
Light of Christ Community Garden

Project Opportunity

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Table of Contents

Purpose of Document	4
Opportunity Description	4
Context	4
Light of Christ Mission Statement	4
Federal Way Community Garden Mission Statement	4
Problem Description	5
Goal and Objectives	5
Critical Aspects	5
Proposed Activity Scope	5
Needs Description	6
Available Technologies	6
Organizational Change Feasibility	7
Organizational Change Scope	7
Change Capacity of the Organization	8
Engagement Relating to the Organizational Change	8
Costs	9
Primary Risks	9
Secondary Risks	9
Recommendation	10
Harmonization with the Current Organization Strategies	10
Opportunity Evaluation	10
Recommendation	11
Proposed Schedule	11
Proposed Approach	11
Definitions and Abbreviations	13

Purpose of Document

This document describes a mission outreach opportunity for the Light of Christ Lutheran Church, and provides information to help determine whether to pursue this opportunity.

Opportunity Description

Context

The Light of Christ Lutheran Church has been blessed with a healthy and capable congregation that has a history of reaching out to those in need. In 19xx the church bought property adjacent to the church building in the hopes of expanding the mission of the church. As of this date, the property remains undeveloped toward the mission goals.

The community of Federal Way, WA consists of many civic and religious groups, professional organizations and businesses that want to provide care to our community's less fortunate. The need in the community is great.

The Light of Christ Lutheran Church has the mission, the land, and the ability to address this opportunity. The Federal Way Community Garden Foundation has established a blueprint for creating a community garden to grow organic fruits and vegetables.

The opportunity exists for the Light of Christ Lutheran Church and the Federal Way Community Garden Foundation to team together to provide a community garden.

Light of Christ Mission Statement

To reach out with God's Grace to help people know, trust and share God's purpose in their life.

Federal Way Community Garden Mission Statement

The Federal Way Community Garden will bring the community together to create and maintain a garden that will provide organic vegetables and fruit for citizens in need.

Problem Description

Many individuals and families in Federal Way do not have ready access to healthy fresh fruits and vegetables. These individuals and families include the increasing elderly population; recent immigrants to the United States; those unemployed by the financial stresses caused by the current economic downturn; and the “working poor”.

Goal and Objectives

The goal of the Light of Christ Community Garden is to organize, establish and maintain a community garden to provide an annual harvest of at least 7,000 pounds organic fruits and vegetables for those in need in the Federal Way community.

Critical Aspects

The garden should be a safe and enjoyable place to gather, work, learn socialize and serve our community. The design needs to incorporate access for all community citizens including children, seniors, and those with physical challenges.

This is a large project that demands additional resources outside the Light of Christ Congregation. By definition a “Community Garden” needs to involve various aspects of organizations within the local community.

The Federal Way Community Garden Foundation has been successful in establishing a liaison with Federal Way governmental agencies as well as local businesses and groups to build the Federal Way Senior Center Community Garden and the Truman Community Garden.

Proposed Activity Scope

The Light of Christ Lutheran Church will have the primary responsibility for the LOC Community Garden project. This primary responsibility includes project initiation, oversight, regulation, organization and responsibility for the various community organizations that will support of the LOC Community Garden Project. The church will provide the land, electricity and water for the community garden.

The Federal Way Community Garden Foundation will provide consultation to the Light of Christ Church for establishment of the community garden. In addition, the Foundation will provide a design for the garden; access to a Washington State Master Gardener; coordination with other community garden projects and the Government Offices of the City of Federal Way.

Various community religious / church groups, civic, professional and retail organizations will be required for the overall success of this project. These groups will take direction from, and be responsible to, the Light of Christ Community Garden project.

Needs Description

- As a Christian congregation it is the responsibility of the Light of Christ church to reach out to others and help those who are less fortunate.
- The Light of Christ Lutheran Church has been given the stewardship of additional church property. It is up to us to use this gift and multiply the opportunity as demonstrated in the parable of the “Talents” Mt. 25: 14 – 30.
- It is the mission of the Light of Christ Lutheran church to reach out to others in the area in the spirit of fellowship, cooperation, community and cooperative identity.
- The church, as a member of the Federal Way community, has the responsibility of being a good neighbor, maintaining and enhancing the property that is now unsightly and overgrown.
- Organically grown fruits and vegetables are expensive and in many cases beyond the financial reach of a considerable number of our neighbors.

Available Technologies

The Federal Way Community Garden Foundation has experience with developing local community gardens. The master gardener will help the Light of Christ Community Garden with layout and construction techniques for the gardens as well as teaching us how to plant, harvest, and maintain the gardens.

The Federal Way Multi Service Center has an established distribution system for food for the needy; the Federal Way Community Gardens Foundation has an established distribution network as well to the residents of the senior housing apartments and the local Meals-on-Wheels program. The Light of Christ Lutheran Church has an extensive care ministry with a long history of providing food for the needed. It is anticipated that other member groups of the Light of Christ Community Garden may have similar effective ministries and needs.

Due to the unique produce of the garden providing organic fruits and vegetables to families in need, there should be little impact to local businesses.

Organizational Change Feasibility

The congregation of Light of Christ Lutheran church has made several proposals for use of this land through the “TGIF / TGIF / Mission Possible” team. At this time, there are no known plans to develop this land for other uses.

The building of a community garden, with the cooperation of other religious, civic and professional groups is within the current capacity of the congregation.

