. Harry M. Rohwer, Jr. became Pastor of Streams. A rebuilding of the congregation was needed, and with the Lord's blessings, good things happened. In June 1971 the congregation received the goals of the Executive Building Committee and in

1972 accepted the plot plan and architect's drawings for a new Sanctuary/Office Building. On September 29, 1974, the service of dedication was held for the office and sanctuary.



New progress often results in growth of membership, financial gifts, and talents for a richer ministry. In 1978 a new constitution was adopted and the Genszler Memorial Garden-statue and fountain were purchased and dedicated. Plans for an education and fellowship hall were presented to council in 1980, and on November 9th ground-breaking for the new facility was held. In September 1981 a service of dedication was held. JR. Westerfield was the first son of the congregation to go into the ministry, and was ordained in our church. Gene Jewell was the first seminary intern requested by the congregation.

In May 1984 we purchased the new Rodgers Model 205 combination electronic/pipe organ, and in November installed the six beautiful stained glass windows in the sanctuary with the theme of the stream. The congregation sponsored the Nguyen family from Vietnam, helping them to get resettled. A need for more staff existed and in 1986 the congregation, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, called the Rev. Shealds Smith to come and serve as associate Pastor. As a new ministry, the church offered its facilities to LSMS to begin its Daybreak Program (adult daycare-respite for caregivers). Shortly thereafter, we finally blacktopped the parking lot which had been gravel and mud. In 1988 a large copper-colored cross was erected on Pima. A large gold letter sign spelling out the church name was placed on the northeast wall on the corner of Pima and Woodland. After nearly twenty-two years of service, Pastor Rohwer retired.

In 1989 Pastor Smith served as interim Pastor until he was called and installed as Senior Pastor. In 1991 consideration had been given to the building of a children's day-care center, but no action was taken. Fire destroyed the former nursery building and the work shed. The council used the insurance money, with other additional cash, to pay off the existing debt, ending the year debt-free. Pastor Patti Knox was called as assistant Pastor, serving a short while before accepting a call to a church in Phoenix.



Plans were made and voted upon to build a new and larger fellowship facility, including youth and choir rooms in 1994. Construction began in June, but on October 15th devastating early morning arson fire destroyed the old fellowship hall, kitchen, as well as a substantial portion of the new construction. The year ended with the resignation of Pastor Smith. A wonderful farewell tribute was held in his honor at our neighboring parish St. Cyril's Roman Catholic Church. Streams in the Desert moved ahead with the re-building of the fire damaged areas, finishing the new facilities and dedicating them Sunday May 21, 1995. The new space is in great demand for many community meetings.

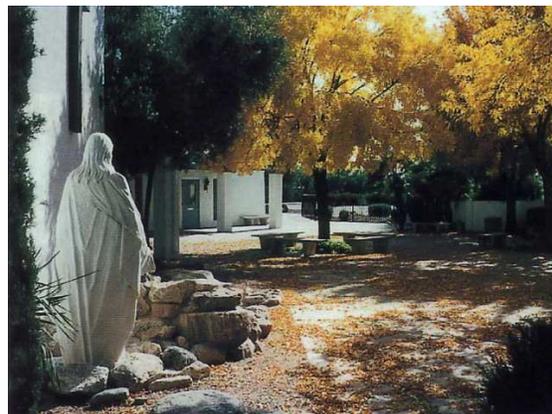
The congregation did the proper work in searching for a Pastor, and in September 1995 Pastor John Witkop, accepted the call to become shepherd of Streams in the Desert congregation. During his ministry an excellent growth in membership occurred. Many new programs were implemented, the worship increased to three services, adding a praise

band. The sanctuary was remodeled and Pastor Walter Schultheiss was called as visitation Pastor. A beautiful memorial rose garden and columbarium was designed and built. Health reasons forced Pastor Schultheiss to resign. The congregation extended its ministry to building homes for the underprivileged in Agua Prieta, Mexico. Several young men from Togo, Africa were assisted by the congregation.



Seminarian David Marz came as an intern in 1997, was ordained here, and then received a call as an associate Pastor at Streams. After several years of ministry, Pastor Marz resigned to accept a call to a church in Phoenix. Pastor Witkop fulfilled his doctoral studies at Chicago seminary, finishing in 2003. Pastor Art Mees began serving as visitation Pastor. Throughout the years many people served our congregation by working with our youth. In 2002 the youth ministry was further advanced by the arrival of Lee Bassett to assume the post of Director for Youth and Family Life Ministry. Pastor Witkop resigned in

2004 and accepted a call to a church in Colorado. Pastor Duane Lokken is currently serving as our interim Pastor.



Section 2: Facts About Our Church

“And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from the dead, so that in everything he might have supremacy.” Colossians 1:18

Streams in the Desert Lutheran Church (ELCA) is located at 5360 E. Pima Street on the southwest corner of Pima and Woodland Avenue in east Tucson. The church is built on a four acre site and is comprised of four main buildings: the sanctuary (4050 SF), administrative building (2015 SF), fellowship hall & classroom building (11,474 SF), and the original sanctuary which is now used as a storage building. This storage building is going to be incorporated into the future elderly housing project and have a shared



community use. The sanctuary has a seating capacity of 300 and the fellowship hall can accommodate 300+ occupants at tables or 400+ in chairs. The sanctuary could accommodate an additional 100-150 people with an expansion and remodeling project.

Within the fellowship hall building, there are two kitchens, one of them a full commercial type. There is also a library, a nursery, several youth rooms, a choir and music room, and with the use of partitions up to 14 classrooms or meeting areas of varying sizes. Movable partitions enable the fellowship areas and classrooms to be combined as needed.

