**Seasonal Teams at a Glance**

Imagine…

* Worship connected with nurture, connected with mission, connected with fellowship, all grounded in Scripture and tied to the liturgical calendar.
* Opportunities to dream about and plan for a season while getting to know and work with others in the congregation, all for a set and limited period of time.
* Ministry enriched by a greater variety of gifts and creativity of members of the congregation.
* “Committee work” that is not set apart in silos, that doesn’t require a full year (or more!) of commitment, that generates new ideas and enthusiasm because more members are able to take part, and that doesn’t result in burnout!

Imagine 5 seasons of planning, tied to the liturgical calendar:

* Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany - (2-3 months)
* Lent - seven weeks, including Holy Week
* Easter - seven weeks, including Easter Sunday
* Pentecost - a season starting with Pentecost and going through the end of summer (approximately 3 months)
* Harvest - a season of Ordinary Time beginning in late August/early September and concluding with Christ the King Sunday (approximately 3 months)

These seasonal teams could be charged with something very familiar to Trinity - the four marks of the church. Each team would be responsible for planning and implementing worship, nurture, fellowship, and mission for the season at hand, all in conversation with the lectionary texts and nature of each season. The work of each team would span 4-5 months, including planning and implementation. Individuals couldn’t serve in consecutive seasons, since while one season is happening the next seasonal team is working on planning ahead.

Members could sign up to serve based on seasons that they particularly enjoy or based on their own schedules and what would work best. Ideally, a wide variety of members would sign up for at least one season each year, with an ideal team size of 5-8 members per Season, including a Ruling Elder facilitator. “Carrying out the work” involves engaging others in the work of the season, so not all of the work falls on the shoulders of the seasonal team.

Signups for the year would be posted during the Stewardship season for members to sign up for their team(s) of choice, including major holy days, events, and things like the church retreat, stewardship season, annual meeting, etc… 4-6 weeks prior to the start of the Season, the team would meet with the pastor for a study of the lectionary texts and liturgical season and to begin developing themes. Ultimately each team will plan and implement:

* Worship - major themes, special music, creative services, art and liturgical space, and any special services for the season
* Nurture - planning for all ages based on the seasons. Some seasons this might include weekly church school on Sunday mornings. Other times it might include special events on evenings or at other times, small group studies, book studies, etc… How can each season be incorporated into the prayground in worship? Each season might begin with one intergenerational event introducing the season and upcoming lectionary passages to the whole congregation
* Mission - plan at least one mission project or focus for the season. This could include Trinity’s week for Open Doors, for example, along with any other opportunities to learn and serve together.
* Fellowship - plan opportunities for members of all ages and stages to enjoy fellowship together, and think of ways to reach out in fellowship with our neighbors. We currently have many seasonal fellowship events, like Epiphany dinners, Shrove Tuesday pancakes or Ash Wednesday soup lunch, the Easter brunch, etc. Teams would decide what they would like to plan based on each season, perhaps incorporating new events or continuing favorites.

Wondering what this looks like? You’ve already seen it! This is how Advent was effectively planned last year. The liturgical space planning team gathered along with members from Nurture to discuss the theme for the season and potential options for nurture. The result was an integrated worship and nurture experience with intergenerational small groups who participated in nurture and fellowship together. The whole congregation was able to participate with the same devotional, even if individuals couldn’t commit to joining a small group. Mission was also factored in with the addition of the tree with ornaments matching the worship and nurture materials that displayed names for monetary gifts to Open Doors in lieu of poinsettias.

Each season would be in communication with the seasons immediately before and after, to share any important information, including supply ordering and such. At the end of each season, the team would review and make notes on the season to add to the seasonal notebook for future teams. Further connectional conversation could happen at Session meetings, too.

Churches that have moved to this kind of model have remarked how rejuvenating it has been to their whole ministry and life of the church. They have newfound joy and meaning in carrying out the work of the church. Moving to this model grounds everything in Bible study. The seasonal planning teams themselves can be intergenerational. Sometimes a whole family will sign on for a season together. Teams come together as small groups, too, getting to know each other in the process of the work. Most of these churches are quite a bit smaller than Trinity, and have found a seasonal model to be **easier** to maintain with smaller numbers.