



## OUR FOCUSED VISION

Saints Peter and Paul, Houghton, MI  
Spring 2013

Since the 1867 founding of Saints Peter and Paul Lutheran Church in Hancock, MI, its pastors and people have faithfully proclaimed the timeless truths of the Christian gospel. At the start of the 21st century, our church continues as a Called Out People Proclaiming the gospel message, Equipping disciples, and Reaching out in ministry to our local community and the world (COPPER). Today in spring 2013, after a period of rapid growth in membership numbers, our 146-year-old congregation remains a powerful and growing spiritual presence in the Copper Country. It is now led by an expanded, two-person pastoral team and housed in a strikingly beautiful new church building in Houghton just across the Portage Canal from the historic Hancock site.

In conjunction with a capital campaign launched in fall 2012 to strengthen Saints Peter and Paul ministries and help pay off construction debt, the congregation also began a special effort to focus its vision and mission. The goal has been to address organizational challenges facing a rapidly growing and evolving congregation, while maintaining strong ties to its theological and historical foundation. After months of study, reflection, prayer, input from members – and a day-long VisionFest during which congregants collectively brainstormed current and future emphases – a seven-member Vision Team is offering a newly focused vision along with a mission “blueprint” to guide us toward the fulfillment of that vision.

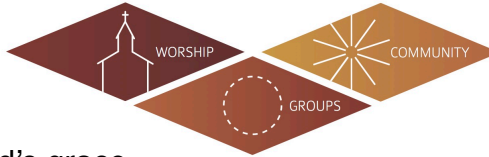
Our *vision*, we have concluded, is really what it always has been and what it always must continue to be – a vision of a vibrant and growing family of God, a community of believers that is truly and fully ***Alive in Christ***. And our *mission* is to strive constantly toward that vision – through ***worship***; through our relationships with one another in study, service and common interest ***groups***; and through our lives in the ***community***.

What does it mean then to be ***Alive in Christ***?

Why have we chosen ***worship, groups*** and ***community***?

And how can this guide us as we strive to organize and continue growing this ministry?

# alive in Christ



## Alive in Christ

- Why this?
  - This is *who* we are by God's grace.
  - It's Scriptural
    - Ephesians 2:1-10; Romans 5&6; John 10:10
  - It is declarative. Jesus says, "You are alive!"
  - It is the defining characteristic of a Christian that comes from Christ alone. And, it is the greatest threat to the enemy. He comes to kill; Christ comes to make us alive.

## Worship, Groups, and Community

- This is *how* we believe God has uniquely equipped Saints Peter and Paul to "make people alive in Christ." In virtually all the conversations the vision team had with the congregation, people expressed that they want order and organization. AND, these three categories are the things which were expressed often as being core ministry areas for Saints Peter and Paul. So, we chose three core ministry areas to provide the order and organization, based in the Scriptural truths that these three things are vital for the Christian life.



### Worship

- We believe the number one priority of Christians is to worship God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) above all else.



### Groups

- We believe it is in relationships with other believers that people know they are alive in Christ. It is in groups where these kinds of relationships are formed. We have broken down the entire ministry of Saints Peter and Paul into groups (study, service, and common interest). Groups also assists us in organizing the responsibilities and opportunities at Saints Peter and Paul.
  - Study = home Bible study, Sunday morning study, Sunday school, midweek studies, etc
  - Service = altar guild, praise team, greeters, ushers, snowplow/landscaping, Sunday morning coffee, prayer shawls, Dorcas, Boards, etc
  - Common Interest = Mom's Night Out, Club Copper, Senior Saints, Youth Group, etc
- By organizing this way, our ministry areas become more than just about getting work done. They become about the relationships that are formed.
  - This will be the *intentional* focus for groups.



### Community

- We believe it is vitally important for Saints Peter and Paul to be vigorously and intentionally involved in our community (local, national, and international) as a whole congregation. And it is just as important for the individual members to be involved in the community.
- Saints Peter and Paul, as a whole, partners with local agencies (Love INC, Little Brothers, Omega House, etc). We encourage individuals to volunteer with these or other community organizations. And we teach members of the church to have eyes of faith to see their neighbors in need and serve them -- even if it's not through an official volunteer position.

The following are several personal perspectives offered by individual members of the Vision Team. As we develop our ministry, and as we explore the scriptural bases for our mission, individually and in groups in the weeks and months ahead, we invite others to add their thoughts.