The large capacity of the fellowship hall has enabled Streams to serve as a community resource by providing space for a number of organizations to hold their functions, such as CPR classes held on a monthly basis and the annual Nordic Fair. The Daybreak program, administrated through Lutheran Social Ministries, also utilizes the smaller fellowship hall to provide adult day-care during the week, providing respite for caregivers.

To the north of the Fellowship building is an enclosed playground for young children. Two new pastor offices and a restroom were added to the administration building during the 1994 Fellowship Hall construction project. There are four total office areas. Two more offices and another restroom could be added with a future addition. Two of the southern three lots on the site have been designated for elderly housing and the remaining southern lot for parking expansion. The Streams in the Desert campus has been designed to maximize its ministries and to allow for a small amount of growth in the future.

At this time the congregation worships at three services each Sunday morning, except during the summer months when there are two services. There is a traditional service at 8:15, a contemporary service at 9:30 and another traditional service at 10:45. June through September we have a traditional service at 8:30 and a contemporary service at 10:00. We are blessed with a volunteer praise band which serves during the majority of the contemporary services. We also have a wonderful church choir, bell choir, and children's choir as well as numerous talented musicians in our congregation who offer their music as part of our worship. About four times a year, whenever there is a fifth Sunday in the month, the youth group conducts our worship service including the sermon or message, the music and all other aspects of worship.

Streams in the Desert continues to be blessed with a wonderful staff. Paid positions are as follows: Senior Pastor (at this time Transition Pastor), Director of Youth and Family Life Ministries, Pastor for Visitation, Minister of Music, Secretary/Office Manager, Accountant, Organist, Custodian/Sexton, and Nursery Attendant.

The Church Council has 12 members and represents the congregation in church decisions. In addition there are three youth representatives. Streams committees and their missions are as follows:

- Prayer Chain** – provides prayer for concerns of members of congregation
- Mutual Ministry** - works intentionally to support staff, Pastor, council, and congregation in their shared ministry
- Library** – supports Christian education of the church and community through the loaning of books, periodicals and other media
- Furnishings** – oversees interior furnishings that are purchased or donated
- Worship/Music** – provides oversight and direction for how worship services are conducted, including music ministries
- Memorial** – manages memorial donations to ensure they are used according to the wishes of the donor
- Service** – organizes and carries out numerous projects to serve those within the church, city and worldwide
- Stewardship** - encourages and facilitates congregational giving of time, talents, and finances.
- Evangelism** – carries out programs that encourage and provide opportunities for non-believers to come to Christ
- Building and Grounds** – provides oversight for building and grounds improvements and maintenance
- Audit** – provides financial oversight for the church
- Family Life** – provides fellowship and service opportunities as well as spiritual development through Bible study, prayer and education
- Altar Guild** – maintains and prepares the altar and sanctuary for worship services
- Nominating Committee** - identifies and recruits candidates for Church council
- Senior Housing** – works to bring to fruition a plan to construct an affordable senior housing facility on Streams property
- Call Committee** – mission of this committee is to discern and communicate needs and expectations of congregation regarding hiring a new pastor, to interview applicants provided by synod, and to make a recommendation on the selection

In 2003, the value of the church buildings and lot was \$1,262,000. Endowment and memorial funds amounted to \$20,000 and cash, savings and bonds were valued at \$80,000. Other assets were valued at \$5,000.

From 1996 to 2003, expenses increased from \$188,700 to \$365,000. During that time, payments on debts went from \$45,700 to \$30,000, a 34.4% decrease. Total indebtedness for 2003 stood at \$205,000.

Streams in the Desert's 2004 budget developed by the church council and adopted by the congregation is as follows:

Personnel		\$ 235,100
Operational Expenses		59,350
Fund Expenditures		
	Worship and Music	\$ 8,500
	Christian Education	23,035
	Benevolence	57,200
		<u>88,735</u>
		\$ 383,185

As in most organizations, the largest item in the budget is personnel expenses, which includes salaries, benefits and other associated costs. Operational expenses follow with a 15.5% portion of the funds, the two major cost areas being utilities, 6.7% and administrative costs of 4.2%. Worship and Music utilizes 2.2% and Christian Education 2.3%. Evangelism and Stewardship combine to equal 2.6%. Our benevolence expenditures are 14.9% of the budget, including 9.4% to Synod for benevolence and 5.5% for other activities, the largest being Daybreak Adult Day Care with 3.8% of budgeted funds.

