

2016-2020

Amazing Grace Lutheran Church Strategic Plan

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you **hope and a future**. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”
Jeremiah 29:11-13



Strategic Planning: a strengths-based, appreciative approach

The strategic planning core team prepared this document using the ideas, hopes, and dreams of the congregation discovered through one-to-one conversations, a previously administered congregational survey, congregational workshops, a new member workshop, and dialogue and collaboration with the Council and staff members. The approaches used are based in Cooperrider's (1986) Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and embrace the following principles:

- Vision for a church body is deeply intertwined with the visions and hopes of every human within the church body.
- Inquiry or dialogue and transformation happen simultaneously.
- Use of positive language, questions, and mind-sets positively influence a church body. Focusing on strengths and assets encourages best use of strengths and assets in future work.



- The stories people hold dear can be used to frame a vision for the future. Stories that aren't shared are left to individual interpretation and meaning. When the church body shares stories orally and in writing, the church body can share interpretation and understanding in order to create a shared vision.

The team employed an appreciative, 4D, strengths-based approach, focusing first on **discovery** of the congregation's strengths and core values. Those strengths and core values became the foundation for **dreaming** about what the congregation is called

to do. We held workshops and conversations that focused on generating ideas using positive questions and provocative propositions based in the combined experiences and hopes of participants. This work resulted in a strong vision for strategic planning. The core team combined all of the findings and ideas, including the core values and vision to **design** a plan that takes into account ecological/environmental impacts, financial impacts, and stakeholder impacts—including benefits and burdens. Goals and actions in the plan are recommendations and are reflective of the thinking and intentions understood by the core planning team. The strategic plan is intended to provide shape and specific information to the ministry teams, staff, and other leaders in the congregation who will implement the ideas presented in the plan. The core team's **delivery** of the strategic plan to the staff, council, and congregation includes presentation of a plan for on-going reflection and evaluation of the plan, measurement and accountability for results, and reporting and communication about progress and future planning.

The strategic planning core team recommends Amazing Grace Lutheran Church revisit a 4-D process (discovery, dreaming, design, and delivery) in 2020-2021 for Strategic Plan renewal.

Mission Statement

Joining God at work in the world.

Core Values	Vision Statements
1. Christian Education and Faith Development	AGLC fosters faith in Jesus Christ through education and service opportunities across the lifespan [for every age-group] at any place on the faith journey.
2. Growth & Responsibility for Physical Assets, Fiscal Assets , and Membership	AGLC uses and develops its physical and personal assets, intentionally serving the community, joining God at work in the world.
3. Justice Mindedness & Responsibility within the Larger Community	AGLC advocates for justice, dignity, and compassion for all.
4. Leadership Development, Staff Support, Talent Management, and Community Engagement	AGLC honors and develops strengths and passions of people of all ages and connects them with opportunities to grow and serve God.
5. Relationships , Companionship, and Culture	AGLC is an inclusive faith community that respects all people, traditions, backgrounds, and experiences.
6. Worship	AGLC provides meaningful and engaging worship and music.
7. Care for Members	AGLC cares for and accompanies people who are in need of prayer and support in times of joy, transition, illness, or suffering.

Strategic Plan Roadmap

Goals have been identified to begin and to be completed within the timeframes identified. These timeframes are recommendations and may be adjusted as needed by ministry teams or Council.

Values and Vision	Strategic Objectives & Goals	Short Term (2016-2017)	Mid Term (2018-2019)	Long Term (2020-next strategic plan)
Assets Leadership	Evaluate council, staff, and ministry team structures, actions, and processes. (Page 5)	Complete		
Faith Relationships	Uphold and champion Amazing Grace Lutheran Church’s commitment to providing vibrant education and social programs for children and families. (Page 9)	Complete		
Care Justice	Identify pastoral care needs and determine resources for meeting those needs. (Page 11)	Complete		
Assets Justice	Create a process for evaluation of engagement with and financial support of organizations that are consistent with Amazing Grace Lutheran Church’s mission. (Page 13)	Complete		
Leadership Relationships	Create a process and annual goals for increasing engagement and building relationships with members, neighbors, and partner organizations. (Page 7)	Begin	Complete	
Justice	Examine AGLC’s work with justice-focused organizations to determine how to best prioritize and work toward AGLC’s justice goals. (Page 6)	Begin		Complete
Faith Justice Relationships Care	Explore ways to build upon an already welcoming culture to become a more inclusive presence to welcome all members, visitors, and neighbors. (Page 8)	Begin		Complete
Worship Faith	Explore and assess different styles and formats, times, and days for worship. (Page 10)	Begin		Complete
Assets	Develop a vision for how AGLC will use facilities and land to serve our members, neighbors, and community. (Page 12)			Begin

