

A PLANNING TOOL TO PREPARE YOUR CONGREGATION FOR 2021

SETTING THE SCENE – 10 MINUTES

RATIONALE: Hearing other people's stories helps to engage empathy.

EITHER

A) Prepare a video and play it back to the group.

If you have capacity, interview on video 3 or 4 people in your community, asking them one of the following questions:

- What was COVID19 like for you?
- What have you valued?
- What did you find most difficult?
- What expression of Christian community life would you like to see happen into the future?

OR

B) Watch the following videos

[What is something you are learning during this time about faith life that you want to keep doing after all this has passed?](#)

Pt 1 (2 minutes)

[What is something you are learning during this time about faith life that you want to keep doing after all this has passed?](#)

Pt 2 (1 minute)

[What is something you are learning during this time about faith life that you want to keep doing after all this has passed?](#)

Pt 3 (2.5 minutes)

[What is something you are learning during this time about faith life that you want to keep doing after all this has passed?](#)

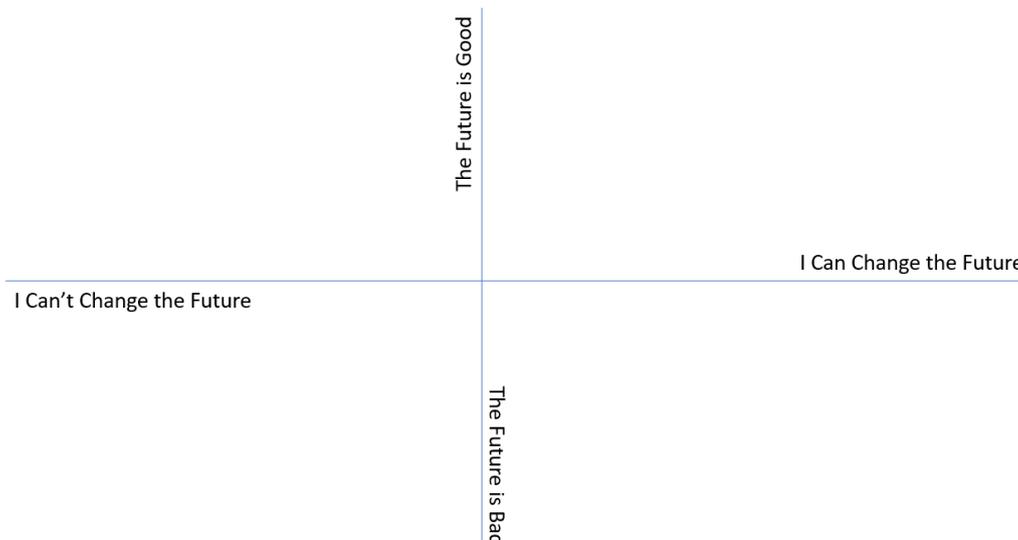
Pt 4 (1.5 minutes)

Bonus Video [Arise Springfield Filming Bloopers Reel](#) (1 minute)

WHAT DO I THINK? – 10 MINUTES

RATIONALE: Spending time thinking about how people might feel about the future can create greater engagement and increase understanding

Have people identify and share where they might place themselves on the following grid, and why they see themselves there.



OUR CURRENT REALITY – 10 MINUTES

RATIONALE: This provides a space for personal reflection on what has been most helpful and what has been difficult. Small group discussion allows all voices to be heard. Summarising the responses in 4 or 5 key words and phrases enables the wider group to look for common themes.

Discuss the following questions in groups of 3 or 4, then as a small group identify 4-5 key words or phrases that are common among all participants. Write these key words or phrases on Post-it notes and place them on a wall.

- a. Over the past six months, what have you most valued within the life of the church?
- b. What have you found most difficult?
- c. What have you missed the most?

IDENTIFY 5 KEY ISSUES OR OPPORTUNITIES PERTAINING TO CURRENT REALITY – 10 MINUTES

RATIONALE: Narrowing the potentially large list of topics into a few categories, provides the opportunity to focus on key topics. Sharing current realities helps to keep the conversation grounded.