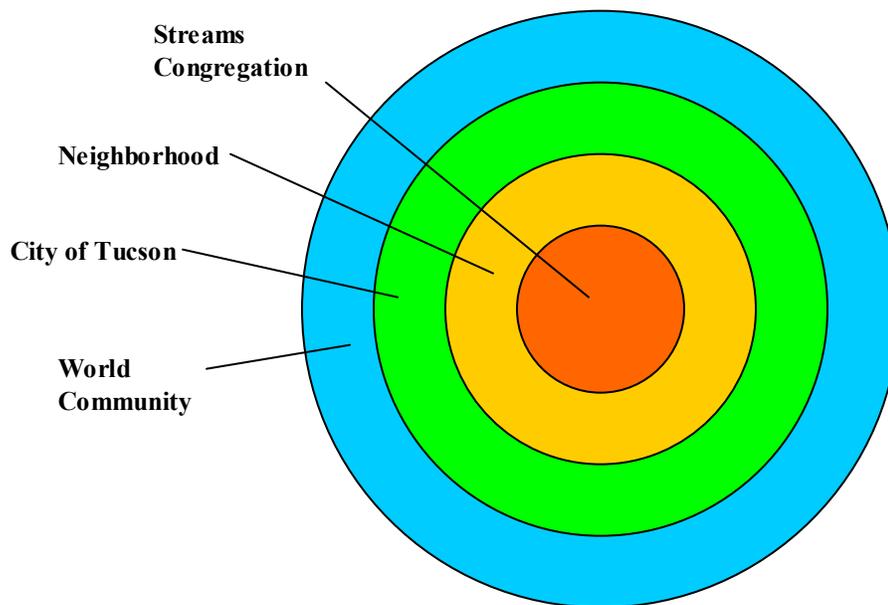
Section 3: Our Community

“Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.” Mark 16:15

A. Introduction

The diagram below illustrates our conception of the community of Streams in the Desert. The inner circle represents the core of our community, our congregation which is embedded in the larger church body of the ELCA. Moving outward, our immediate neighborhood is defined as walking distance from the church, or within a two mile radius. The city of Tucson as a whole represents a still larger community. Finally, we consider ourselves part of the world community, impacting missions around the world largely through the ELCA.

Diagram 1: Streams in the Desert Community



B. Congregation

The congregation of Streams in the Desert is a wonderful group of people of all ages. Some have attended Streams since its inception in 1956. Our most recent statistics from a church survey done in September of 2004 show a current membership of about 550 in approximately 300 households. This is significantly lower than the 902 membership figure reported for 2003 in our Congregational Trend Report found at the ELCA web-site. The difference is probably due to some miscalculation of membership size in 2003 and some attrition of members due to Pastor Witkop leaving. Membership is

predominately Anglo and includes other ethnic groups such as African American, Hispanic, Native American and persons of Asian descent. More detailed demographic information is not yet available due to incomplete survey responses. As this information is added, we will be able to understand more fully the needs of our congregation.

Our members come from all over the city, but 64% reside in the zip codes served by our church as defined by the ELCA trend report: 85710, 85711, 85712, 85716, 85730, and 85750.

Attendance patterns for the past eight years are summarized in the table below. Overall, worship attendance started to level off from 1999 on. The percentage of members attending services peaked in 2001 and has declined somewhat since.

Attendance Patterns from 1996 to 2003

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Average Worship Attendance	260	330	345	372	367	387	377	360

Streams members have been faithful in their giving over the years. Total giving by Streams members amounted to \$392,000 in 2003, up from \$251,600 in 1996. Following the curve of the average worship attendance, total giving peaked in 1999 and declined slightly through 2003. Regular giving per confirmed-communing member increased 10.3% in 1996 dollars over that same time period, from \$480.77 to \$530.24. Total ELCA benevolence has increased over the years.

C. Neighborhood

In our study we define our local neighborhood community as roughly the area within a two mile radius of the church. According to a demographic study commissioned by the church, with information from the 2000 Census, the demographics of the area show definite patterns.

The neighborhood is densely populated, highly dispersed and highly diverse. Moderate growth is occurring from older established households to younger, non-traditional family structures. The predominant age group in this area is 23-43 and the educational level is considered very high. Fifty percent are young (singles and couples beginning career life) and fifty-seven percent are single (male or female either never married, divorced or widowed).

The neighborhood has a somewhat high level of ethnic diversity with African Americans as the fastest growing segment of the population. The lifestyle group would be considered “young and coming” with a tendency to be more concerned with the basic necessities of life as opposed to family or community problems, hopes and dreams, or spiritual matters. Stress levels are somewhat high, and according to this analysis potential resistance to change is also somewhat high.

Forty-four percent of this population has no faith preference, a very low faith receptivity and low financial giving potential. They are likely to prefer a contemporary style worship service and programs that emphasize recreational activities such as sports

and camping. Other likely interests are cultural programs, adult theological discussion groups and day-care services.

As a team, we set out to look at the neighborhood to gather our own personal observations. Focusing on our more immediate neighborhood within a 1 mile radius, we noted that the housing is largely single family residential homes with a number of



apartment and multi-family dwellings, with at least one low-income apartment complex. There are several office buildings and thriving shopping centers along main thoroughfares. The closest churches to Streams are Pima Street Baptist, Grace to the Nations, St. Cyril's Catholic, and Tucson Christian Mandarin Church. Nearby hospitals include Tucson Medical Center, Palo Verde Behavioral Health Center, El

Dorado Hospital, Carondelet St. Joseph's Hospital, Posada del Sol, and HealthSouth Rehabilitation Center. Many healthcare facilities for the elderly are close by, including The Forum, Valley Healthcare, Devon Gables, Handmakers, Sabino Canyon Adult Care Center, Santa Rosa Care Center, and the Atria Valley Manor adult apartments. The American Cancer Society and American Heart Association offices are located nearby as well. Nearby public schools include Townsend Middle School, Ft. Lowell Elementary School, and Dodge Middle School.

A plaque placed at the exit from the Streams parking lot reads "You are about to enter your mission field." With this in mind, we traveled around and through the neighborhood during the course of a few weeks and looked for signs of hope and signs of despair. Signs of hope were people out and about, shopping, walking with family, actively engaged, new construction, and successful businesses. We know of neighbors looking for a church home, a better life and opportunities. We noticed church buses and busy schools. Our "mission field" also has signs of despair: disappearance of faith messages from a business marquee, vacant lots and empty houses and shops, signs of drug use, graffiti, trash and litter, and the loss of a local grocery store. We see a panhandler and know that transportation is a problem for some.

Overall, our team has been inspired by the opportunities to reach out to our neighbors.

D. The Community of Tucson

Tucson is a fast-growing metropolis of over 884,000 set amidst beautiful cactus forests, rolling hills, and craggy mountains. National and State Parks and Forests ring the city. The natural beauty of the area is augmented by a dynamic city, with a cultural "heart" centered around the University of Arizona which has a student population approaching 35,000. It lies in the borderland region that blends the cultures of the United

States and Mexico, and has a long history of settlement by ancient Native American peoples, Spanish explorers, and Anglo frontiersmen.

