# BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH HAPPY VALLEY, OR

## ASSESSMENT REPORT

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### BACKGROUND

Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church (BSLC), located in Happy Valley, OR, is a Missouri Synod Lutheran Church outside of Portland, OR. Church members describe their church family as "inviting," "welcoming," and "warm," as well as "encouraged" and "hopeful." The church describes itself as a bunch of normal people who don't have it all together, but want to learn and grow and serve together.

The membership of the church is 299 and on an average week 145 people including 35 virtually - attend the church's worship service at 9:00 AM on Sunday mornings. The church is also testing an 11:00 AM traditional service on the last Sunday of each month. Classes are offered for all ages on Sunday mornings at 10:30 AM. Lead Pastor, Kevin Hohnstadt, started at the church in August of 2020, virtually, and in-person in December of 2020. Vicar John Durkin, Director of Family Ministry, began serving BSLC in July of 2021.

Currently, there are 13 sixth through twelfth graders on the rolls of the church, with 8 of them participating in one of the youth programs any given week. This includes Sunday morning Bible class, as well as a Wednesday night program which includes the Confirmation lesson, a meal, and games and prayer. There are also special events throughout the year, like broomball, bowling, and holiday parties, as well as fall and spring retreats, and a summer mission trip. Some of these have not happened in a long time, especially since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The youth meet in Junior High and Senior High rooms in the lower level of the church building, and use other indoor and outdoor spaces on the property for their programs and events. The ministry is currently led by a volunteer, the director of family ministry, and the youth board.

Currently, there are 10 children, ages 4 years to 5th grade on the rolls of the church. During a typical week about 7 children participate in Kids Community on Sunday mornings, and the nursery is also available. There is a summer VBS type program, called Fun and Friends, offered every year, and children also have the opportunity to be baptized throughout the year. The children meet in classrooms on the upper level of the building, which are shared with the preschool. The ministry is currently led by a team of volunteers, the director of family ministry, and the family ministry leadership team.

The church has a 2021 budget of \$681,800 of which \$50,000 is dedicated to the youth ministry and \$18,250 is dedicated to the children's ministry. These include the program expenses as well as the salary and benefits for the staff position giving time to the children's and/or youth ministry.

Ministry Architects was invited to do an initial assessment of the children's and youth ministry, and to make recommendations about how they might move strategically forward. This comes after some difficult staff transitions and an interim season for the church, leading to the arrival of the new lead pastor and director of family ministry. Ministry Architects met with 16 individuals in 8 focus groups or one-on-one meetings. What follows are the findings gleaned from those conversations along with recommendations and a proposed timeline for the future.

### MINISTRY IN CONTEXT

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#### RENTS

One lens Ministry Architects likes to use for understanding ministry is the idea of the "three rents."

Rents are defined as core elements of the ministry that must be paid in order to establish a sustainable ministry. The rents of numbers, programs, and enthusiasm are often the most immediate evaluation tools used by children, youth, parents, staff, and the congregation at large. It has been Ministry Architects' experience that though these three rents, in and of themselves, do not ensure an effective or faithful ministry, they are the most common sources of discontent when people talk about their church's ministries.

Ministries that "pay these rents" tend to have much greater freedom to be creative, take risks, and experiment with innovative ideas. The ministries that fail to pay these rents often find themselves mired in distrust, second-guessing, and discouragement.

Rent #1: Numbers: A significant percentage of children and youth need to be participating visibly in some aspect of the church's ministries. It is important for this target number to be clearly agreed on by the church leaders and the staff. Ironically, when target numbers are not established, ministries are typically more likely to be judged by numbers than if the target numbers are clearly established. The consensus is that this rent is not being paid. The numbers of children and youth involved is at a low point, and well below what the church hopes for in the family ministry. And the church is unclear on what the target number should be.

Rent #2: Programs: In order to "earn the right" to experiment with changes, the church's leadership needs to provide the church with a few visible, effective programs that give church members "something to talk about." This rent appears to be partially paid. While there is some recent success with special events and youth programming, there is not much offered for children, and the congregation at large seems to be unaware of what is/isn't happening.

Rent #3: The joyful enthusiasm and positive attitude of the staff, volunteers, and the church members themselves are essential to building trust with the leadership of the church. It seems this rent is paid in full. Families and church members are energized by the new staff and feel a new sense of hope and excitement about the future of the children and youth ministry.

### CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRY NORMS

There are four rules of thumb –"youth and children's ministry norms" – that will be helpful to keep in mind. These are not necessarily targets for success; they are simply what an average church typically experiences.

### Size of Program

In a typical church, the size of the youth ministry tends to settle at a number that is around 10% of the worshiping congregation. Similarly, the norm for children's ministry is 15% of the worshiping congregation.

With an average worship attendance of 145, BSLC could expect a children's ministry of about 22 children and a youth ministry of about 15 youth. With 12 children and 8 youth active on a weekly

### MINISTRY IN CONTEXT CONTINUED

### CHILDREN AND YOUTH NORMS CONTINUED...

basis, the size of both programs is below what Ministry Architects would expect to see.

### **Financial Investment**

In a typical church, the church's budget (program budget, staff salary, and benefits) for youth ministry typically is \$1,500 per youth and \$1,100 per child for the children's ministry.