Amazing Grace - Strategic Plan Details

VISION: Amazing Grace Lutheran Church uses and develops its physical and personal assets, intentionally serving the community, joining God at work in the world.		
Goal:	Evaluate Council, staff, and ministry team structures, actions, and processes.	
Champion:	Business Management; Pastor Julie Wright; Ann Morgan	
Financial Impacts	Minimal financial support needed; individual time required.	
Ecological Impacts	None	
Stakeholder Impacts	Congregation benefits from most efficient structures and processes. Staff and leaders invest time in evaluating processes and actions for long-term improvements and job satisfaction.	
Action Steps	Measure	End Date
Identify leader to conduct analysis/evaluation with AGLC team.	Present plan to Council	08/2016
Discovery: Interview staff and leaders (including past council members) 1 to 1 to understand current processes and what’s working or not working. Contact synod/ELCA, other church leaders, etc., for data regarding staffing ratios, position descriptions, staffing priorities, etc.	Report to Business Mgt	12/2016
Dream: Gather committee for analysis of current staff and committee structure to determine opportunities for process mapping and presentation of strategic plan to determine current and future capacity.	Report to Business Mgt with recommendations	2/2017
Design: Review church constitution to determine whether proposed changes require updates or additional approvals or amendments.	Provide recommendations to Council	5/2017
Delivery: Use current Council, staff, and additional leaders for evaluation and implementation of proposed changes.	Council seeks and reviews feedback on changes monthly	12/2017
Explore and identify opportunities to attract new leaders by developing ministry team participation and mentorship opportunities.	Lay ministry team rosters remain full; attrition managed with replacement members	12/2017

<p>VISION: Amazing Grace Lutheran Church advocates for justice, dignity and compassion for all by respecting people, traditions, backgrounds and experiences.</p>		
<p>Goal:</p>	<p>Examine Amazing Grace’s work with justice-focused organizations to determine how to best prioritize and work toward Amazing Grace Lutheran Church’s justice goals.</p>	
<p>Champion:</p>	<p>Mark Morgan; Stewardship and Evangelism</p>	
<p>Financial Impacts</p>	<p>Potential costs for leadership development.</p>	
<p>Ecological Impacts</p>	<p>Consider how to care for creation through wise use of resources in justice-focused work.</p>	
<p>Stakeholder Impacts</p>	<p>Inclusion of stakeholders (members and other leaders) in a goal-setting process will increase stakeholders’ engagement and commitment.</p>	
<p>Action Steps</p>	<p>Measure</p>	<p>End Date</p>
<p>Identify a team of justice leaders and active agents of justice; develop goal set and mission for this group. Ensure goals include being inclusive of varied acts of justice (learning and praying, writing letters, actively protesting, etc.).</p>	<p>This group will identify a team of leaders, a mission statement that fits under our AGLC mission, and goals that are set by AGLC.</p>	<p>1/2017</p>
<p>Develop relationships with justice-focused organizations, congregations, and interfaith partners with whom AGLC may partner to accomplish justice goals.</p>	<p>Publication of goals through regular written communication and annual report.</p>	<p>1/2017; Annually thereafter</p>
<p>Create a workgroup whose purpose is to bring affordable housing to Inver Grove Heights or surrounding communities.</p>	<p>Report to the congregation</p>	<p>2018-2020</p>