Tucson shares the same social ills as any major American city and also faces unique challenges based on its proximity to an international border which exposes the region to both illegal drug and immigration traffic. The homeless population is significant, especially in the winter because of mild weather, and Streams has had occasion to provide food and a place to rest to a few. In spite of these challenges, Tucson is experiencing success in attracting residents and businesses to experience the Southwest ambiance.

As the second largest metropolis in Arizona, Tucson has a significant impact on the state, both in economic terms and social terms. The state as a whole is exhibiting dramatic growth, and continues to focus on major issues including border security, improving education and the standard of living.

Streams in the Desert seeks to be a vital part of the Tucson community.

E. World Community and the ELCA

The great commission of Christ commands us to go out into the world and tell the good news of the gospel to all nations. Streams members have done this by going on mission trips to countries around the world or supporting missionary organizations on an individual basis. The church as a whole has also supported Trinity Lutheran mission church here in Tucson and other missionary efforts. For example, Streams helps to sponsor a missionary in Papua, New Guinea.

Streams impacts the world through the larger Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. Ours is a congregation in the Sunrise Conference of the Grand Canyon Synod of the ELCA. Streams supports the Synod through a budgeted benevolence, a significant portion of which is then forwarded for support of the national church. Delegates from Streams attend the Annual Synod Assembly. The Synod supports Streams with guidance, Youth Ministry programs, and assistance in clergy selection. The national church makes educational materials available through its publishing houses, as well as education through its colleges and seminaries. Other aspects of the ELCA that involve Streams members are World Hunger, the Global Missions program, and the pastoral pension and medical benefits programs. The national church also provides theological guidance through the theological perspectives of the Church leadership and the seminaries.

Streams in the Desert did not participate in the recent human sexuality study that was undertaken by the ELCA this year. Another issue that has not been widely discussed in our church is the desire by the ELCA to continue and understand the Lutheran heritage and doctrines while, at the same time, working with all Christian denominations plus other world religions. Therefore, a significant number of our members are either unaware or poorly informed about what's going on at the national church level on these issues.

Section 4: Current Ministries

“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Ephesians 2:21

A. Worship and Music

The ministry of worship and music is guided by a Worship and Music Committee. Streams has a half-time director of music who leads three choirs and utilizes talents of members for special music. A volunteer Praise band, leading one service for several years, has exceptional musical talent, and the contemporary worship has fostered membership growth. We also have a church choir, children’s choir, and bell choir. Numerous volunteers from our congregation are regularly called upon for lay participation in various aspects of worship. Seasonal “pulpit exchange” with other Lutheran churches has been good opportunity for variety. Multi-media and variety in worship resources has been a strength that is appreciated.

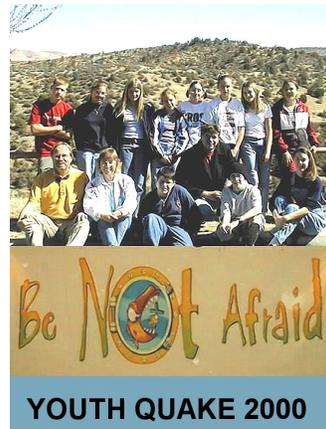
B. Family Life



The purpose of the Family Life ministry is to provide fellowship opportunities, service opportunities and spiritual development through Bible Study, prayer and education. One of the changes that occurred this year was the revamping of the Christian Education and Youth Committees to form one committee entitled the Family Life committee. This streamlining made sense since so many members served on both committees and a lot of the business items were also discussed at both meetings. A full time staff person, the Director of Youth and Family Life Ministries, works with the Family Life Committee to run this ministry area.

Streams currently has two weekly Bible studies (the “Tuesday Morning” Bible study with Pastoral leadership and Breaking Through held on Wednesday night by a lay leader), Sunday School for ages three through ninth grade plus one adult Sunday School class, and Vacation Bible School one week during the summer. Confirmation classes run during the school year for grades six through nine, and there are three youth groups: senior high, junior high and Team 3-4-5 for children in grades three through five.

There are a number of trips the youth of our church are involved in each year: summer camp, Youth Quake for junior high, Youth Congress and a summer mission trip for senior high students.





Various family activities include the annual Easter Egg Hunt and Easter breakfast, dinner theater presentations by the youth groups, family nights and potlucks, and the Christmas Program.

As an educational resource, the library falls under the umbrella of Family Life ministries, offering a variety of resources and staffed by dedicated librarians.

C. Support Ministries

The ministry area of Support includes the Stewardship Committee which organizes education and the pledge programs for financial support. They also support the volunteer needs of the church through a Time and Talent pledge, enabling members to grow in faith through service to the Lord.

The Memorial Committee carefully works to fulfill the wishes of donors, and a Wednesday morning grounds and building maintenance group is very dedicated.

Stephen Ministry is a program which trains volunteers to minister and offer support to fellow church members. A prayer chain and a team of people to organize food for funerals are also good support vehicles. We are blessed with a member who volunteers as Parish Nurse. She has often made herself available to take blood pressure readings after services and can help with advice on how to get needed health care. For visitors and new members, Streams volunteers deliver home-made cookies to first time visitors and new members are sponsored by existing members.

These support ministries could be stronger with increased participation, with better communication of the availability of these services, and with more acceptance on the part of members to receive the help and support offered.

D. Fellowship Groups

Of course, any group whether it be a service group or Bible study group involves fellowship, but Streams does also have a number of groups that are focused on fellowship. Some meet for recreation such as the Friday card group and the mixed bowling league. The dinner group and men's breakfast group meet to share meals on a regular basis. The "Streamers" are retired members who meet regularly for fellowship.