With a youth budget of approximately \$50,000, BSLC has the capacity to effectively reach and maintain a weekly participation level of somewhere in the neighborhood of 33 youth in some aspect of the church's life. With a children's budget of approximately \$18,250, BSLC has the capacity to effectively reach and maintain a weekly participation level of somewhere in the neighborhood of 17 children in some aspect of the church's life. Both programs are well-funded with room for growth.

### **Paid Staff**

In a typical church, there is the equivalent of 1 full-time staff person for every 50 youth and 1 full-time staff person for every 70 children. The director of family ministry spends approximately 20 hours per week on youth ministry, and 5 hours per week on children's ministry.

Given this, BSLC children's ministry is staffed to effectively reach 9 children, which is inadequate to sustain the needs of the ministry. Ordinarily, in over-capacity children's ministries, the children's staff is set up to be unable to fulfill all the expectations placed on them. The natural result is a climate of criticism and burn out.

BSLC youth ministry is staffed to effectively reach 25 youth which allows room for significant numerical growth.

### **Volunteers**

Ministry Architects likes to think in terms of "spans of care," recognizing that, realistically, most volunteers cannot effectively oversee the church's Christian nurture of more than about five youth or children on an ongoing basis.

With three weekly volunteers in the children's ministry, the program can reach about 15 children. The current team seems to be the right size for the current ministry of 12 children. However, if the church wants to expand its impact, it will need to consider recruiting more volunteers.

With one volunteer serving weekly in the youth ministry, the program can reach about 5 youth. Currently, the team is too small to attend to the relational needs of the 8 youth who currently attend. The volunteer pool will need to expand if the church wants to sustain its impact with youth.

#### \*Note about Children's Ministry Norms

While the preschool is considered a program of Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, the preschool numbers are NOT included in these norms since the preschool operations are currently separate from the ministries of the church.

### MINISTRY IN CONTEXT CONTINUED

### BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE STAFF

When a ministry is based solely on the giftedness of a single staff person, instability is a predictable result. Ministry Architects has found that the most stable approach to staffing a ministry, particularly in the early stages of a rebuild, is to build a team of three different kinds of staff and volunteers.

### **The Architect**



A person who designs the building plan and ensures that the building is done in compliance with the agreed-upon plan.

#### **The General Contractor**



A person who manages the flow and sequencing of work and the building process according to the agreed-upon blueprint, and ensures that the appropriate number of "laborers" is in place for each stage of the project.

#### The Laborers



Those people are charged with specific gifts and responsibilities for particular aspects of the work. In youth ministry, a laborer might have particular skills in relating to youth, in planning and managing events, or in teaching. Each of these roles is important as Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church pursues a more sustainable model of ministry. As the church moves forward, the following observations will be helpful to keep in mind:

- Currently, it appears that there is no person or group playing the role of the architect for the children's and youth ministry at BSLC. The ministry simply moves from one event to the next without a clear vision or stated outcomes.
- There seems to be a need for more laborers at BSLC, which will better enable staff and leadership to focus on architect and general contractor work.
- Some churches hire a laborer who is skilled at leading singing, playing games or teaching a Bible lesson. These laborers often mature into an architect or a general contractor, but only if they are given permission, time, and training.

### ASSETS STRENGTHS TO PROTECT

### **Healthy Staff**

There is a lot of excitement about, and energy amongst, the staff at BSLC. It's clear that the staff knows it's not their responsibility to do everything, but to equip the congregation to be, and lead, the children's and youth ministry, and church. One listening group participant said, "The staff knows how to connect with people and they are empowering us to serve." The staff also seems to trust one another and are open to feedback from one another, and the congregation. The congregation is clear about their role -"We can't relegate all the responsibility to the staff," stated one individual – but the staff and their leadership is creating a sense of hope and enthusiasm about the future of the children's and youth ministry at the church.

### **Preschool Connection**

A very healthy relationship is developing between the preschool and BSLC. "There's been a focused investment from the church in the preschool families," said one listening group participant, and many others share similar observations. There seems to be a genuine desire from the church community to know the preschool's children and parents, and their needs. The staff of both the preschool and the church are meeting regularly to work on ways to best offer support and collaborate. An individual stated it plainly, "We want the preschool to be more than a program for the community, but a ministry of Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church."

### **Effective Communication**

The general consensus from youth and families is that the communication from the church is very effective. There are regular emails and texts with information about upcoming events, as well as a quarterly newsletter available online and at the church. One parent commented, "Whenever I reach out, the staff is very accessible, responsive, and helpful." And a youth shared, "The communication helps everyone feel included, keeps things fresh, and helps us plan." While the staff is considering expanding the ways they communicate, it is clear that what they are currently doing is a valuable tool for the ministry.

### **Congregational Support**

It's obvious that the BSLC congregation wants nothing but success for the children's and youth ministry. One leader said, "Everything we've started and tried has been supported," and another stressed, "The family ministry is a priority of this church." There is some concern that the community might not have the time or energy, or even the people, needed to sustain a healthy family ministry, but there is a commitment of money and resources to support the individuals and programs involved. The overwhelming sentiment can be summed up as one person stated, "We want a thriving children, youth, and family ministry here, and we are willing to do whatever it takes to make it happen."

