

KAIROS LISTENING REPORT

Oral Report Delivered November 19, 2017

Written Report Presented January 2018

**Grace Lutheran Church & School
Huntington Beach, CA**

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REPORT USAGE STATEMENT

It is important that this report be recognized as an internal planning document. Intrinsic to its value is its candor, which is essential in assisting the leadership of Grace LC & School to make informed and faithful decisions around future planning, particularly relating to conducting a major capital campaign for the purposes of school campus relocation, facility and ministry enhancements. This report includes general references to responses from congregation and school families gained through the Mission Assessment Profile (MAP) report, School Survey, Leadership System Inventory (LSI), interviews and listening groups. It also includes recommendations from Kairos based on this input along with additional analysis and professional experience. This report should not be regarded as a promotional document designed for general distribution. Rather, it should be used as a significant resource among key decision-makers of Grace LC to plan appropriately for the future.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

Grace LC & School hired Kairos and Associates in the spring of 2017 to provide professional guidance in assessing the church's capacity to move forward with a major capital funding initiative. This initiative was focused on both the need to move the current school location back to the main church campus and to address much need facility upgrades and expansion to accommodate such a move. Pastor Jeff Kjellberg implemented a Listening Process to inform the assessment.

This Listening Process focused on these key areas: 1) What are the hopes and dreams for both the church and school? 2) What is the level of understanding regarding the potential move of the school back to the church's main campus? 3) What are the opportunities and concerns regarding this decision? 4) Where is the level of willingness and potential to financially support this decision? 5) Additional comments and feedback.

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

There were six major components to this process. The first was an initial engagement with both the church and school staff and leadership. This engagement provided the opportunity to get a deeper understanding of what was driving this conversation to move the school, what were the hopes and concerns from the leadership's perspective, and what were the desired outcomes for this assessment process.

The second component was the conducting of an online assessment with congregational members. The Missional Assessment Profile (MAP) was implemented with 187 responses. An initial interpretation of the MAP was given to Grace leaders in October of 2017. The third component was the implementing of the Leadership System Inventory (LSI). This was given to the past five years of elders, executive leaders and staff. 18 responses were received. The interpretation was shared along with the MAP results in October of 2017. The fourth component was the conducting of several interviews and listening sessions with Grace LC members. 80 individuals were either interviewed or participated in one of the group listening sessions.

The fifth component was the conducting of a uniquely designed survey for the Grace LC School families. 122 responses were received. The report from this survey was shared on November of 2017. The final component was the conducting of interviews and listening groups with Grace LC School families. 41 individuals participated in either an interview or listening group, including 10 from the preschool.

LISTENING PHASE OBSERVATIONS

As mentioned above, the purpose of this process was to gather meaningful input and information from Grace LC members and school families to give the leadership of Grace the ability to make important decisions around ministry and facility planning. The comments shared below are general perceptions and reflections that emerged out of the broad-based input that was shared. It isn't meant to be declarative as much as reflective of the spirit and sentiment that is held amongst the faith community of Grace Lutheran Church and School.

It is important to note that an preliminary oral presentation of this Listening Phase was shared with Grace LC leaders in November of 2017.

Missional Assessment Profile (MAP) Points of Interest:

- The congregation is in the “puzzled” landscape, but moving towards the land of “possibilities”. This is a positive, as it reflects that there are is good energy and positive feelings about the church. The opportunity is that people are also wanting clear direction for the future. Where are we going and why are the key questions to address.
- Given the above observation, there is clear need for Grace leaders to work on deepening the buy-in and awareness of Grace’s missional purpose
- There seems to be a variety of elements that are affecting people’s sense of belonging and connectedness to the ministry. These include the sense of being respected, feeling valued or integral to the culture and Grace feeling cohesive in its directional purpose.
- The trust of leadership and experiencing full transparency are areas needing to be addressed.
- Worship is the highest valued ministry practice with educational opportunities being the lowest.
- Leveraging the entrepreneurial spirit of the people that shows up in the priority tendencies.

- Change is seen as necessary in a positive way
- There is real opportunity to develop a more holistic approach to growing the culture of generosity.