E. Outreach

Outreach service ministries are an important attribute in the character of the Streams congregation. One of our most long-standing service ministries is "The Quilters," working together since 1981. As many as 36 women gather on Wednesday mornings, bringing friends from their neighborhood. In addition to making quilts, they make lap robes, crib blankets, and knitted and crocheted items for babies and the elderly.

The hand made items are donated those in need in Tucson and sometimes sent overseas, up to 200 items in a year.

The Service Committee stays very active by organizing congregational collections for shoes for needy children in Tucson, and non-perishable groceries for the food pantry of Lutheran Social Ministry of the Southwest (LSMS). They also sell gift certificates to raise funds for LSMS, and encourage members to donate Christmas gifts for local needy families.

Another exciting ministry is the Lutheran Thrift Store, established about four years ago. Streams members came together with Lutherans from other congregations to bring this dream to fruition. Located about one-half mile from our church, the store serves the community by offering second-hand merchandise at a low cost and accepting vouchers issued by churches to enable those in need to get items at no cost. Proceeds support synod mission programs.



Our church hosts a program called Daybreak, an adult day care service. The program is administered by LSMS, and Streams helps through volunteers and financial assistance.

Another way our church has reached out to the community is through our pastors who have welcomed non-members who request baptism and wedding ceremonies. In addition, the pastors have regularly conducted worship services at a nearby assisted living center.

Streams members contribute to a number of programs and ministries that extend beyond the city of Tucson (interestingly, many of these are spearheaded by a member “champion” rather than a committee). Our church has

provided assistance to two families from Africa, helping with financial, emotional and other support. As individuals, we support on the order of 40 children through Compassion International, donate regularly to the ELCA World Hunger fund and the Heifer project, sell “cottage industry” products and coffee, and help and befriend refugees. Several of our members have gone on mission trips to South America, Africa, and



China. Small teams of members make weekend trips to Agua Prieta just across the Mexican border to help build homes for families who otherwise would be living in makeshift shacks. WELCA supports a Navajo mission in northern Arizona.



Another community outreach program at Streams is Hearts & Hammers which is a nonprofit, charitable, volunteer organization dedicated to repairing and maintaining the homes of people physically or financially unable to do so themselves. All repairs are free to the homeowner.

In recent years, a number of people and groups committed to ministry have been invited to speak about their work and participate in worship. Some examples are Pastor Vijay from India, Christian drama and music groups, and Jews for Jesus.

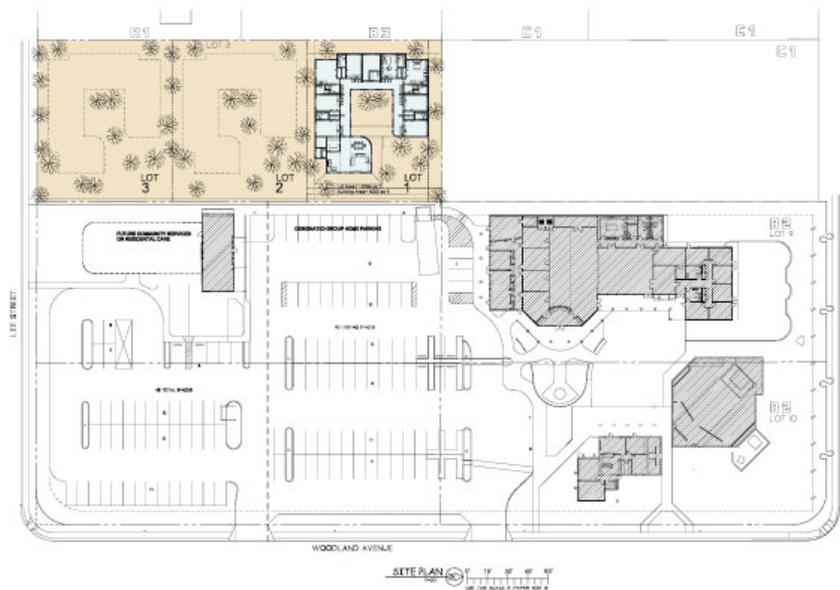
The church also contributes to missions through the Grand Canyon synod, but the congregation has little awareness of these contributions or the ministries they support.

F. Women of the ELCA (WELCA)

The Streams in the Desert Unit of WELCA has been active since the inception of the church. Their stated purpose is “to grow in faith as believers, support one another in their callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.” They focus on three mission areas that provide different yet integrally connected perspectives on holistic ministry.

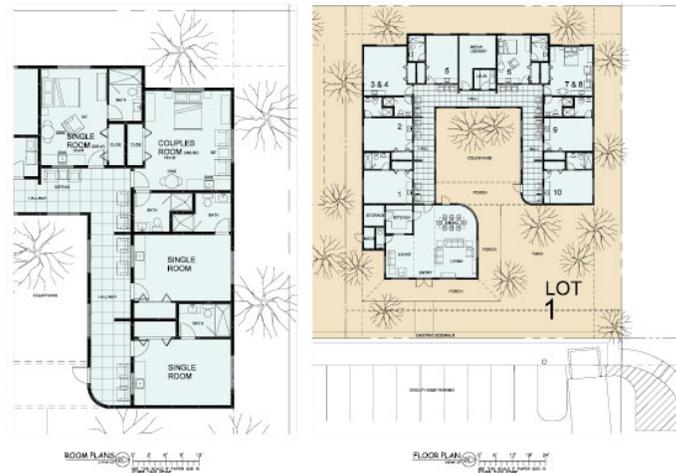
- Under Mission Growth, WELCA provides resources and opportunities for women to study God’s word, to develop their faith and to identify their own gifts and leadership skills. In this area much emphasis is placed on an individual’s prayer life and group prayer.
- The Mission Community area helps women to develop faith relationships which include God, family, our sisters in faith, the global community and the unchurched.
- Under Mission Action, WELCA provides opportunities for outreach so that women can act upon their faith and be in servant roles within the church, community, and the world. Their theme for the next three years is “Act Boldly.”