### Strong Youth Community

A close and caring community seems to exist amongst the youth who are active in the ministry at BSLC. "I love the diversity, in ages, topics, and views," said one youth, while another shared, "Everyone wants to be here, to learn and to grow, together." Their gatherings have a nice balance of fun and games along with deeper discussions and study which makes it easy for anyone to participate; the youth feel like they can talk with anyone, and have a mutual respect for each other. One listening group participant described the youth ministry saying, "Everyone has their own voice, and everyone gets heard."

### **CHALLENGES** OBSTACLES TO MOVING STRATEGICALLY FORWARD

### Lack of Vision

There are many individuals and families at BSLC who care about and have a high investment in the children's and youth ministry, but most are unaware of a clear direction or purpose for the ministry. Many listening group participants shared their own desires for the program, but none were able to articulate a unifying, overarching vision of the ministry. When asked about a mission statement, responses included the following:

- I just don't know.
- I don't think we have a mission statement.
- I'm almost sure there is one, but it's not common knowledge.

Without a clear focus, anxiousness is often a predictable result, and parents, youth, and leaders will become confused and frustrated about what is happening and why.

### **Missing Pieces**

BSLC is offering regular weekly programming for children and youth, as well as some special events throughout the year, but there is a noticeable absence of the consistent, memory making events and milestones each year that all individuals and families either look back on with fondness, or forward to with anticipation. A listening group participant said, "We don't have anything for children outside of Sunday mornings." Retreats, camp experiences, special summer programming, and mission trips are all missing from the annual offerings of the ministry. And the lack of milestones, like blessing of the backpacks and graduate recognition, means that the church is missing the opportunity to celebrate key moments in the lives of the children and vouth.

### Leadership Clarity

Currently there is a family ministry leadership team but there is a lack of clarity about who is on the team, and what they do, or are supposed to do. One church member admitted, "I used to be part of the team but didn't feel like they were accomplishing anything." Some thought the team was supposed to be planning and setting goals, while others assumed the team focused on evaluating the programs and supporting the staff. The attention of the team also seems to be children, but not youth. There is a church elder for youth ministry and a youth board, it's not clear if or how these relate to the team. A listening group participant commented, "It might be a good thing to have a youth on the leadership team." Some work is needed to help the leadership function more effectively for the ministry.

### Intergenerational Opportunities

Almost all listening group participants, of all ages and roles, expressed the desire for more intergenerational gatherings as a church. An older church member said, "There's not a lot happening for all ages to be together," and one of the youth shared, "It's cool to connect with people at the church who have been here a long time." Events like decorating for Advent, the women's arts and crafts activity, and the church work day were well attended and really popular, and left everyone wanting more. Stressing that these types of programs are important, one individual said, , "Family ministry is actually ministry for the whole congregation and even community."

### **Broken Connection**

Related to the hope for more intergenerational opportunities, many individuals at BSLC, in particular those not directly involved in the children's and youth ministry, feel disconnected from this vital area of the church. One listening group participant stated it plainly, "I just don't know what's going on." There's a lack of church wide communication highlighting the successes of the ministry, and sharing of upcoming plans and current needs. "There's no more children's message on Sunday morning, and I miss it," stated one older member of the church who seemed to be longing for a connection with younger generations. This hope for children and youth to simply be more present, and visible, was echoed by many.

### **Critical Mass**

One of the key things that attracts children, youth, and families to a ministry and church, is other children, youth, and families, and there was a consistent concern over the small numbers currently involved. One youth said it simply, "We want more youth at youth group." Another individual shared, "We need to be bringing families in, and back." The low numbers also make programming difficult because a wide range of children and youth have to meet together, and it's hard to select age appropriate material with different stages of life represented. A listening group participant said, "It's challenging to have everyone together, it would be nice to be able to divide into smaller groups." The need for, and importance of, a critical mass is clear to everyone at BSLC.

#### Stuck in the Rearview Mirror

With a church that has a long and rich history like Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, it's natural to reflect fondly of seasons of ministry in the past. However, a large percentage of comments in listening groups were backwards-looking instead of forward-thinking. One church member said, "I would love to see it back the way it was," and this sentiment was shared by many others. While it's important to appreciate the past, and all the great things that happened with and for children, youth, and families, if the church can't turn their focus to what's in front of them, then there likely won't be much of a future. There was an

awareness of this need, and a few hopeful comments made about leaving the past in the past and focusing on moving forward. One individual shared, "It won't be just the same; it will look different because it is different, but we can do this." This attitude will need to be adopted and embraced by others on the journey ahead.

### **Equipping Adults**

Plain and simple, BSLC needs more adults supporting the children's and youth ministry. There is an excellent, committed core of volunteers serving, but they are doing a lot and need a larger team to share in the work. One individual shared, "I feel confident and supported, but we need more volunteers who want to step in and help out." More volunteers prepares the ministry for growth, and creates a strong community amongst the volunteers, allowing them to use their specific gifts. Recently parents have been invited to be more involved in the ministry, helping with specific tasks and also participating in programs, but there is still a desire for more equipping of parents as spiritual leaders for their families, according to several listening group participants. Overall, There needs to be a strategic process in place to recruit, train, and celebrate the adults serving the ministry, and their families, and investing in the lives of the children and youth.

