

Vision Statement 2015

Our Savior Lutheran Church will be a Spirit-empowered family of faith, focused on Jesus Christ, whose members and missions reflect the diversity of our neighborhood and holistically address the needs of our neighbors with the love of God.

What does This Mean?

Our Savior Lutheran Church of Laurel, Maryland held their first worship service in January of 1969.

Will be: A vision statement describes an anticipated future for our congregation, a reality we haven't realized yet but are growing towards in God's grace.

Spirit-empowered: Dr. Martin Luther believed that everything begins with the Holy Spirit who is at work in each of us to create and sustain saving faith, but the Spirit also fills us (and fuels us) to live as examples of the love of God for those around us. See 1 Thessalonians 1:4-7.

Family of Faith: The church. The body. The "called-out ones." The congregation. The assembly. The community. All of these have been used to describe what we are at Our Savior, and all are Biblical. But "family" calls to mind an intimacy that the other titles don't achieve. We are brothers and sisters in Christ with one Heavenly Father. We share time together in our living rooms and around our dining room tables. These relationships mean that I can disagree with my brother, and get mad at him over things done and neglected, but at the end of the day, I stand by my brother because within there is a deep love for him. We are a family. We love one another to the end. See Galatians 6:10.

Focused on Jesus Christ: This is at the heart of the vision statement because this is at the heart of who we are. We fix our eyes on Jesus, *Our Savior* from sin and death who loves us by teaching us about the Kingdom of God and demonstrates that love by laying down his life for the forgiveness of our sins. We focus our worship, study, prayer life and service on Jesus Christ. With Paul, we "want to know Christ..." Philippians 3:10-11.

Whose members and missions: We are members, not of a club, but a family. We are members of one body. We are individuals, uniquely gifted for service

by the Holy Spirit. We are Ministry Action Teams, individuals who come together to use our diverse gifts in concert to accomplish something greater than any individual is capable of. See 1 Corinthians 12 (the whole thing.).

Reflect the diversity of our neighborhood: In Revelation 7:9, St. John sees incredible diversity in heaven, when members of every tribe and nation and people and language surround the throne of God. Laurel is a place where this diversity is evident—but not always appreciated. Our church family will grow to appreciate and enjoy heaven's diversity today by seeking out the beautiful mosaic of God's people as revealed through different cultures, traditions, generations, worship styles and ministries through our daily outreach efforts. We will be both a reflection of Laurel, and a reflection of God.

Holistically address the needs: We are interested in our neighbors. And if we are interested in our neighbors, we are also interested in what our neighbor's needs are, whether spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual, or experiential. We will seek to discover the needs of our neighbors, and then discover how we can address those needs with what gifts the Lord has given us. See Matthew 8:16-17.

Of our neighbors: Our neighbors are the people we "live, work and play with." They are rich, poor, young, and old. They are around the corner and around the globe. When Jesus was asked the question: "Who is my neighbor?" he told the story of the Good Samaritan, who crossed boundaries of race, language, tradition, and built-up hatred to help a perfect stranger. See Luke 10:25-37.

With the love of God: We end where we began—we are loved by God and motivated by the Spirit of God to do the work God prepared in advance for us to do. Jesus said, "This is my commandment, that you love one another—as I have loved you." John 15:12.