G. Woodland Lee Senior Housing Project



This project was started in the year 2000 to help meet a critical need in our community for affordable senior housing, while creating a campus environment and providing volunteer and housing opportunities for its own members.

The current plan is to build a group home that will provide independent or assisted living with a residential home atmosphere for up to ten individuals. The property would be subdivided to allow for the construction of two additional 10-resident homes in the future. Each home will have common areas including a living room, community kitchen, library, TV room, laundry, and game and socialization area. Surface parking will be provided. Maintenance of building and grounds would be included in the rent. A garden area, walking path and outdoor seating areas are also planned.



Opportunities to utilize common spaces of both the group homes and Streams would create a mixed-use concept that is unique in the area. Working with Lutheran Social Ministry of the Southwest, we could facilitate a variety of neighborhood and community services. Examples are housekeeping, laundry service, Meals on Wheels, various health care services, and a parish nurse program.

Now overseen by a nonprofit entity called Woodland Lee Senior Housing Inc., the project is presently on hold until a funding source can be established. Approximately \$75,000 is needed to approve moving ahead with the final architectural drawings. The estimated total cost for each home is \$500,000 to \$600,000.

Section 5: Mission Exploration

*“Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”
Philippians 3:13-14*

A. Mission Statement

In approaching the mission exploration goal of our team, we looked first to the mission statement for Streams in the Desert developed in 1997 by the church council:

“The mission of Streams in the Desert Lutheran Church is to bring the good news of our salvation by God to the community it serves, marshalling the resources of God’s people to teach God’s word, to make disciples for Christ, to Baptize, and to provide a vehicle for God’s grace and strength through the administration of the Sacraments. As a part of the body of Christ, it provides a Christian church home, strengthens and nourishes its members’ own commitment to a life in Christian love, and serves people in need, both directly in personal ways, and indirectly through financial and prayer support of the work of the Church at large.”

In addition a condensed version of our mission statement appears in our weekly worship bulletin as well as our monthly bulletin. It reads as follows:

“To share God’s love with everyone!”

These mission statements provide a solid framework for moving forward through the power of the Holy Spirit and the inspiration of God’s word to create a vision for our church in the coming years.

B. Congregational Questionnaires

From the beginning our team decided to make congregational input a priority. For this reason we presented the congregation with a series of questionnaires in order to obtain their input on our identity, strengths, weaknesses, and direction as a church. The responses were carefully evaluated by the Mission Exploration Team for inclusion in Mission Goals. The following are summaries of the responses to each question.

QUESTION 1: Why did you join Streams in the Desert?

Most of our members joined Streams because it was welcoming and friendly, they liked the Pastor, or were invited by friends, neighbors, or family. Members were also attracted by programs such as those for children and youth. A number joined because it was close to their home or because family members attended. The music and Praise Band attracted many to join and several mentioned they joined because the church was Bible based and they felt the presence of the Holy Spirit.

QUESTION 2: How does Streams support your faith growth?

Members of Streams generally feel that small group ministries and programs have been the most important support of their faith growth. Of those, Bible Study is by far the most mentioned, then Sunday School programs and the overall variety of opportunities available to serve and grow. A number appreciated being challenged to grow. Sermons are also an important aspect of faith growth for Streams members, especially in terms of sermons with a biblical focus. A general attitude of caring and friendliness has been very important to our members, as well as the sense of openness and acceptance of everyone. Many are nourished by time spent in fellowship.

QUESTION 3: How are we meeting one another's needs at Streams?

Streams members report their needs are being met through service and participation in a number of ministries, most notable youth groups, family events, Stephen Ministry, Sunday School and Bible Studies. Financial giving was also recognized as a way we meet one another's needs. Fellowship is very important, for example small group fellowship and visiting between services on the patio. Members appreciate when we are caring and forgiving toward one another and support one another in our unique needs through prayer, service and the sharing of resources. The pastors are seen as playing an important part in meeting our needs, especially through visitation.

QUESTION 4: How can we do better as a congregation in meeting one another's needs?

Summary of Responses: Respondents to this question felt we can do better at meeting each other's unique needs by fostering an attitude of listening, caring, and paying attention to the concerns of others. Good opportunities for this are patio visiting before and after services, and through small group ministries. Nametags for Sundays were suggested as helpful, something we've done in the past but aren't currently doing. Members also would like to see more aggressive support of small group ministries, the contemporary service, and other existing programs, including those which target specific age groups. Many suggestions for new programs were made, most frequently to target young adults ages 18-35. To support young families, "Parent's Day Out", family dinner groups, family service projects and a support group for young women were suggested. Creativity and trying new things were urged by some. Better communication between church council and church members was also suggested.

QUESTION 5: Does Streams do enough Outreach Ministry? Yes or No?

YES: While some people didn't know very much about outreach at Streams, a number had some awareness of our many programs and in general felt they were sufficient. Many were aware of Operation Shoes, the Agua Prieta housing project, and food collection for the needy. Others noted Daybreak, Compassion, Quilters, Hearts & Hammers, Lutheran Social Ministry Services (LSMS) and New Beginnings. A number of other outreach programs were mentioned just once: the Lutheran Thrift Store, Missionary support, the 30-Hour Famine program through the Youth Group, Global Health Missions, church sponsorship of a family at Christmas, and some community organizations that use Streams facilities for their functions. Our team noted that in these responses the concept of outreach tended to gravitate toward service rather than evangelism.