#### **Cracks in the Foundation**

One of the things that keeps ministries from crashing and burning during times of transition is a strong infrastructure of systems and processes that undergird the ministry and programs of the church. When asked about these pieces - like attendance tracking, the annual calendar, a ministry manual, and major event notebooks – listening group participants indicated that these either didn't exist, or didn't know if they did. Without these key components for the children's and youth ministry of BSLC, the church will be unable to maintain strong and coherent ministries through staffing transitions, and other changes and challenges that arise.

### Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) **Reframe the next 18 months** as a time of building long-term infrastructure for the children's and youth ministry. Understanding that significant and immediate momentum will be built throughout the process of renovating the children's and youth ministry, target May 2023 as the date when the renovation will be complete.
- 2) Establish a Prayer Team to undergird this renovation process.
- 3) **Present this report to the governing body of the church**, requesting that they endorse an 18-month strategic design process for the children's and youth ministry.
- 4) Address the current pressure points facing the children's and youth ministry:

**Pressure Point #1: Establish a Children's and Youth Ministry Renovation Team,** made up of five to six volunteers, who are non-anxious, goal-oriented people. This team will free up the staff to focus on exceptional day-to-day ministry, while ensuring that the outcomes of this assessment are achieved.

- Create a job description for and recruit team members, with a commitment for the full 18 months, and determine a meeting schedule.
- Determine how current leadership, including the Family Ministry Team, the youth board, and the elder for youth ministry, will relate to and support this team and their work. Consider merging these other groups into this team for this season.
- Plan a "Quick Start" meeting with the Renovation Team to familiarize the members with this report and recommendations/timeline, and determine a rhythm for assigning/accomplishing tasks.

**Pressure Point #2: Expand the Pool of Adults** serving the ministry and engaging with the children and youth of the church, in their faith journey.

- Create a volunteer "megaboard" with lists of current volunteers, volunteer needs, and potential volunteers. Create job descriptions and an onboarding process for all volunteers.
- Match potential volunteers with needs, and use the Family Ministry Team and/or current volunteers to begin the recruiting work. Continue asking until all positions are filled.
- Create new, non-threatening opportunities for adult involvement in the program and communicate these with the congregation at large.
- Schedule regular meetings for parents which will be designed to share the vision and plans of the ministry, communicate opportunities for parents to serve, and teach/equip parents in ways to be the spiritual leaders of their families.

**Pressure Point #3: Deepen the Reach of the Ministry** by strategizing ways to invite new and former families to participate in programming, and engage in the life of the church.

- Develop a plan which formalizes current connections and expands opportunities for collaboration and relationship building between the church and the preschool.
- Gather contact information for all current and former families, and implement a system to personally contact each one, with the purpose of checking in, asking for feedback, and inviting them to current offerings.
- Determine strategies for reaching out to and getting to know the children, youth, and families in the neighborhoods around the church. Focus on learning their needs and ways to partner together to meet these needs.
- 5) **Build the long-term infrastructure** required for sustainable children's and youth ministry, including the following tasks:

### **Building Infrastructure and Stability**

In building a ministry there are key pieces to creating a solid foundation. Those key pieces to building infrastructure and stability are the following items:

- **Visioning:** Invite parents and leaders to participate in a multi-session, on-campus process of visioning a new future for the youth and children's ministries, resulting in the following documents which will direct the ministry:
  - A ministry mission statement
  - A statement of values
  - A set of three-year revolving goals with one-year benchmarks
- **Christian Formation Summit:** Gather a team for a Christian Formation Summit to discuss the learning objectives of each age level and how these might be accomplished utilizing curriculum, milestones, and special programming.
  - Evaluate the upcoming curriculum to ensure its effectiveness.
  - Develop a long-range scope and sequence as well as a set of core competencies for the youth and children's ministries programming.
  - Develop a clear plan for milestones and special events to shape the faith formation through the ages and stages.
  - Determine how the curriculum selected will be communicated to volunteers.
  - Decide what level of training will be required prior to full implementation.
- **Control Document Development:** Complete and publish an 18-month calendar, create major event notebooks to help event planners succeed, and generate a preventative maintenance calendar that schedules behind-the-scenes activities for each month (like "September: nail down the date for next year's VBS").
- **Compliance Documents:** Ensure that copyright licensing for music and videos has been obtained, an application and screening process for every volunteer is in place, and all adults working with any youth and children affirm a sexual abuse/child protection policy.
- **Children's and Youth Database:** Work on the youth and children's ministries databases has begun, collecting the most recent information for families, youth, and children. All are categorized in a manner that will follow up on First-Time Guest and MIA families, youth, and children. Children/youth have been identified with appropriate tags so that targeted communication for one-time visitors to long-time members is streamlined and effective.
- Attendance: Track attendance for all youth and children's activities in one cloud-based, electronic system.
- **Marketing:** Establish clear internal marketing processes that allow parents, youth, children, leaders, and the broader church are exposed to the successes and good news surrounding the children's and youth ministry.
- **Communication:** Document the rhythms and methods for effective and timely communication with parents, youth, children, and leaders utilizing as many forms of communication as possible including updating the youth and children's pages of the church's website, Facebook, mass texting, mail, e-mail, etc.
- Youth and Children's Ministry Manuals: Develop a manual for the youth and children's ministries, including the most recent youth and children's directories, a 12 to 18-Month calendar, results-based job descriptions for staff and volunteers,

compliance documents, budgets, game plans, a preventative maintenance calendar, and notes for every major children's or youth ministry event.