As a large group, categorise the Post-it notes into no more than 5 groupings.

A PREFERRED FUTURE – 10 MINUTES

RATIONALE: Moving from large group participation back to personal reflection provides individual input and ownership into discussions on the future

Individually, and in the context of the mission and ministry of the local Lutheran congregation, what would you hope that your congregation might look like in 5 years' time. Write a 'mini-story' (one or two sentences) describing an aspect of your preferred future. (eg; my ten year old grandchild will attend church and discover other people his age worshipping as well). Write your reflections on individual post-it notes.

- What do you hope that your worshipping community will look like in 5 years' time?
- What are you most looking forward to starting again?
- In what areas do you think that the congregation can most grow?

A PREFERRED FUTURE – GROUP REFLECT – 20 MINUTES

RATIONALE: Sharing individual mini stories into the larger group starts to paint a picture of what a mutual hope might be. Categorising the individual stories into themes can help to focus the group on where to next invest their energies.

Individually, share each mini-story and place it on the wall.

As a large group categorise the stories into no more than 3 key themes.

CHANGE – 10 MINUTES

RATIONALE: Having identified up to three key themes on which to focus and potentially develop, identifying potential roadblocks, potholes and obstacles is essential to planning.

In groups of 3 or 4, reflect on each of the identified themes, brainstorm potential roadblocks, potholes or obstacles that might stop that from happening?

How might these roadblocks, potholes and obstacles be addressed?

CHANGE – LARGE GROUP – 10 MINUTES

RATIONALE: Moving from small group to large group conversation broadens the discussion and shares the joint wisdom.

Each group shares with the larger group their responses and means of addressing potential roadblocks, potholes and obstacles.

As a larger group, choose one or two key areas on which to focus in the coming year – areas that, to the best of your wisdom, will have the most positive impact on your congregation or your community.

WIGS AND WHIRLWINDS – LARGE GROUP – 10 MINUTES

RATIONALE: Much of the life of the church (as either a church worker or a volunteer) can be understood as a whirlwind – the week is filled with the urgent which takes control. Whirlwinds cannot be avoided – they happen. But if the whirlwind takes full control on the life of the church, and of Christians in the church, their ability to have capacity to be engaged in the work of the Gospel will be constrained. Developing WIGS (Wildly Important Goals) and finding ways to use those WIGS to keep us on track is Wildly Important.

As a group complete the following grid. Note: choose no more than two WIGS – one is good. Identify a range of lead measures that include the required resource, and who is responsible.

Definitions:

WIG = Wildly Important Goal

Lag Measure = A description of what the community will look like when the WIG is achieved. It is a Lag measure because the result can only be measured further down the road.

Lead Measure = Smaller indicators than you can charted, observed, delegated and reminded to ensure that the goal remains focussed. If a Lead Measure is not able to be met, it provides an opportunity to tweak the plan to achieve the WIG. A lead measure is often written in the form *From X to Y by when*. In other words, it has incremental steps that are time framed with which the congregational leadership team can monitor and review.

WIG	Lag Measure (social/spiritual benefit)
<i>(In this space, write the key area of focus)</i>	<i>(In this space, write what your community will look like when the WIG has been achieved)</i>
Lead Measure 1	Progression
From X to Y by when	<i>Note how this lead measure will be monitored</i>
<i>(Insert resource and person responsible)</i>	
Lead Measure 2	Progression
From X to Y by when	<i>Note how this lead measure will be monitored</i>
<i>(Insert resource and person responsible)</i>	

The congregation leadership team will spend 5-10 minutes every month reviewing and reflecting on how the Lead Measures are tracking towards the Wildly Important Goal.

RATIONALE: Most plans fail because often, there are few processes put in place to ensure that either the focus area is not regularly monitored, and that intended actions are missing the mark. The following Action Research Cycle can be used on a regular basis to reflect on and learn from the intended Action

At six months, the leadership team spends deeper time collecting information (observe) and reflecting on how the plan is tracking. If need be, it can revise the plan, and refine the Lead Indicators.

