
Abiding Savior Lutheran Church

2024 Strategic Plan

Abiding Savior Lutheran Church Summary

Mission Statement: Living in God's love, Abiding Savior Lutheran Church (ASLC) is a welcoming and caring family that nurtures spiritual growth, shares our Christian faith, and serves all creation.

Who We Are: Abiding Savior is a neighborhood church that's part of the congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the St. Paul Area Synod. We are here because this church is a friendly, safe place to call home, a truly caring family where people treat one another with kindness and respect. Abiding Savior does not claim to offer perfection, instead it offers people just like you coming together to praise God, learn God's ways, support one another through the rough moments in life and to celebrate with one another life's accomplishments.

Where we want to go: We must maintain the foundational reasons why people worship and serve here, as those traditions are why many of us are vested in this wonderful faith community that we have here at Abiding Savior Lutheran Church. At the same time we must:

1. Family Ministry: more young families growing their faith through engagement with each other and the church.
2. Growing participation in ASLC ministries by members and those who are not yet here.
3. Worship services that are comforting and creative, inspiring, and exciting.
4. Active engagement in sharing God's love with our local community and around the world.

ASLC Listening Sessions Results

Why do you attend (ASLC) Abiding Savior Lutheran Church?

- Because of the people: friendly, family, welcoming
 - We needed a welcoming and caring family and that was very evident in our first visits here.
 - Requested prayers and received support during trying time, of all churches this felt most supportive.
 - We wanted a church that our kids could attend with their schoolmates – right in the neighborhood.
 - This is just where we go, this is our church! (stated with joy)
- Because of Ministry: worship, music, and youth programs
 - Wednesday evenings. hymns & contemporary music
 - A traditional church with a small-town feel, homey
 - Challenging yet focused Bible studies
 - Alignment with personal faith, sermon messages, Pastors are known, welcoming
 - Focuses on confession and forgiveness during worship, and not entertainment
 - Open-mindedness of ELCA

ASLC Listening Sessions Results

How would you describe the ideal Abiding Savior now and in the future?

- Maintain the core members, and the “personal touch” not found in big box churches
- More youth
- Getting more people to “want” church, like to see more members back at the church service,
- More young people with families AND bigger youth programs

What should never be changed at ASLC?

- Our commitment to outreach
- We are a resource to support one another - a community of trust
- Fellowship, providing meals (Wednesdays, Election night, Sunday Brunches, Funerals) and seeing new faces
- The liturgical flow, the consistency, the meaning, the familiarity, and the music
- Including a children’s sermon during church

What parts of worship do you find inspiring?

- Traditional Liturgy and hymns, Sermon, Singing, including Lord’s Prayer and Apostles Creed
- Pastors using the sign of the cross during worship
- The music: contemporary and traditional
- Sharing peace and greeting during the church service
- Globe for the kids to donate

ASLC Listening Sessions Results

What value does ASLC bring to the community and beyond?

- Supporting Tanzania
- Wednesday night meals
- Trunk or Treat
- Meals on Wheels
- Hosting Growing through Loss
- Election night meals
- A variety of needs drives - coats, food shelf, infant bundles and more
- CPY
- Community Support Center
- Irondale High School programs
- VBS & CAC

ASLC Listening Sessions Results

What would you like changed or enhanced at Abiding Savior?

- Service changes:
 - Would like to have the 1st lesson read.
 - Explain scripture in layman terms so you leave feeling “I can do this”
 - Present the ministry in a way that you can bring it home
 - Theme services diving into scripture – connecting week over week
 - Additional vision guides (for adults) connecting sermons week over week – Cliffhangers
 - Timing of service, sometimes hard as services go over, could Pastors make decisions during service to shorten or cut a piece of the service to maintain time...are we putting too much into each service?
- More welcoming, such as non-traditional music in entryway, coffee available as you enter
- More representation of different age groups
- Education/classes on being Lutheran: Why do we stand when we do? Why do we “chant”? Explaining what the meaning is behind the words or actions
- It is a choice for people to attend, what does the next generation need / we need to determine what will make it relevant to our kids’ kids?

ASLC Listening Sessions Results

What would you like changed or enhanced at Abiding Savior?