- Fall Kick-Off/Parent Orientation: Develop an intentional, family-based, incredibly fun Fall Kickoff event to launch the youth and children's ministries in the fall of 2022. Use that event to cast the vision, share information, and build enthusiasm about the year ahead.
- Enlist an Experienced, Professional Coach: Invite Ministry Architects to play the "coach" role during this renovation period. Ministry Architects would offer experienced direction for the building of an infrastructure for the youth and children's ministries and provide ongoing coaching for the ministries' staff members as well as the Renovation Team.

### **Developing and Nurturing Staff and Servants**

As the foundation is built, the church will need to assess the staffing structure that will best serve the ministry as it moves forward. The church will also need to ensure it is engaging and equipping the leadership.

- **Strategic Staffing:** Propose a clear, appropriate long-term staffing plan, including the professional and volunteer components, for the youth and children's ministries that will provide the church with significant capacity to sustain a thriving ministry to its targeted number of children and youth.
- Leadership Development: Complete results-based, written job descriptions for all paid and volunteer positions in the youth and children's ministries, and create a structure for the ongoing training of all volunteers at least quarterly.
- Volunteer Recruitment: Build a fortified volunteer leadership team, some of who will do relational ministry with children and youth, while others work behind the scenes. Create a clear and complete list of the volunteer needs. Create a "fishing pond" list of at least 15 possible volunteers to call on for weekly volunteer positions.
- Leadership Launch: Schedule and implement an inspiring leadership-training event for all volunteer youth and children's workers at the beginning of each school year.

#### **Developing Clear Strategies and New Initiatives**

Once the foundation is being laid and volunteers are engaged and clear on their roles, the church will then need to shift its focus to establishing clear strategies and developing new initiates such as:

- **Parent Engagement:** Create a written process for engaging the majority of parents in the ministry in some way during the 2022-2023 school year.
- **Measurable Markers of Effectiveness:** Determine reasonable participation goals for all youth and children's ministry events and weekly programs through December 2022 and take responsibility for filling those events.
- **Missions and Outreach:** Continue to build on the desire of youth, children, and parents to make a difference in the world, as well as their local community. Develop a clear, focused calendar for involvement in local agencies, as well as, regional, and possibly international missions. Evaluate the current mission trips for effectiveness.

Create a plan for promoting and exposing the congregation to missions throughout the year.

- Integration: Develop a strategic plan for helping the youth and children become an integral part of the whole church, weaving the children's and youth ministries into the fabric of the entire church.
- **Personal Connection Plan:** Develop a system for ensuring that every family in the current children's and youth directories is contacted personally at least once a year in order to make a connection, express support, and clarify if there are any parents requesting that their sons and/or daughters be removed from the church's directory.
- **First-Timer Process:** Develop a process for welcoming new families, children, youth, and guests to the church so that they feel warmly welcomed. Document a timely follow up plan to ensure their return to the church.
- **Ownership:** Create a game plan to encourage a culture where everyone feels valued and equally regarded. Foster a culture that all adults, regardless of their station in life, feel passionate about raising and supporting children and youth in their Christian faith.
- **Family Ministry:** Plan a few family events throughout the year focused on building family relationships and fun fellowship.
- **Rites of Passage (or Milestones):** Develop a written plan for the processes, events, and privileges that includes:
  - First Steps Milestone
    - Purpose: introduces the congregation to a few of the youngest members and makes both children and parents more comfortable with Sunday school. It reminds both children and their parents of the importance of attending Sunday school.
  - Welcome to Worship
    - Purpose: intentionally extends the welcome mat to children and their parents. It also introduces children, and the adults who care for them, to worship and worship space.
  - Anniversary of Baptism
    - Purpose: Reminds those who have been baptized during the past year, their families, and the congregation of the promises made to everyone at baptism. It is an opportunity to remind everyone that living our baptism is a lifelong journey—and one needs to be prepared to live and walk wet.
  - Prayer Milestone
    - Purpose: To encourage the congregation to keep its promise to equip and support parents to pass on faith. Through this milestone, children learn they have a direct relationship with God and Jesus through prayer.
  - Bibles to 8-year olds
    - Purpose: To invite children into the community's practice of reading scripture together.
    - 5<sup>th</sup> graders moving into the middle school ministry
      - Purpose: To welcome the rising 6<sup>th</sup> graders into the middle school ministry.
  - Blessing of the Backpacks

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- Purpose: To mark the passage of summer and to help children and adults transition back into the fall schedule, reminding the children that Jesus is always with us.
- Key Middle/High School Transitions
  - Welcome and connect the new ninth graders and their parents into the high school ministry.
  - Launch the church's high school graduates from the youth ministry, confident that they are surrounded by a supporting church family and committed to live out their faith as adults.