<p>VISION: Amazing Grace Lutheran Church advocates for justice, dignity and compassion for all by respecting people, traditions, backgrounds and experiences.</p>			
<p>Goal:</p>	<p>Create a process and annual goals for increasing engagement and building relationships with members, neighbors, and partner organizations.</p>		
<p>Champion:</p>	<p>Pastor Julie Wright; Stewardship and Evangelism</p>		
<p>Financial Impacts</p>	<p>Funding needed for marketing efforts.</p>		
<p>Ecological Impacts</p>	<p>Consider ecological impacts when selecting outreach materials (i.e., print materials, t-shirts, etc.)</p>		
<p>Stakeholder Impacts</p>	<p>Including the congregation in this process is crucial to its success. There is great potential to impact the lives of hundreds of neighbors.</p>		
	<p>Action Steps</p>	<p>Measure</p>	<p>End Date</p>
	<p>Create a marketing and communications plan with emphasis on engagement with new residential neighborhoods in close proximity and with new and existing members.</p>	<p>Marketing and Communications Plan</p>	<p>12/2016</p>
	<p>Provide spiritual gifts training and listening campaign for members, who will then be equipped to make meaningful connections with new neighbors.</p>	<p>Training attended by at least 25 leaders</p>	<p>5/2017</p>
	<p>Develop a list of Amazing Grace Lutheran Church member talents, strengths, and general work history. Include things they would like to do or explore. Consider developing this within a private member-login section of our website.</p>	<p>Creation of electronic directory and a plan for use</p>	<p>12/2018</p>

VISION: Amazing Grace Lutheran Church advocates for justice, dignity and compassion for all by respecting people, traditions, backgrounds and experiences.		
Goal:	Explore ways to build upon an already welcoming culture to become a more inclusive presence to welcome all members, visitors and neighbors.	
Champion:	Zella Vandervort & Susan Young; Stewardship and Evangelism	
Financial Impacts	Potential need to hire guest speakers/facilitators	
Ecological Impacts	Unknown/minimal	
Stakeholder Impacts	A high level of stakeholder involvement is required to achieve this goal, including lay leadership and potential staff time commitment	
Action Steps	Measure	End Date
A taskforce studies practices of welcoming congregations and then coaches the congregation in ways to be a good host for members, visitors and members.	Best practices are developed and communicated to the congregation.	2017
Offer events that provide education and dialogue concerning racial, multi-ethnic, socio-economic status, and other marginalized peoples in our communities.	Participation of at least 50 members.	2018
Amazing Grace enters into the Reconciling in Christ process to affirm the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people into the life of the church. AGLC encourages member dialogue throughout this process.	Amazing Grace will decide whether to become a Reconciling in Christ Congregation no later than 2020.	2020

VISION: Amazing Grace Lutheran Church fosters faith in Jesus Christ through education and service opportunities for every age group and at any place on the faith journey.			
Goal:	Uphold and champion Amazing Grace Lutheran Church’s commitment to providing vibrant education and social programs for children and families.		
Champion:	Lynn Waska; Christian Education		
Financial Impacts	To be determined.		
Ecological Impacts	Disposable products and single serve items for VBS.		
Stakeholder Impacts	Increase a deeper relationship with other parishioners and larger community, also increased meaningful socialization.		
	Action Steps	Measure	End Date
	Understand operating costs of existing week-long VBS program; continue to support full day VBS at a reasonable cost.	Monitor costs and how many participating, including number of volunteers.	8/2016
	Evaluate existing programming to determine whether there is a desire for additional programming for children or young families during summer months.	Congregational survey or inquiry.	09/2016
	Seek to understand needs of new neighborhood families regarding youth and family education programming.	Compilation of requests and recommendations of new neighborhood families.	11/2016