Leadership System Inventory (LSI):

- There is a tendency to recycle members in leadership
- Leadership is perceived to come from a small group of people
- Need for more intentional training and equipping of lay leadership
- Strong feeling of being supported by each other as leaders
- There is a longing for a clearer process to conduct ministry planning and implementation
- A sense of being unorganized
- Willingness to take risks
- Looking for a stronger system of accountability
- Wanting more transparency in decision making and process

Listening Sessions w/ Church Members:

- Grace is seen as a family that shows authentic love for one another.
- Overall respect for the pastoral leadership and staff.
- Overwhelming support for making the move of the school back to the church campus.
- The move of the school brings significant hope for growing Grace's overall ministry, both in numbers and missional impact.
- There are some misconceptions on how the financial piece will be managed for a major facility renovation and school campus move.
- A consistent inability to articulate a sense of missional direction and purpose for the church.
- General concerns about Grace having the needed leadership to manage a school move.
- A deep longing to grow the youth ministry program

School Survey – See Attachment

The survey was designed with very clear and direct questions relating to how parents felt about the school, what was most important to them for placing their child in the school, what are the most important areas for leadership to focus on for the future, and the feelings about the campus move. The results speak for themselves.

School Listening Sessions

Primary Affirmations of current Grace Lutheran School

- The teachers & staff
- The culture of compassion
- The curriculum
- The family community
- The openness of the current campus and its more secure location

Primary Concerns w/ campus move

- Campus Safety
- Traffic of Grace Lutheran Church location
- Accessibility
- Lack of green space
- Tuition increases to pay for the move

Additional Comments

- A majority of families will move with the school, especially if most of the concerns are addressed
- There is little resistance to the idea of being asked to financially support the capital appeal
- There are a number of higher potential gifts within the school community
- Most of the preschool parents indicated an unwillingness to move to the Church campus
- There is very little awareness of the overall plan and needs for making this move

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Clarifying Grace's Missional Purpose and Overall Ministry Goals & Priorities

Through all phases of the assessment process it was clear that there is a lack of clarity around Grace's missional purpose. This is especially true amongst the church membership. Before any major appeal initiative is attempted, Grace Church and School leaders will need to spend time developing a clear picture of its future relating to its overall Missional Identity/Purpose, the plan for living out that mission and facility needs that arise out of that mission. This isn't a starting from scratch process, but taking what is already in play and working to develop clarity and definition around Grace's "why". Kairos will work with leadership to accomplish this goal. In addition, a variety of opportunities will need to be created to draw in the whole faith community in this process to work towards shared ownership and broad based buy-in to Grace's desired future.

2. Revisit the Campus Site Plan

It will be important, once the missional purpose work is complete, to take a fresh look at the Grace Church Campus plan. The main purpose for this is to ensure that the desired renovations and expansion fulfill much, if not all, of the newly developed mission and its facility needs.

3. Developing a Comprehensive Financial Plan

Once the Missional Purpose work is advanced, and the campus plan has been revisited, a thorough financial strategy will need to be created that incorporates the entire picture for how Grace Lutheran Church and School plans to move this dream forward. This needs to involve projections of school income, preschool income, church income, capital appeal revenues and short and long term debt management, along with the imagined costs for the campus renovation, school relocation, costs of doing the ministry and any new mission and ministry initiatives that are launched.

4. Conducting a Capital Appeal in 2018

For the dream to be realized, a major Capital Funding Appeal will be needed. Most likely there will need to be 2-3 successive appeals conducted to help manage the level of indebtedness that will be incurred. Planning for this appeal should begin in May of 2018 and launched for both the church and school communities in the fall of 2018.

5. Worship Assessment

This is not based upon the sense that what is being offered is broken, or needing to be revitalized. It is based upon comments shared from the listening sessions as well as the observations and expertise of the consultant that makes this an area of focus. A comprehensive assessment of the current worship experience should be conducted with the hopes of developing some reimagined ways to make worship vibrant and inspiring to a broader range of people.

6. Organization Assessment and Development

With the relocation of the school back to the main church campus, there is need to revisit the current organizational structures that are in place. This involves addressing how the church and school are governed, where key decision making rests for both entities, how leadership and staff are equipped to make critical decisions on a daily basis. This recommendation includes bringing in outside expertise that can assist in this process.

It is with deep gratitude and appreciation that I share this report. It has been a gift to become more connected with Grace Lutheran's faith community and discover its potential and opportunity for growth. I look forward to the continued relationship and helping to move these recommendations forward.

Faithfully Submitted, Pastor Jeff Kjellberg