### TIMELINE

The following provides Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church with a timeline that can serve as a blueprint for the strategic launch of a sustainable, long-term children's and youth ministry.

Many churches choose to use the services of Ministry Architects to provide coaching and experienced troubleshooting through this infrastructure-building process. If the church would like Ministry Architects to provide more specialized consulting in certain areas, particularly for the 18-month transition, we are available to help.

#### December 2021

## Focus: Starting Right and Work Begins, Calendar Outcomes:

- This report has been presented to the governing body of the church for the strategic renovation of the children's and youth ministry and the governing body of the church has given full support of this plan.
- A prayer team has been recruited and charged with praying for the children's and youth ministries. They have received a copy of the assessment report and timeline.
- A job description for the Renovation Team has been created and the team recruited, with a commitment for the full 18 months. A meeting schedule has also been determined. And a determination has been made regarding how current leadership including the Family Ministry Team, the youth board, and the elder for youth ministry will relate to and support this team and their work.
- A volunteer "megaboard" has been created, with lists of current volunteers, volunteer needs, and potential volunteers. Job descriptions and an onboarding process for all volunteers has also been drafted.
- A plan which formalizes current connections and expands opportunities for collaboration and relationship building between the church and the preschool has been created.
- Work has begun on creating an organizational chart that will clearly outline responsibility for staff and volunteers.
- Work has begun on the 2022 summer calendar.
- The church has partnered with Ministry Architects to serve as the architect for the entire renovation process.

### January 2022

### Focus: Renovation Underway, Renovation Team Launches, Volunteers Outcomes:

- A "Quick Start" meeting with the Renovation team has occurred, in which the team has been familiarize with the assessment report and recommendations/timeline, and determined a rhythm for assigning/accomplishing tasks.
- The matching of potential volunteers with needs has been completed, and the Family Ministry Team and/or current volunteers have begun the recruiting work. Asking will continue until all positions are filled.
- Contact information for all current and former families has been gather, and system implemented to personally contact each one, with the purpose of checking in, asking for feedback, and inviting to current offerings.
- A Vision Summit has been scheduled for March and a "save the date" email/postcard has been sent to all families.
- A mid-year training event has taken place in which all volunteers received support and training in their specific roles. A "check-in" with each volunteer has taken place to evaluate how the volunteer has been doing in their role and addressed any concerns.
- The 2022 summer calendar has been completed.

### February 2022

### Focus: Attendance Tracking, Calendars Outcomes:

- The 2022-2023 children's and youth ministry calendar has been drafted through August 2023.
- Volunteer recruiting season for the 2022-2023 school year has opened.
  - Volunteer job descriptions have been reviewed and updated as needed.
  - Names of potential volunteers have been added to the fishing pond.
  - $\circ~$  All volunteer needs have been determined for the 2022-2023 school year.
  - $\circ$   $\,$  The volunteer needs list and the potential volunteers list has been merged.
  - Current volunteers have been asked to evaluate and possibly renew their commitment to the children's and youth ministries.
- Recruitment has begun for hands-on weekly volunteers, event coordinators, and behind-the-scenes volunteers.
- New, non-threatening opportunities for adult involvement in the program in both visible and behind-the-scenes roles have been created and communicated with the congregation at large.
- Strategies for reaching out to and getting to know the children, youth, and families in the neighborhoods around the church have been created. The focus of these plans has been on learning their needs and ways to partner together to meet these need.
- A process for tracking and recording attendance in all children's and youth ministries programs has been created and implemented.

### March 2022

## Focus: Pressure Points, Communication, Database, Vision Summit, Calendar Outcomes:

- All pressure points have been addressed.
- The 2022-2023 children's and youth ministry calendar has been completed through August 2023.
- Regular parent meetings have been scheduled. These are designed to share the vision and plans of the ministry, communicate ways for parents to serve, and teach/equip parents in ways to be the spiritual leaders of their families.
- A Vision Summit with all major stakeholders has occurred producing visioning documents for the children's and youth ministry (mission statement, core values, and goals).
- One-year benchmarks have been assigned to each three-year, revolving goal developed in the visioning process.
- Communication norms have been determined and those best practices are being implemented.
- Work on updating the children and youth database has begun, collecting the most recent information for families, children, and youth. All are categorized in a manner that will follow up on MIA families, children, and youth. Youth and children have been identified with appropriate tags so that targeted communication for one-time visitors to long-time members is streamlined and effective.
- A Christian Formation Summit has been scheduled for the summer of 2022. The Summit will facilitate a discussion of the learning objectives of each age level and how these might be accomplished utilizing available curriculum.

### April 2022

## Focus: Compliance, Volunteer Thank You, Participation Goals Outcomes:

- A volunteer application, an application process and a screening process for all weekly hands-on volunteers have been created/updated and implemented.
- Background checks have been done for all weekly hands-on volunteers.