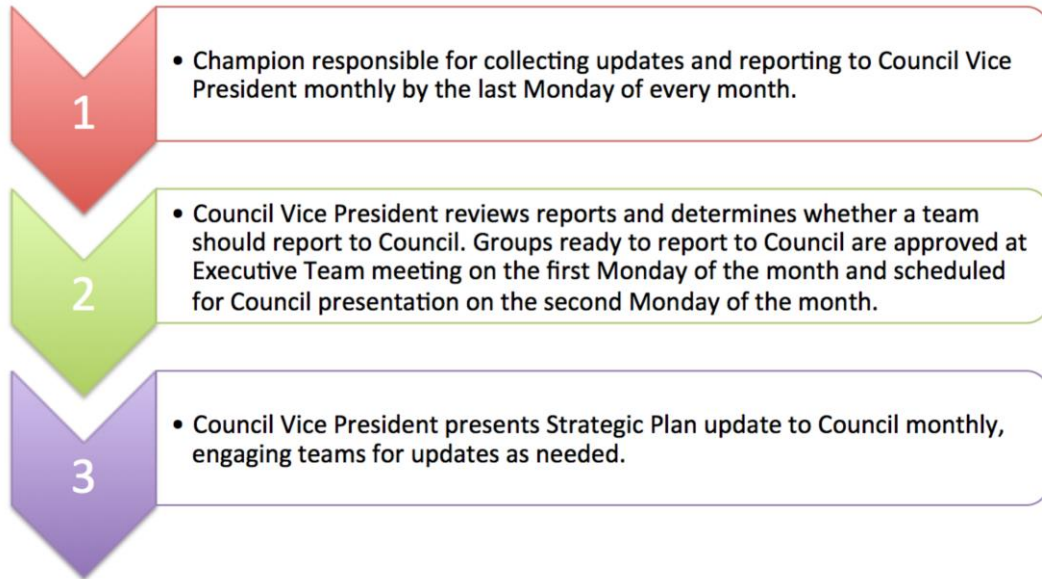
VISION: Amazing Grace Lutheran Church provides meaningful and engaging worship and music.		
Goal:	Explore and assess different styles and formats, times, and days for worship.	
Champion:	Music and worship ministry team	
Financial Impacts	Potential costs: music, musicians	
Ecological Impacts	Potential to minimize printing/paper use.	
Stakeholder Impacts	Administrative time and coordination with pastors, staff, music & worship; increased volunteer coordination.	
Action Steps	Measure	End Date
Compile a record of types of worship and descriptions for the past 3-5 years; document feedback and recommendations; keep record moving forward.	Documentation	12/2016
Research other “Drawn to the Word”-type ministries; offer unique ministry once per year	List of possibilities	12/2016
Research and resolve issues with existing audio visual system. Develop and implement a strategy for leveraging our audio/visual technology.	DVD ministry produces quality products; Engaging visual images are used to enhance the worship experiences	9/2016
Engage ALL members in worship in a variety of opportunities to expand capacity. Create a training program for worship roles that are difficult to recruit for (i.e. worship assistant) involving mentoring and partnering for training (including to recruit young people). Develop and define youth-led worship experiences (plan, calendar, promote).	More youth on lists for ushering, greeting, reading, and audio-visual system. “Junior” workers participating in worship	9/2017
Continue to nurture musical talent in youth and adult members and assess resources for a band and musicians	Worship and Music Team communicates to congregation to discover interest level and report back to Council.	2020

<p>VISION: Amazing Grace Lutheran Church cares for and accompanies people who are in need of prayer and support in times of joy, transition, illness, or suffering.</p>			
Goal:	Identify pastoral care needs and determine resources for meeting those needs.		
Champion:	Pastor Chris Becker; Ministry Team to be determined.		
Financial Impacts	Unknown.		
Ecological Impacts	None.		
Stakeholder Impacts	<p>Increased value to members and affiliates via quality care. Increased fulfillment for volunteers or staff. Increased need for respite or refueling for volunteers or staff.</p>		
	Action Steps	Measure	End Date
	Identify, define, document, and evaluate current care, accompaniment, and mentorship ministries to ensure we are meeting the needs of individuals at every stage of life-span.	Present evaluation report to staff and appropriate ministry team.	12/2016
	Identify opportunities for connection among members. Pair older members with younger members for intergenerational fellowship, volunteerism, and teaching/learning.	Set goal for number of active pairs having approximately a 2-year commitment.	4/2017
	Review staff and lay ministry job descriptions with business management team to ensure requirement for “refuel” respite for care workers.	Revised, approved job descriptions that include respite and refuel requirement.	8/2017