Organizational Change Scope

The building and maintenance of the community garden will have an impact on several Light of Christ groups, including the office of the Pastor and Congregation President, Care Ministry, “TGIF / Mission Possible” group, and Buildings and Grounds. In addition, a group of focused, committed individuals will be required for an extensive period to act as the core of the Light of Christ Community Garden project. This core group may contain persons outside the congregation of Light of Christ Church.

There may be several sub groups, composed of Light of Christ congregation members and others, focused on various group activities for example:

- Communications and Community

- Religious Institutions
- Local Civic groups and clubs, i.e. Scouting, Gardening, ethnic, etc.
- Business professionals, i.e. Lions, Rotary, Chamber, etc.
- Contributions and Finance
- Construction
- Planting and Harvesting
- Maintenance
- Distribution
- Etc.

Change Capacity of the Organization

It is well within the capacity of the congregation of the Light of Christ church to sponsor and lead this project. However, this project may stretch and challenge the congregation as it requires a long term commitment and working extensively with other organizations to be successful.

The congregation will be asked to support the community garden through their prayers and money but most of all their skills and time in the planning, organizing, building, distributing and maintaining the gardens.

Engagement Relating to the Organizational Change

By working together the congregation of Light of Christ Church will be strengthened not only through a cooperative fellowship, but through the workings of the Holy Spirit as we challenge ourselves to meet our Holy Commission. The Light of Christ Church will become better and more positively known to our neighbors and recognized as a community leader as we organize other organizations and groups to meet this need.

The needy will benefit by receiving wholesome food for their bodies and the community will benefit in general by working cooperatively in a nurturing place that is conducive to learning and quiets the soul.

Costs

To begin the project, a sum of \$10,000 will need to be committed and collected. Within the first two years, another \$20,000 will be needed to complete the startup, build, planning and first harvest.

Some of these costs may be reduced by contributions by local businesses including donated or at cost materials or services. There are no “paid” positions. Additional monies may be required after the initial startup for enhancements and maintenance to the gardens.

Primary Risks

- Commitments to complete the project are not kept. This would be detrimental to the reputation to the church in general and the Light of Christ Lutheran Church in particular. This risk is considered LOW.

Secondary Risks

- Commitments by others that are not kept. This could potentially require an additional burden on the congregation to complete additional tasks. However, it is anticipated that the project should have sufficient breadth with other organizations so the impact of these unanticipated changes can be distributed to a larger group. This risk is considered LOW.
- Security of gardens and garden property, i.e. building, shed, greenhouse, etc. There have been problems with theft from the outside storage shed on the Light of Christ Church Property. This risk is considered MEDIUM
 - This area on 21st Ave S. is more exposed which can be considered both good and bad.

- The design of the gardens can provide some security using low fences, and flora such as perimeter rose and berry bushes to discourage vandalism and theft.
- Limit storage of expensive tools / equipment on property
- Reach out to a variety of groups within the community to encourage ownership as well as involvement
- Accept the fact that some vandalism will occur, but will probably decrease over time as the novelty wears off
- Injury liability. By allowing persons on property, even with signed agreements limiting liability could expose the church to liability lawsuits as owners of the property. This risk is considered LOW.

Recommendation

Harmonization with the Current Organization Strategies

The development of a community garden to feed the needy, along with community outreach of cooperation and spreading the word of the Light of Christ Lutheran Church is within the charter of the church and the mission of each Christian Congregation. We also have the responsibility to be good neighbors, to keep up our property and enhance our neighborhood. The current condition of the property does not reflect well upon the community of Federal Way or the church.

The LOC TGIF / Mission Possible team has been working on a plan to use the property in a positive manner that is affordable to the congregation. The Light of Christ Community Garden meets this goal.

Opportunity Evaluation

The alignment of requirements and timing of this opportunity is good. The city of Federal Way has expressed interest in expanding the community garden program into the 98023 area. Currently community gardens are located in the 98003 area, i.e. east of RT 99. The community need is well established as the U.S. economy is still recovering while population demographics indicate a growing senior and immigration population. The Light of Christ Church is exploring options to best use the property.

Recommendation

Proceed with initial development of the Light of Christ Community Garden. As the project sponsor, the LOC Care Ministry brings this proposal forward to the TGIF / Mission Possible Team, Buildings and Grounds, Pastor, Elders, voters of the congregation for approval.

Upon approval, begin fund raising activity for initial \$10,000. Establish core team for Community Garden Project. Begin drafting detail project plans and schedules.

Proposed Schedule

Detail TBD

- Week of 3/7/2011 - Presentation to TGIF / Mission Possible Team, Pastor, Elders and Building and Grounds.
- 18 March 2011 – Presentation to congregation through TGIF / Mission Possible Team
- May – October 2011 – Garden Build
- April 2012 – First Planting
- July 2012 – First Harvest

Proposed Approach

Detail – TBD

- Light of Christ Commitment
- Establish teams and committees
- Acquire initial funding
- Community outreach
- Design, build
- Plant
- Harvest & Distribute

Definitions and Abbreviations

Light of Christ Church	Light of Christ Church, LCMS 2400 SW 344th Street Federal Way, WA 98023
LCMS	Lutheran Church Missouri Synod
LOC	Light of Christ Church
LOCCG	Light of Christ Community Garden
FWCGF	Federal Way Community Garden Foundation http://www.federalwaycommunitygarden.org/