



▶ OUR OUTREACH



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▶ OUR CARE OF MEMBERS

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Issue 2 of 5

Epiphany *vision*

EPIPHANY'S PURPOSE IS TO LOVE JESUS BY SERVING OTHERS.

A Message from Pastor Pete

WORSHIP RATIONALE

Worship's purpose is to love Jesus by worshipping and praising the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

As God's children, we are called to worship and praise God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As a congregation, Epiphany is called to worship and praise God as the corporate body of Christ.

Therefore, worship is a very important part of the vision statement.

In the past, the size of a congregation was measured by its baptized membership. More recently, the size of a congregation is measured by its average worship attendance.

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God's Vision for Epiphany

Worship Rationale Continued

In 2005, Epiphany's average worship attendance was 1,024 per weekend, which was 30.8% of its baptized membership of 3,322. The normal range of worship attendance for a healthy large congregation, like Epiphany, is between 25% and 35% of its baptized membership. Epiphany is worshipping approximately 500 per weekend or 21.8% of its baptized membership of 2,289. The below normal worship attendance percentage is understandable given Epiphany's recent history. At this point, that percentage should not be a cause for alarm. The vision calls for 1,500 average worshipping attendance at the Far Hills and Austin campuses in 2021. *What will lead to this amount of growth?*

The ELCA published a study in 1996 on worship and numerical growth. Over a five year period, congregation's which offered effective traditional and effective alternative worship styles grew by three percent, while those who offered only effective traditional worship declined by three percent. The conclusion of the study was that growing congregations offer different worship experiences to meet the needs of a variety of individual worshippers.

Epiphany's vision recognizes the importance of different styles of worship. Currently, three traditional services are offered at Far Hills on Saturday evening and Sunday mornings. In addition, three alternative services are offered on Sunday morning - two at Far Hills and one at Austin. A single pastor preaches at all four services at Far Hills each Sunday morning leaving no time to greet worshippers, meet with parishioners or teach Sunday School.

While continuing the current worship schedule, the vision changes the preaching assignments for pastors. Instead of one pastor being at all four services, two pastors will be at Far Hills on a Sunday morning. One pastor will preside at both the traditional services with an hour and fifteen minutes between these services to greet visitors, teach Sunday School or socialize with parishioners. The second pastor will preside at the alternative worship services giving the same opportunities to greet, teach and visit. If the pastors teach Sunday School, it means one will preside at the same worship for several weeks.

There was serious debate to cut the number of worship services to three at Far Hills per Sunday. Retaining the current schedule of four services per Sunday was decided when the seating capacity of the sanctuary was taken into consideration. Church consultants advise their clients that a sanctuary is "full" when 75% to 80% of its official capacity is occupied. Epiphany's sanctuary, according to the architectural drawings, has the capacity of 633 worshippers.

According to consultants, growth in worship attendance stops when 487 to 522 worshippers gather for a service in the sanctuary. Consultants also teach that the greatest attendance will be between 9:30 and 10:30 on Sunday morning. Therefore, it can be concluded that there will be two services with large attendance and two services with smaller attendance.

In conclusion, diversity in worship styles and adequate seating capacity, plus time to visit with a service's presiding pastor are conducive to the growth in the vision statement.



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