- All paperwork for hands on, weekly volunteers has been updated and is in compliance with the safe church policy.
- A volunteer thank-you event has been scheduled and promotional materials have gone out to all children and youth volunteers.
- A strategic plan has been created for helping the youth and children become an integral part of the whole congregation, weaving the ministries into the fabric of the entire church.
- Reasonable participation goals have been determined for all children's and youth ministries events and weekly programs through August 2023 and steps to accomplish those targets have begun to be implemented

### May 2022

## Focus: Database, Compliance, Volunteer Thank You, Leadership Outcomes:

- A database of all youth, children, and their families has been compiled and each person is "tagged" with a category.
- Copyright licensing for music and videos has been obtained. Permission slips for each offsite event in addition to standard medical release forms for the entire year have been created.
- All programs have adhered to the safe church policy as laid out by the church.
- A process for engaging the majority of parents in the ministry in some way during the 2022-2023 school year has been written and implemented.
- A volunteer thank-you event has taken place.

### June 2022

## Focus: Timeline Progress Report, Curriculum, Fall Kick-Off, Leadership Launch Outcomes:

- The Renovation Team has completed a 6-month timeline progress report of the renovation process and made any adjustments necessary to improve the work being done.
- The Renovation Team has met monthly and decided how often they will meet for the remainder of the 18 months.
- MIA children and youth have been systematically contacted.
- All volunteers for the 2022-2023 school year have been recruited.
- The effectiveness of this past year's curriculum has been reviewed and decisions have been made for any necessary changes for the upcoming school year.
- A Fall Kick-off team has been recruited to begin planning for the start of the fall children's and youth ministry programs.
- A Leadership Launch has been scheduled for August and initiations have been sent to the volunteers

### July 2022

### Focus: Christian Formation Summit, Major Event Notebooks, Communication Outcomes:

- Interested staff, volunteers, and parents have gathered for a Christian Formation Summit to discuss the learning objectives of each age level and how these might be accomplished utilizing available curriculum, milestones, and special programming. At the Summit, the team:
  - Evaluated the upcoming curriculum to ensure its effectiveness
  - Developed a long-range scope and sequence as well as a set of core competencies for the children's and youth ministries programming.
  - Developed a clear plan for milestones and special events to shape the faith formation through the ages and stages. Determined how the curriculum selected will be communicated to volunteers.

- Decided what level of training will be required prior to full implementation.
- Work has begun on major event notebooks creating a template for the notebooks and collecting information on each children and youth event.
- Building on the desire of youth, children, and parents to make a difference in the world and their community, a calendar for involvement in local agencies, as well as, regional, and possibly international missions has been well publicized. Current mission trips have been evaluated for their effectiveness.
- Communication methods currently being used to promote the children's and youth ministries and share the successes with the congregation have been evaluated and added to if necessary.

### August 2022

## Focus: Database, Marketing, Leadership Launch, Compliance, Curriculum Outcomes:

- The collection of updated information from each youth, child, and family has been completed and the database for children's and youth ministries has been updated with that new information.
- Clear, internal marketing processes have been established that allow all church members to be exposed to the successes and good news surrounding the children's and youth ministries.
- All volunteers have experienced a Leadership Launch, lasting 2-4 hours that clarified their roles, inspired them to grow in their own faith and equipped them to serve. The Safe Sanctuaries policy was reviewed and adopted by all volunteers.
- Background checks have been done for all weekly hands-on volunteers.
- All paperwork for hands on, weekly volunteers has been updated and is in compliance with the safe church policy.
- Curriculum has been distributed to all teachers/volunteers and they have been trained to implement the curriculum.
- A game plan for welcoming new families, children, youth, and guests to the church so that they feel warmly welcomed has been implemented. The plan has included a timely follow up plan to ensure their return to the church.

#### September 2022

## Focus: Major Event Notebooks, Fall Kick-Off, Directory Outcomes:

- Major event notebooks for each major event for the children's and youth ministries have been handed out to this year's event coordinators.
- A Fall Kick-off has taken place that welcomed children, youth, and parents into a program they can get excited about, introduced parents to a format and structure they can feel confident about and provided a forum for receiving information from families. All participants feel energized and enthusiastic about the coming year's programs.
- With the most recent information on youth, children, and their families, a directory of all families and a directory of all volunteers have been created to be distributed at the Fall Kick-off.
- A plan has been implemented for ensuring that every family in the current children's and youth directories has been contacted personally at least once a year in order to make a connection, express support, and clarify if there are any parents requesting that their sons and/or daughters be removed from the church's directory.

#### October 2022 Focus: Preventative Maintenance Calendar, Benchmarks, Budget Outcomes:

- A preventative maintenance calendar has been created for the children's and youth ministries that will help regularly deal with on-going "behind the scenes" ministry maintenance.
- 50% of the one-year benchmarks have been accomplished.
- A detailed 2023 budget for the children's and youth ministries has been completed and submitted to the appropriate group.
- A game plan to encourage a culture where everyone feels valued and equally regarded has been implemented. A culture has been fostered that all adults, regardless of their station in life, feel passionate about raising and supporting children and youth in their Christian faith.