NO: Many people feel we don't do enough outreach, with a number pointing out that we can never "rest on our laurels" and stop trying to do more. The largest number of suggestions had to do with starting new programs to attract new members. Suggestions included a Parent's Day Out program, a young women's support group, game nights, prison and mental health ministries, and ministries to the housebound, ill and disabled. Some also advocated supporting existing programs more aggressively such as the contemporary service, ELCA programs, and activities for youth and children. A number suggested evangelistic outreach in terms of phone calls, door to door visiting, inviting neighbors and befriending and inviting college students. Leadership, both lay and pastoral, was identified as important in having a stronger outreach program.

QUESTION 6: What question would you like to see on this form next week?

The MET team appreciated the input and used some of these suggestions in subsequent questionnaires. The responses were also helpful in understanding more fully what concerns people had. Although responses were varied, some overall themes reflected concerns about the style and structure of worship services (e.g. the number of services), what type of person our new minister should be, and increasing participation in our church. Some questions had to do with larger church issues and theological concerns.

QUESTION 7: What is the main quality you would like to have in our new minister?

Most people identified the quality of primary importance as someone who is loving, warm, friendly, and outgoing. Other important qualities were honesty or sincerity, openness to doing things in a new way and a strong faith and trust in our Lord. In addition, many people value a biblical orientation in preaching and teaching, the ability to minister well to all ages, someone who will challenge the congregation to go out of their "comfort zones", and an ability to give good sermons.

QUESTION 8: What three or four other qualities are also important to have in our new minister?

Again, the most often cited quality here was that of compassion, warmth and friendliness. Close behind was the desire to have someone with good leadership and administrative skills. Other important secondary qualities were a good sense of humor, someone who is youth and child oriented and creative in trying new things. As in Question 7, good sermons were often mentioned as an important quality. More specifically, adjectives used in order of frequency were applicable or relevant, biblically based, interesting. Other attributes of a good sermon that were mentioned were understandable, not condescending, articulate, straightforward, inspirational and non-judgmental.

QUESTION 9: What encourages you to be more involved at Streams?

Streams members said they feel encouraged by feeling a sense of love, friendliness, and having people of one's own age to relate to. Many people are motivated by their relationship to the Lord and the desire to take action that springs from that love. Other encouragements were opportunities to be involved through programs and activities and a strong sense of God's presence through the Holy Spirit and biblical teachings and sermons.

QUESTION 10: What are your ideas regarding how to encourage our congregation to be more involved?

Responses underscored those of previous questions: develop programs and small groups that are applicable to people's lives, develop strong motivational leadership both pastoral and lay, have two worship services on Sunday rather than three, and have a greater focus on members getting to know one another better. Other suggestions were to pray as a church for this to come about, to focus more on Biblical teachings, and to invite more participation through personal invitation, temple talks and brochures that describe opportunities to be involved.

QUESTION 11: What are a few goals for Streams that come to mind in reading the Mission Statement?

Respondents want to have good worship services that will not only nourish the congregation but will attract visitors and encourage our members to invite people. Specifically, having two services rather than three was mentioned, and a joyful and happy service where the minister is reaching out with Christ's love to strangers. Increasing membership was also mentioned as a goal consistent with our mission. More specific efforts suggested were expanding the Stephen Ministry, starting a program for teen peer counseling, and encouraging evangelism "without fear".

C. Small Group Input

Additional input from the congregation was gained by sending team representatives to a number of small groups and committees within our church and asking them what goals or dreams they have for their groups. Overall, we saw a desire on the part of these group members for more participants, especially younger ones. We also saw a number of innovative and exciting ideas for new ways to serve God together.

The Family Life Committee hopes to see increased and more consistent attendance to youth and children's programs as well as more "balanced," Biblically based youth programs. For the adults, the committee would like to establish small group studies, a young adults group and combine with other churches to start up a young adult "coffee shop". They are also hoping for more volunteers for teaching and group leadership perhaps through developing an organized and consistent effort of recruiting both leaders and participants. Some members of the committee would like to see Sunday School take place before or after, but not during, worship services so that families worship together and there could be more time in the classroom.

The Tuesday morning Bible Study would like to continue as they have for the past 20 years as a study and prayer support group. They would also encourage other groups to meet for study. They hope to focus on how Biblical teachings apply to situations in their own lives.

The Service Committee is in great need of more volunteers, especially younger people that would be able to do projects that current committee members are unable to do because of age and health reasons. Younger members who would be willing to provide transportation are especially needed to assist in the many different activities that would require the help of a driver.

With more funds and members, the Worship and Music Committee would like to do more with the audio/visual system and to present more special music for the worship services with gifted instrumentalists.

Fellowship is a very important part of the Wednesday morning “Quilter’s Work Group” and it is very fulfilling to do work that benefits others. Their hopes are to continue to help as many people as they can through the quilted comforters and other items they make.

The church Choir hopes to attract more members, especially younger people, so they can continue to sing out their praises to God. The Choir would also welcome more instrumental accompaniment from Stream’s members.

Via de Cristo is a renewal retreat movement within the Lutheran church that brings together Lutherans from all over Tucson for three retreat weekends each year. The many Streams members who have already gone through the program have enjoyed the numerous citywide gatherings but want to have more gatherings among themselves for both fellowship and to coordinate efforts in encouraging other Streams members to go on a Via de Cristo weekend retreat.

The Woodland Lee Senior Housing group hopes to be able to move forward with the project by raising approximately \$75,000.

