

Why the “LifePlan” is a process that you should consider!

At regular intervals a congregation needs to take time to prayerfully consider how things are going in its ministry. It needs to consider questions like, “Are there changes that we need to make to become more effective?” “Are there areas we are overlooking where we could be involved in helping and reaching people in our neighbourhood and beyond?”

The LifePlan is drawn as a circle. This is because ministry happens in cycles that either spiral upward with encouraging breakthroughs or ...sometimes stall, and spiral downward, in decline. Each section within the LifePlan cycle has been carefully designed to try to help congregations see clearly what Jesus presently has in mind for them as a community of his people.

Starting at the top and moving clockwise, here are the sections.....

1. Know what time it is?

Some basic research will provide a **clear picture** of what is really happening within our congregation and our neighbourhood.

2. Find God’s opportunities!

As a congregation, set aside time to **fast, pray, and reflect** on what the Lord is saying to us about what we now know about ourselves and our neighbourhood.

3. Trust each other.

Come together as a community of God’s people to have a **conversation** about insights that surfaced during the fasting and prayer times. Looking for common themes, decide together which of these themes should receive the most attention and use this as a “sketch” for planning the future.

4. Dream up a plan.

Give the “sketch” to the ministry leaders to develop a more concrete plan that will focus on what has been decided is most important.

Ask the leaders to shape the pastor’s Job Description so that he/she focuses time, energy and abilities toward following the plan.

5. Stay on target.

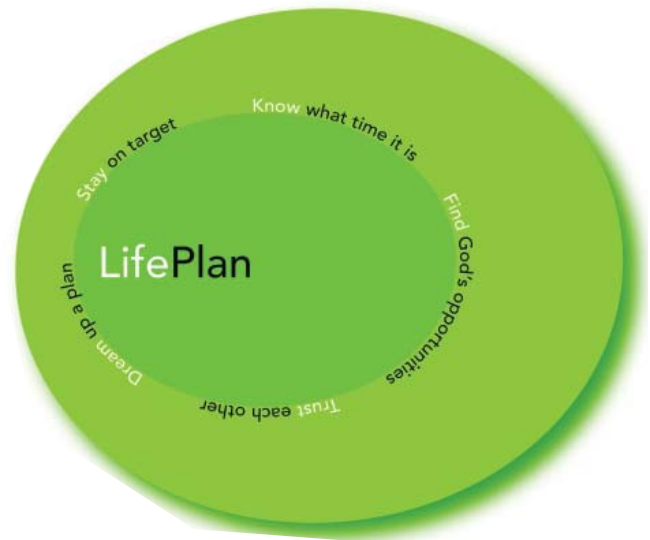
Complete the cycle well and **fully implement the plan**. To do this, we need help from others who will encourage us and hold us accountable to stay on target with our plan.

6. Rinse and repeat.

After two years, pause to celebrate what God has done and then repeat the cycle again to seek guidance on how to adjust to changes and challenges that have emerged within the congregation and its neighbourhood.

In the pages that follow, you will find more detail on what happens in each section and guidance on how to use various tools and guidelines to help you move around the cycle with a sense of confidence and adventure.

Training videos are available on our website: <http://fmcic.ca/lifeplan/>
Coaching and resources – please contact Marc McAlister at marc.mcalister@fmcic.ca



KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS?

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The LifePlan Team

Overview

A LifePlan Team will coordinate and implement the LIFE PLAN PROCESS. This is a five phase discernment process to help congregations make healthy decisions about what the Lord Jesus has in mind for it at this time in its history. The Team (4-7 members) will meet every 2 to 4 weeks - depending on where they are in the process. The process will take 4 to 6 months and the step by step work of the team is guided by a LifePlan Manual provided by The Free Methodist Church in Canada.

Team members are appointed by the Official Board and all need to have:

- A sense of God's call to participate on this Team and God given excitement about this ministry
- A desire to be used by God in the area of Research or Writing with skill/ability that would enable you to make contribution to this Team
- The time and energy to serve faithfully

Key Responsibilities:

1. TEAM LEADER

- Will coordinate and facilitate the ministry of the TEAM
- Will keep the process on schedule (see timeline below)
- Will communicate regularly with the Board and congregation on what's happening
- **Gifts/Skills required:** leadership, organization, ability to affirm and encourage

2. RECORDING SECRETARY

- Will keep a clear and concise record of the work of the Team

- **Gifts/Skills required:** Computer skills, capacity for details

3. COORDINATOR OF RESEARCH

- Will recruit persons to do the various research elements in the PLAN
- Will monitor their progress to help keep the overall process on schedule
- **Gifts/Skills required:** Organizational ability, Computer Skills, some understanding of the science of research

4. COORDINATOR OF THE "WRITING TEAM"

- Will recruit the members of the "Writing Team", clarify research analysis assignments for each and assist them to complete their written findings on schedule
- Will lead the "Writing Team" to integrate and summarize the findings of the research and together identify the implications of these findings
- Will make presentations of the findings to the Official Board and then to the congregation and write revisions as necessary
- **Gifts/Skills required:** Organizational ability, Writing ability (to communicate clearly, creatively and succinctly), the ability to identify themes and the implications of ideas

5. MEMBERS AT LARGE (3 or more)

- A sense of God's call to participate on this Team
- A desire to be used by God in the area of research or writing on one of the above teams