VISION: Amazing Grace Lutheran Church uses and develops its physical and personal assets, intentionally serving the community, joining God at work in the world.			
Goal:	Develop a vision for how AGLC will use facilities and land to serve our members, neighbors, and community.		
Champion:	Norm Goetzke; Business Management Team		
Financial Impacts	No financial impact for evaluation and team planning.		
Ecological Impacts	Property development with ecological justice and healthy earth choices.		
Stakeholder Impacts	Congregation, partners who use space.		
	Action Steps	Measure	End Date
	Evaluate current building and land use and develop a plan for future building and land use.	Leader and team presented to Council for work beginning in 2021	12/2020
	Review current policy for use of building and land.	Report to Council January 2021	12/2020
	Prepare proposal, including costs estimates, for future building and land developments.	Report to council January 2021	12/2020

<p>VISION: Amazing Grace Lutheran Church advocates for justice, dignity and compassion for all by respecting people, traditions, backgrounds and experiences.</p>			
<p>Goal:</p>	<p>Create a process for evaluation of engagement with and financial support of organizations that are consistent with Amazing Grace Lutheran Church’s mission.</p>		
<p>Champion:</p>	<p>Stewardship and Evangelism</p>		
<p>Financial Impacts</p>	<p>By setting goals for engagement and financial support, AGLC will be able to make a greater impact and have a better understanding of how financial gifts are utilized.</p>		
<p>Ecological Impacts</p>	<p>None noted.</p>		
<p>Stakeholder Impacts</p>	<p>Through transparent communication of processes and goals, members and other stakeholders will be more engaged and will have a clear avenue for introducing new organizations or initiatives.</p>		
	<p>Action Steps</p>	<p>Measure</p>	<p>End Date</p>
	<p>Develop criteria for adding or removing an organization from AGLC’s list of officially sanctioned outside missions/ministries.</p>	<p>Criteria communicated in Congregational Annual Report.</p>	<p>1/2017; annually thereafter</p>
	<p>Create annual goals to establish commitment to outside missions/ministries. Consider level of engagement or participation and financial support. Communicate commitment to congregation.</p>	<p>SMART goals communicated at congregational annual meeting. (SMART-Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound)</p>	<p>1/2017; annually thereafter</p>

Achieving our mission: Connecting the strategic plan to action and results



MONTH 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Executive Team Mtg (Council VP Reports to Exec Team)					
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	Council Meeting (Council VP Reports to Council)					
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				
	Champion Reports to Council VP					
		Notes:				

Appendices

Appendix A - Charter

Appendix B – Reporting and Measuring Form

Appendix C – Research and Resources

Appendix A

Amazing Grace Lutheran Church – Strategic Planning Team Charter Mission – Joining God at work in the world

<p>Possibility Statement / Purpose Statement</p> <p>The Amazing Grace Lutheran Church congregation will grow in faith, connection, and participation through the strategic planning process. The process will follow an Appreciative Inquiry approach to strategic planning, which will acknowledge that God is constantly at work in us and through us, we have a rich history and strengths on which to build, strategic plans and a vision for our future state lives within the congregation and can emerge from the stories and strengths of the congregation.</p>	<p>Expected Outcomes – Congregation (internal)</p> <p>The process will result in a strategic plan that will lead us into the next 3-5 years with assessment of the plan throughout implementation to ensure we are meeting goals that continue to be appropriate for the congregation and community.</p> <p>The process will include evaluation of the existing ministry team structure and processes, ensuring we have a most effective, efficient structure.</p> <p>The process will include on-going communication to the congregation, resulting in clarity of mission and vision.</p>
<p>Success Metrics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased stewardship participation and giving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Number of households * Amount of time and money • Increased membership • Increased satisfaction with strategic plan, clarity of process and implementation strategies measured by feedback gathered at 1/31/16 workshop and again at 2016-17 Annual Meeting in January 2017 	<p>Expected Outcomes – Community (external)</p> <p>The process will include use of data and analysis of the needs of a wider community in order that we effectively reach individuals or households so they will know they are welcome at Amazing Grace LC.</p> <p>External partnerships will be strengthened with our congregation’s increased clarity of vision and mission and plan to support it.</p>
<p>Timeline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12/14/2015 – Present charter and update to council for approval • 12/18/2015 – Establish core team • 1/3/2015 – Strategic Planning – Planning Coffee • 1/10/2016 – Core team AI workshop and planning for congregational workshop • 1/31/2016 – Congregational Meeting and afternoon workshop • 2/?/2016 – Council process mapping to evaluate ministry teams • 4/11/2016 – Present strategic plan to Council • 5/9/2016 – Collect feedback and input from Council • 6/13/2016 – Begin implementation of plan 	<p>Sponsor: Pastor Julie Wright Chair: Ann Morgan</p> <p>Team: Julie Lindschied (njlinscheid@gmail.com) Andrew Jeyachandran (james.jeyachandran@gmail.com) Pete Malamen (bmalamen@aol.com) Patty Johnson (pj81291@gmail.com) Kent Rhein (kerhein@comcast.net) Renee Skoglund (rskoglund@bigdreamsmn.com)</p> <p>Jean Jantzen (Advisor, previous LRP leader) Barb Henke (assist core team with phone calling, etc.)</p>

