Benefits of Strategic Planning

1. **What are the benefits of strategic planning for congregations?**
   - Clearly defining and widely communicating the congregation’s mission
   - Comprehending current reality (both within the congregation and community)
   - Clarifying core values (and, when appropriate, challenging the status quo)
   - Receiving context-sensitive recommendations
   - Building consensus and shaping an agreed-to, compelling vision for future ministry
   - Helping contributors envision what their support will accomplish (to God’s glory)
   - Designing specific strategies and action plans which purposefully involve more people
   - Evaluating progress and making needed adjustments during implementation
   - Strengthening the concept of teamwork throughout the congregation
   - Initiating and managing needed change with minimal resistance and disruption
   - Leadership development (growth in knowledge, passion, skills)
   - Exposure to current trends and evaluation of ministry innovations
   - Informed decision-making that supports long-range strategic direction
   - Calculated investment of the congregation’s resources (people, properties, programs, funds, facilities)
   - Organizational alignment with enhanced effectiveness and efficiency
   - Improved communications and public relations

2. **Why have someone from the outside – but still WELS – assist with strategic planning?**
   - Offers a fresh, impartial, informed point of view (which is biblically grounded)
   - Promotes crosspollination of ideas (experience with serving many congregations within diverse contexts)
   - Utilizes associate consultants who have a wide range of competencies
   - Provides a proven ministry planning process and has a positive track record
   - Uses tested tools, manages phases/steps, and keeps the process moving (so it doesn’t stall out)
   - Accomplishes both long- and short-term ministry planning (with outreach/nurture balance)

   **Theologically trained within WELS**
   “Elton, I have explicit trust both in your theology and practice.” (District President)

3. **How can our congregation afford to do this?**
   - Include the costs in the budget. Utilize undesignated special funds. Seek support publically from all or privately from individuals (who value strategic planning and have the means to fund it).
   - Select an affordable ministry planning approach. (Crossroads offers options.)
   - Work with Crossroads on developing an acceptable payment plan.
   - View ministry planning as cost-effective, a wise investment in your congregation’s mission and future within your community and beyond. (The benefits – both immediate and long-range – are likely to dwarf the costs associated with ministry planning.)