#### November 2022

### Focus: Ministry Manual, Summer Calendar Outcomes:

- The Children's and Youth Ministry Manual (both hard copy and digital) has been completed, including:
  - Visioning documents
  - Directories
  - Volunteer directory
  - Volunteer training agendas and notes
  - Attendance records
  - Annual calendar
  - Results-based job descriptions
  - Game plans and new initiatives
  - Meeting agendas and minutes for Children's and Youth Ministries Committee/Renovation Team.
  - Christian Formation Plan and record of curriculum resources used for the current year
  - Budget and other financial documents
  - Recruiting template, with a record of all the volunteer needs for the year
  - Compliance documents
- Work has begun on the summer calendar for 2023.

#### December 2022

## Focus: Reflection and Re-Assessment, Summer Calendar Outcomes:

- A review of the renovation process has been completed.
- An online diagnostic has been completed to re-assess the children's and youth ministries.
- Current pressure points have been named.
- The summer 2023 calendar for the children's and youth ministries has been completed and distributed.

#### January 2023

### Focus: Participation Goals, Compliance, Mid-Year Training, Calendar Outcomes:

- Reasonable participation goals have been determined for all children's and youth ministry events and weekly programs through January 2024 and steps to accomplish those targets have begun to be implemented.
- A mid-year training event has taken place in which all volunteers received support and training in their specific roles. A "check-in" with each volunteer has taken place to evaluate how the volunteer has been doing in their role and addressed any concerns.

- All paperwork for hands on, weekly volunteers has been updated and is in compliance with the safe church policy. Background checks have been completed on each volunteer.
- All children and youth programs have adhered to the safe church policy.
- Work has begun on the 2023-2024 children's and youth ministries calendar.
- A few family events have been calendared for the upcoming year. They have focused on building family relationships and fun fellowship.

#### February 2023

### Focus: Benchmarks, Volunteer Recruitment Outcomes:

- All one-year benchmarks have been achieved. Goals have been re-upped and new one-year benchmarks have been established.
- Volunteer recruiting season for the 2023-2024 school year has opened.
  - Volunteer job descriptions have been reviewed and updated as needed.
  - Names of potential volunteers have been added to the fishing pond.
  - All volunteer needs have been determined for the 2023-2024 school year.
  - $\circ$   $\;$  The volunteer needs list and the potential volunteers list has been merged.
  - Current volunteers have been asked to evaluate and possibly renew their commitment to the children's and youth ministries.
- Recruitment has begun for hands-on weekly volunteers, event coordinators and behind-the-scenes volunteers for 2023-2024.

#### March 2023

### Focus: Game Plans, Strategic Staffing

#### Outcomes:

- All game plans that have been launched in the last 12 months have been evaluated and tweaked as necessary for impact and sustainability.
- With the changes in the children's and youth ministries, the volunteer staffing to meet the size and scope of the children's and youth ministries has been evaluated and a game plan to meet those needs has been created if necessary.
- A plan for the Rites of Passage processes, events, and privileges has been launched that includes:
  - **First Steps Milestone**: Has introduced the congregation to a few of our youngest members and made both children and parents more comfortable with Sunday school. It reminded both children and their parents of the importance of attending Sunday school.
  - **Welcome to Worship**: Has intentionally extended the welcome mat to children and their parents. It has also introduced children, and the adults who care for them, to worship and the worship space.
  - Anniversary of Baptism: Has reminded those who have been baptized during the past year, their families, and the congregation of the promises made to everyone at baptism. It was an opportunity to remind everyone that living our baptism is a lifelong journey—and one needs to be prepared to live and walk wet.
  - **Prayer Milestone:** Has been a way a congregation can keep its promise to equip and support parents to pass on faith. Through this milestone, children have learned they have a direct relationship with God and Jesus through prayer.
  - **Bibles to 8-year olds:** Has invited children into the community's practice of reading scripture together.
  - **5<sup>th</sup> graders moving into the middle school ministry:** Has welcomed the rising 6<sup>th</sup> graders into the Jr. High ministry.

- **Blessing of the Backpacks:** Has marked the passage of summer and helped children transition back into the fall schedule and has served as a reminder that Jesus is always with us.
- Welcome and connect the new ninth graders and their parents into the high school ministry.
- **Launch the church's high school graduates** from the youth ministry, confident that they are surrounded by a supporting church family and committed to live out their faith as adults.

### April 2023

### Focus: Compliance, Volunteer Thank You Outcomes:

- Copyright licensing for music and videos has been obtained. Permission slips for each offsite event in addition to standard medical release forms for the entire year have been created.
- All programs have adhered to the safe church policy as laid out by the church.
- A volunteer thank you event has been scheduled and all volunteers have been invited.

### May 2023

### Focus: Sustainability

### Outcomes:

- Game plans have been put in place to sustain the processes and procedures developed during the renovation.
- Ongoing coaching has been secured and a sustainability plan has been put in place.
- A timeline for the next 12 months has been created that included game plans for the current pressure points and items from the online diagnostic.
- The staff and Renovation Team have celebrated what God has done with their 18-month investment.
- The Renovation Team has transitioned their role to providing support and accountability to the children and youth volunteers and focusing on strategic issues such as three-year goals and one-year benchmarks, curriculum selection, calendars, and volunteer recruitment.



### THE CONSULTANT TEAM FOR BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH



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