Stephen ministers in our church would like to see every minister matched with a care receiver and would like to be part of a citywide ministry with a continuous flow of new ministers and leaders. They also would like to establish a “Christ Care” small group as well as train post-high school members for peer counseling.

WELCA members look forward to continuing to deepen their spiritual lives, grow in their faith, and “act boldly” to help the needy and unfortunate in our community. Other goals are to encourage more women to take active leadership roles and to encourage more mentoring among senior women to younger women. The WELCA group also hopes to increase membership and to establish a younger women’s circle.

The Library Committee would like to be able to supply every member of the congregation the religious information that they seek and to provide Christian based books and non-book recreational materials appropriate for all ages. They would like to be housed in a new library setting that adequately accommodates their collection, has space for growth and is in a central location. They hope to have enough volunteers to offer more help in the library and someday to convert to a computer based circulation system.



Section 6: Mission Goals



“Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.” Proverbs 16:3

A. Introduction

As we gathered information on our history, who we are today, our community, our ministries, and our mission statement, and as we solicited and considered the thoughts and ideas of our congregation, the following goals began to surface. We hope that these goals and strategies will serve as rallying points for our congregation as we grow together in God’s love and that they will improve our fulfillment of our mission statement. They are not intended to replace any existing ministries or programs, but to enhance and augment them. Committees and groups will likely have other initiatives in their work beyond this list.

While the goals are broad intentions, the strategies are suggestions for actions that can be taken. They are meant to be suggestive, not restrictive. Yet we have tried to be specific enough so that our progress can be measured and evaluated periodically. In this way, we can measure progress and as a congregation celebrate together our successes in serving the Lord. Therefore, it is our recommendation that on an annual basis the council encourage a committee or group to document accomplishments in each of the goal areas, revise the goals and strategies as appropriate, and make a presentation to the congregation.

B. Goals and Strategies

- ❖ Provide more opportunities for teaching and learning God’s Word.
Background: This goal was strongly suggested by the congregational questionnaire responses and is consistent with our mission statement. An evaluation of current activities also shows that we can do more in this area.
 - Offer on an ongoing basis additional small group Bible studies at a variety of times and days.
 - Offer an adult Lutheran instruction course (comparable to confirmation) taught by the Pastor at least once per year.
 - Maintain a preaching focus on Bible teaching and its application to life, supported with worship which utilizes a variety of styles and approaches.

- ❖ Reach out to welcome and invite our neighbors, being inclusive, and responding to their needs.

Background: The Streams congregation highly values being a welcoming and friendly church. From what we learned about our surrounding area, we can make opportunities to reach out to our neighbors and share God's love.

- Distribute flyers inviting neighbors to activities and worship at least once a year.
- At least twice a year, plan special events or leverage existing events to draw neighborhood participation (i.e. barbeque, ice cream social, movie ministry, “coffeehouse”, concerts, games, sports, themed lectures, etc.).
- Initiate “Parents’ Day Out” or other programs supportive of young families. Explore preschool and daycare possibilities.
- Continue to offer one contemporary worship service and publicize it within the community.

- ❖ Improve and enhance communication within our church.

Background: Through questionnaires and other input it became apparent that improved communication could help us accomplish our goals.

- Recruit and support a communications committee. Their efforts may include electronic communications via e-mail and the internet.
- Develop brochure with inserts of activities, groups, and ministries updated every six months.
- Monthly update of information table, bulletin board, marquee, and website.

- ❖ Encourage member support and full participation in the life of our church.

Background: The importance of this goal was made clear by small group and committee input as well as comments on the questionnaire responses.

- Conduct a yearly ministry fair publicizing time and talent opportunities with committee representation. Encourage committees to expand ministries by asking individuals for short-term commitments (such as coordinating an event, participating in a musical piece, serving as a small-group leader).
- Improve new member experience by encouraging sponsors to act as mentors. Write sponsor guidelines and suggestions.
- Foster an environment of sharing, caring, and openness by creating an intentional program which encourages visiting after services on the patio, increasing participation in small groups, being alert to needs within our congregation that we could meet, and encouraging one another to accept help when needed.
- Ensure that activities and programs are available for all age groups and provide regular opportunities for inter-generational activities as well.

The Mission Exploration Team

Paul Olson, chair of the Call Committee, educated the congregation on the purpose of the Mission Exploration Process, recruited membership, and initiated the first meeting.

Co-leaders for the Mission Exploration Team were Janis Richert, Ron Rogers, and Rob Pruden. Jointly they were able to share ideas and make decisions that enabled the team to make progress.

Team members were Paul Olson, Bev Pruden, John DiDomenico, Lupe Wagner, Debbie Goll, Suzanne Van Ampting, Marla Lowell, Mary Kirsch, Lois Pittenger, Ruth Wicker, Jan Rockwell, Ethel Rounds, Barb McNaughton, Trisha Blaisdell, Barbara Sammeth, Dan Smithson, Paula Caylor, Cathy DiDomenico, Pastor and Jane Rohwer, Joyce Cashman, Miles Vaughn, Sandy Holm, Bev Matthews, Beverly Hohman, and Doug Holm.

Thanks be to God for the dedication and enthusiasm of this group of leaders!

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We appreciated that Lynne Baker of Lutheran Social Ministry of the Southwest took time to attend one of our meetings and make a presentation.

Thanks to Marshall Coyne who researched a great deal of the “History” section in this report and to Pastor and Jane Rohwer for contributing their personal insights and experiences that are a part of Streams history.

We were grateful for the support and encouragement that Pastor Lokken offered our team.

Finally, we want to thank the congregation at large for their participation through questionnaires and, more importantly, their constant prayer and uplifting of the Mission Exploration Team’s efforts.