

Funding Forward/BHAG Visioning Meeting Summary & Next Steps

Messiah Lutheran Church

Thank you to everyone who joined our *Funding Forward/BHAG Visioning Workshop on November 23rd*! Your energy, ideas, and faithful reflection are helping to shape the next chapter of our ministry together.

What We Learned

Through our interactive station discussions, we explored our **vision, mission, and community connections**. Here is what emerged:

- **Vision and Mission:**

Participants expressed strong support for our [current vision statement](#), and the **Funding Forward Committee** recommends using it as our *mission statement* going forward, as it clearly expresses how we live out God's purpose through our ministries.

We also generated ideas for a new **one-line vision statement** describing where we hope to be in the future. These ideas were hopeful, outward-focused, and will be refined at our next gathering.

- **Defining Our Community:**

We mapped the circles of community God calls us to serve:

- **Local Community:** Amherst, Mont Vernon, Milford, Hollis, Bedford, Merrimack, Brookline, New Boston
- **Regional Community:** Hillsborough County (Nashua, Manchester) and Camp Calumet
- **World Community:** ELCA World Hunger and other global partners

This reflection helped us appreciate how far our ministries already reach and how much opportunity we have to deepen these relationships. We discussed the need to identify the % of time we should invest at each level - **70% local, 20% regional, 10% global- was a starting point.**

Mobilizing the Talents of Our Congregation

A heartfelt **thank you** to everyone who took the time to complete the **Talent and Network Survey**. Your responses highlighted how deeply gifted and well-connected this congregation is. We are already beginning to plan ways to **activate and mobilize these gifts**:

- We discovered that we have a surprisingly large number of **writers**. We will be reaching out to invite you to help craft articles for local newspapers and online outlets to share Messiah's mission and activities more widely.
- We identified several **event planners** whom we will reach out to begin brainstorming **monthly community-facing events**, helping us build stronger and more visible connections with our neighbors in 2026.
- And to the entire congregation: **we promised to utilize your talents over the next year, and we intend to keep that promise.**

The Big Picture: Where This Work is Going

The work we began in November is part of a larger, thoughtful process aimed at clarifying our identity, strengthening our ministries, and preparing for a sustainable and vibrant future. Here is the roadmap:

1. Finalize Our Vision, Mission, and Community Definition (February)

These foundational pieces will guide all future planning and ensure that our ministries, resources, and energy are aligned with our purpose.

2. Develop a Congregational Strategic Plan (Spring 2025)

Once the foundation is set, we will move into creating a *practical, Spirit-led strategic plan* with:

- **Short-Term Goals**

These are highly visible, community-involvement actions such as:

- Participating in the **Milford Arts & Crafts Fair** to highlight congregational talents, for example:
 - “Meet an author” hour
 - Mini painting demonstration/class
 - Handmade bread, chocolates, or quilts

These activities would increase our presence, strengthen relationships, and showcase the gifts of our members.

- **Long-Term Goals**

These ensure the sustainability and vitality of Messiah’s ministry, including:

- Identifying ways to **diversify income** and strengthen financial resilience
- Conducting **1:1 listening meetings** with local community groups
- Building new partnerships informed by our listening tour

These longer-range goals will help us grow in stability, connection, and mission impact. Together, these efforts will help Messiah Lutheran Church become even more rooted in our community, more confident in our purpose, and more sustainable for the future.

Next Steps

We will gather again for **lunch and conversation in February** to continue refining these elements and begin preparing for strategic planning in the spring.