- Society is more mobile, to assimilate new people in our area is a challenge but it is an important one – how do we welcome new neighbors?
 - Enhance outreach to the immediate and broader community
- Guest musicians - pull in variety from congregation, concerts (sell tickets) Advent fair - family activities
- Entice more families and youth - children to join our church
 - Families are very stressed with activities, sports, - how do we add value so more attend?
- Do more “non-traditional church things” at church for the youth AND get more adults to support/attend the non-church activities of the youth to build better connections between the youth and the church.
 - Integrated service in the church - volunteer to work at meals - incorporate youth
- We need to adapt to the new generation, those that are disenfranchised with church
 - Social activism involved/supported through church
- Technology for the youth to better connect to the church.
- More emphasis on church camps.

ASLC Listening Sessions Results

What skills/competencies in a new pastor do you feel are most important to enable ASLC to be as you envision it?

- Energy that compliments Pastor Ryan
- Someone with high energy to spearhead youth programs and children activities
- Pastoral care – outgoing personality
- Some musical abilities
- Teaching skills, maintain what we traditionally have with the associate pastor, but also bring “new” Tech skills,
- Getting the word out in sermons
- Caring and compassionate,relatable, people skills, good communication, visitation skills
- Empathy and caring intergenerationally
- Balance between fun and compassion, comfortable with all generations
- Someone more engaging, touchy-feely person people person - able to relate to all ages
- Someone willing to try to do something new
- Female
- Diversity
- Younger
- Lots of positive comparisons to Brad’s approach including a suggestion to hire a full time Deacon and part-time pastor
- Full time position, the church is not good at executing time commitments for part time pastors
 - We have to understand that Pastor’s need to have work/life balance

Note: If call committee – include multiple generations

Strengths		Threats	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Community (internal/external) ● Generosity ● Staff/Leadership/ Volunteers ● Partnerships ● Building ● Programs ● Outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Welcoming ● Connected (family feel) ● Intergenerational ● Feeding ministries ● Music ● VBS ● Better message in the gospel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Post COVID culture are not changing ● Church lower priority; Church losing its place in society ● Kids activities and busy schedules ● Political discourse separates Christians ● Mounds View has a large transient community ● Hard to get kids out the door 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ELCA is too progressive for some ● Families are out of the habit (or habit wasn't established for younger kids) ● Big Box Churches ● Changes in population <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Empty Nesters not attending ○ Large givers are moving, dying, or unable to attend
Opportunities		Weaknesses	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Changes, new visions, & new ideas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revise roles New staff & Committees ○ Online worship and present ○ Utilize technology (limits expenses): QR codes, Facebook, New Sign ○ Programming based on schedules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Community, Partnerships & Outreach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bring church to the community "God's work, Our hands" ○ BKB involvement ○ Collaborate & partner with other churches ○ Preschool & VBS families ● Finance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grow the endowment ○ Financial reserves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Busy schedules ● Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Steeped in tradition; comfortable where we're at ○ Worship not inspiring; Lack of new ideas and creativity ● Societal changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Balancing 21st century with traditions ● Population <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Small Sunday school population ○ Youth group not well attended, events only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Population cont'd <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Losing kids after confirmation ○ Located in a subdivision ○ Not enough volunteers ● Finances: Faithful longtime givers passing & Lower average giving amount ● Communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of communication - not everyone can do new technology but youth don't use "traditional" means

Definition of Strategic Plan

How should our finished strategy look?

Our document should cover the entire strategy from our defining documents (mission, vision, values) to our actual plan.

1. Summary including strategic foundation
 - ✓ **Our mission:** A brief statement that describes what you do.
 - ✓ **Who we are, our core values:** A series of statements that explain the principles that guide your (and your members') conduct, behavior, and relationship.
 - ✓ **Our Congregation's input:** The council established Listening Sessions following our September Council meeting, to allow the congregation to share their thoughts on who we are and where we are going as a church.
2. Our vision: A short statement that explains what you aspire to become.
3. Strategic Plan establishing:
 - **Our objectives:** Your desired end goal that gives purpose to your ministries, programs, and activities.
 - **Our goals:** Specific, quantifiable aims you hope to achieve in pursuit of your objectives. Your goals are met by hitting your targets.
 - **Our targets:** Time-bound, measurable expectations required to meet your goals.

Next Steps / Considerations

1. Goals, do we need to break down into smaller goals?
 - a. Family Ministry: more young families growing their faith through engagement with each other and the church.
 - b. Growing participation in ASLC ministries by members and those who are not yet here.
 - c. Worship services that are comforting and creative, inspiring, and exciting.
 - d. Active engagement in sharing God's love with our local community and around the world.
2. Discuss current committees / Task force to absorb work/activities
3. Timing
4. New pastor input