**The Vision Team of Saints Peter and Paul began a journey, not to change the vision of the church, but to create a *focused* vision, one that aligns our current activities to a central purpose and defines a path for future growth. “Alive in Christ through worship, groups, and community” accomplishes this. The statement “Alive in Christ” is well rooted in scripture; and “worship, groups, and community” explains how we, as a body in Christ, are alive. The next step in this journey is to assess ourselves and the programs within Saints Peter and Paul to see how we are “Alive in Christ through worship, groups, and community” and focus our efforts on becoming more alive in Christ with each passing day.**

**– Chris Gilbertson**

**The journey of the Vision Team has brought us to the conclusion that our vision statement – “Alive in Christ” – embodies what Saints Peter and Paul is and what God would have us be. With assistance from the congregation, we learned what they valued most about the church leading us to broaden the vision statement with the addition of: Worship, Groups and Community. Our members value our pastors’ scripturally based sermons and the opportunity to worship and praise God. More opportunities for study and fellowship with fellow members were requested indicating an appreciation and desire for group activities. Reaching out to our local community and beyond was also valued amongst our membership so that we might continue to share God’s love and care with others who have need of this care and the knowledge of what it means to be alive in Christ.**

**– LouAnn Vitton**

**Our VISION is to be ALIVE IN CHRIST! This means living in the joy, hope and peace that only Christ offers, freeing us from the stranglehold of sin and Satan... as set forth in scripture (Ephesians 2:1-10; Romans 5&6; John 10:10). We achieve our VISION through WORSHIP, GROUPS and COMMUNITY. In worship, we profess and celebrate our faith in Christ in both traditional and contemporary ways. Through worship, we are also moved to come together in GROUPS as people in Christ to interact, learn, organize, take responsibility, explore the many opportunities our church offers... and, ultimately, to reach out to others in the local COMMUNITY and beyond through ministries that demonstrate the qualities of being Alive in Christ!**

**– Sam Coates**

**When I began to be drawn toward Christianity and some new Christian friends in my mid 30s, I did not experience the sudden, dramatic conversion that many describe for themselves as adults. Over years, I had become embedded in a secularist worldview and culture hostile to Christianity. Like Pontius Pilate -- who asked “What is truth?” -- I had largely accepted the proposition that “there is no truth... only perception.” And in my working life, I had even come to accept the notion that it was my mission to help shape “enlightened” popular perceptions. I was a hard case, and my Christian conversion was slow, difficult and often erratic. I recall a conversation I had during this transitional time with a retired university professor who wrote a column for my newspaper editorial page. Years before, I had known him when I briefly attended a liberal church in our community, and I was now expressing newfound Christian convictions. His reaction was that it was nice that I was coming to a personal faith that would “work for me,” even though I was sounding a bit like one of those unsophisticated evangelical Christians. It was only later that I came to firmly accept the reality that objective, God-given truth exists whether we believe in it or not – and that Jesus spoke the truth when he said, “I**

am the way, the truth and the life.” Indeed, it is this truth that sets us free. And it is in this freedom that we are truly “Alive in Christ.”

– *John Munson*

To me Alive in Christ through worship groups and community means that we come together as a congregation to hear and celebrate our Lord. We desire to spend time with one another in groups to discuss our thoughts and beliefs on a more personal level. And through all of this, we want to help others in the community see the work of The Lord, through various personal ways.

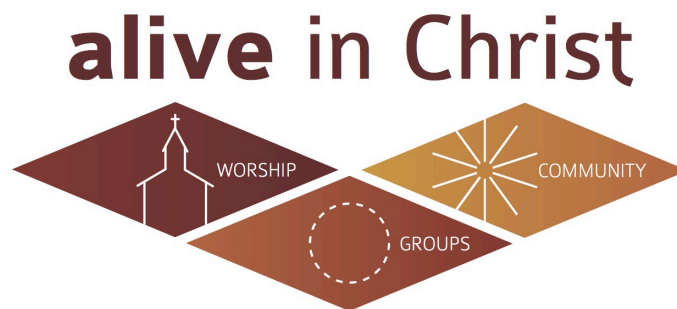
-- *Colleen Mayra*

To be Alive in Christ to me means to live in the love and joy of God our Father. Worshiping together allows us to thank God for all of our blessings. Groups encourage us to support one another in our daily and life-long journey to follow Christ. And, community involvement allows us to celebrate the good works of God with our neighbors as a witness of His love and mercy.

-- *Katrina Carlson*

### **About the Graphics**

It is important that we communicate the same message in a variety of ways. Some people remember words while others remember images. We will use these graphics in a variety of ways as this vision guides our ministry. You will see that the colors and styles are consistent with our current logo. There is a “stained glass” diamond shape which is apparent within the flames of the logo. These “pieces” symbolize how these three ministry areas come together to make our congregation alive in Christ. The more the graphics are used, the more people will easily identify with them.



### **Vision Team**

Chris Gilbertson  
Colleen Mayra  
John Munson

Katrina Carlson  
LouAnn Vitton  
Pastor Aaron Gehrke  
Sam Coates