Appendix B

**Achieving our mission: Joining God at Work in the World
Connecting the strategic plan to action and results**

Working teams will use this form to communicate to the Council through the Council Vice President.

UPDATED DATE				
Goal				
Champion				
Action Steps	Measure	Timeline	What's Happening?	

Appendix C

Research and Resources

When people have a pathway for tying their individual passions and beliefs to their learning, work, or worship, they are happier and healthier and all-around better. In the late 1980s, researchers David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva found that employees had increased engagement through collaboration, innovation, and a sense of governance (Stratton-Berkessel, 2010). Their work, based on Gergen's generative theory (1978), gave form to a method based in appreciation for assets and strengths and inquiry that leads to a shared narrative and creative and innovative thinking among people (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). The strategic planning process at Amazing Grace used an Appreciative Inquiry 5-step approach and SOAR analysis.

5-D Cycle = Define, Discovery, Dream, Design, Deliver

Phase I – Define

Design Charter
 Purpose/Value
 Proposition/Possibilities
 Desired Outcomes
 Success Measures
 Timeline
 Determine Team
 Create Communication Plan



Phase II – Discovery

Observe Processes and Current State –
 Process Mapping
 Gather Key Metrics
 Appreciative Inquiry Interviews
 Understand Current State

Phase III – Dream

Event to Gather Data and Uncover Possibilities
 Envision Future State – What Can Be

Phase IV – Design

Core Team Data/Discovery Review and Ideation
 Design Ideal Processes and Future State
 Draft Strategic Plan
 Implement Quick Fixes / Tackle Low-hanging Fruit
 Determine Measurements and Management for Strategic Plan

Phase V – Deliver

Implement Strategic Plan

Measure and Manage

Evaluate Strategic Planning Process

Evaluate Strategic Plan for Sustainability

SOAR Analysis = Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results.

Through story-telling, tracing pathology, or listening to the joys, dreams, and aspirations of our congregation, we participate in leading positive change and affirm people's need and ability to embrace change (Stavros & Hinrichs, 2009).

Questions for inquiry in strategic planning were generated using SOAR-style questions. This process provokes positive thinking, processes involving as many people as want to participate, “blue-sky” aspirational thinking, and a focus on getting results for efforts.

Strengths

What can we build on?

What are we most proud of?

What makes us unique?

Opportunities

What does our community need or want from us?

What challenges do we face, and how can we reframe those challenges as exciting opportunities?

Aspirations

What are we deeply passionate about?

If there were no limitations in budget or resources, what would we like to accomplish?

What do we want to be known for?

Results

How do we know we are succeeding?

What resources are needed to implement vital projects?

What measures indicate we are on track to achieving our goals?



References

Cooperrider, D. L. & Srivastva, S. (1987). Appreciative Inquiry in organizational life, *Research in organizational Change and Development*, 1:129-169.

Gergen, K. J. (1978). Toward generative theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 36, 1344-1360.

Snow, L. (2004). *The Power of Asset Mapping: How Your Congregation Can Act On Its Gifts*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute.

Stavros, J., & Hinrichs, G. (2009). *The thin book of SOAR: Building strengths-based strategy*. Bend, OR: Thin Book Publishing Co.

Stratton-Berkessel, R. (2010). *Appreciative inquiry for collaborative solutions*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

