

Congregational Profile

For use among congregations of the
Southeastern District, Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Greetings in Christ, the Lord of the Church!

Your congregation is about to embark on a process that will lead to the most important decision you as a congregation will make for years to come -- the calling of a new pastor. My experience with congregations in the call process is that they like to receive as much information as possible about the pastors on their call lists. If you have not been involved in a call process for several years, you will quickly find that we provide far more information than we did years ago. A "call list" today consists of a packet of information with several pages of information on each candidate. It is important information about attitudes, practices, theology, strengths and weaknesses.

It has also been my experience that congregations are not always sure what kind of information they should provide to the District President as he seeks to assist with the formation of a call list and to the new pastor as he considers a call. Some congregations go through elaborate self-study processes; other congregations give little consideration to what information might be important to the process.

The attached materials are designed to assist you with the preparation of a congregational profile, which has three uses:

1. To help the congregation understand itself and its unique call to ministry. (My recommendation, by the way, is that you not call for nominations from the congregation until you have completed the congregational profile and discussed it with the congregation.)
2. To help the District President understand the needs and opportunities of the congregation.
3. To help the pastor you have called evaluate how well his gifts match the congregation's needs and opportunities.

The profile consists of four sections:

- + Basic questions -- a Self Evaluation Tool for Congregations
- + Demographics
- + Finances
- + Missional Information

During the call process you will be assisted by your Circuit Counselor and by your Regional Mission and Ministry Facilitator. The Circuit Counselor is the person who will assist you once you get into the actual calling process. The Mission and Ministry Facilitator, however, is the person best trained and experienced to assist you with the completion of a congregational profile. He has additional resources, which will enable you to address your specific needs. Please call upon him for help in completing this profile.

Above all, remember that God is at work in this process. He already knows who your next pastor should be. It is our job to discern His will through prayer and study of the Word. Use this important time to draw closer to Him as you seek His will. I will be keeping you in prayer, and seek to be of help to you in whatever way I can.

Section One

A Self Evaluation Tool for Congregations

A number of years ago, the Council of Presidents of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod began the practice of asking each pastor to fill out a Self Evaluation Tool (SET) describing his basic approach to ministry and his practice with regard to selected issues. Congregations have found this SET to be extremely helpful in evaluating the qualities of candidates for the pastoral office in their congregation. The instrument below is based on the pastoral SET. It is our hope that it will be a help in discerning the proper match between pastor and congregation.

Name of Congregation: Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church of Northern Delaware

Address: 3003 Silverside Road

City, State, Zip: Wilmington, DE 19810

1. What is your understanding of the mission of the church?

Per our constitution, “Tell others of God’s love in Christ; serve others as Christ served us; keep each other strong in faith; rejoice and offer praise to God for His goodness; manage our lives and resources to serve God and care for and serve one another.”

While all this is true and faithfully (energetically even) invested, the output of our Strategic Ministry Planning (SMP) Process and adopted mission statement more succinctly (and accurately) suggests “Serving Community by Sharing Christian Hope” as the overriding mission of our congregation. Our sense of “community” includes both our congregational family with whom we worship and serve as well as the community external to our congregation to whom we offer service. Our collective heart for this effort will be shared in other parts of this questionnaire.

2. Why was your congregation founded? Why does it exist today?

When? December 27, 1931. Why? The first Missouri Synod congregation in Delaware was in Dover and it was this group that helped reach out and plant “Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church of Northern Delaware.” The first full time pastor was installed in January, 1940. By 1946 (after WWII), a building for the 140 member congregation was built and dedicated.

Our congregation continues to exist through the grace of God who has gathered a people in this place with a passion for ministry to the needs of the community at large and of care and love for each other. This Spirit continues to attract people to work and care with us. The congregation has been further blessed with more than adequate financial resources to support the ministry.

3. Describe your commitment to the doctrine and practice of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.

Our commitment to the doctrine of the LCMS is circumscribed by humility before an omnipotent God and His incarnate Son who commands that we model the love He showed all people during His earthly ministry. Among our congregants, we likely have a broader than typical diversity of doctrinal belief within the LCMS context. A significant percentage of our congregation – although not a majority – do not come from an LCMS background choosing to join this church from a sense of common mission.

In worship style, we have generally been traditional in the LCMS context. Theologically, we have been more progressive. For example, our congregation has a long history of inter-Lutheran, inter-Christian and other community service work, advancing the role of women in the church and moving toward a more open communion table.

4. What are the chief priorities in your present ministry?

Our Core Values as expressed through the Strategic Ministry Planning (SMP) Process are:

- *Care for Community
- *Sharing Christian Love
- *Worshipping the Lord

5. Our congregation's strengths in ministry are . . .

- *Service (see questions 7 & 11)
- *A warm and welcoming congregation
- *Nurturing our Church family
- *An empowered and active laity
- *Music ministry in worship
- *Emerging youth ministry

6. Areas in our ministry needing improvement are . . .

- *Congregation is too comfortable, even complacent, and can be resistant to change
- *Implementing decisions and action plans
- *Becoming more effective personally and as a congregation in Evangelism
- *Struggling to broaden participation and leadership from the congregation in our many ministries
- *Expanding successful programs for young people and young families
- *Coping with a geographically diverse and time starved congregation
- *Successfully coping with the transition of key volunteers moving from providing ministry to needing it
- *Continuing to increase interaction between the preschool and the main Church body
- *Facilities are stretched

7. In what community outreach or service activities does your congregation participate?

Beyond Budget Benevolence (BBB) – Financial support of housing / homeless ministries in Wilmington Community: Habitat for Humanity (New Castle County); Interfaith Housing; Lutheran Community Services Housing Assistance; Sojourner’s Place; and St. Clare Medical Van.

Contact – support crisis hotline – Concordia established this ministry in 1974.

Emmanuel Dining Room (EDR) – Prepare and serve meals (27th of every month) at dining center for the needy in Wilmington.

Habitat for Humanity / Thrivent Builds – part of a coalition of Lutheran churches supporting (financially and physically) the building of affordable housing in Wilmington.

Hilltop Lutheran Community Center – adopt children to receive gifts at Christmas and participate in Superstars fundraiser.

Orphan Grain Train (OGT) – Gather, sort, store, pack and ship essential items (clothes and goods) to missions nationally and internationally.

Women’s Prison Ministry – supply toiletries and other items; adopt children of incarcerated women to receive Christmas gifts through the Angel Tree Ministry

Sojourner’s Place – Offer weekly Bible study with residents at homeless shelter.

Lutheran Community Services (LCS) – Support food kitchen; supply medical drivers; participate in annual Hunger Walk / Run. Traditionally, we have a member on the Board. Also, we support their annual fundraising breakfast “Room at the Table.”

Facility usage – support groups like Alcoholics Anonymous and others use our facility for meetings four times per week. Other community groups like Girl Scouts have used our facility as well.

We regularly support other ministries like: LIFE (Lutherans Involved in Food Emergencies), Lutheran Hour Ministry, Meals on Wheels, Bethesda Mission, Lutheran World Relief, etc.

8. Briefly describe your congregational practice and/or preference toward the following:

a. The Lutheran Hymnal / Lutheran Worship / Lutheran Book of Worship / Lutheran Service Book / Other

In 2007, we moved from Red (*The Lutheran Hymnal*) and Blue (*Lutheran Worship*) to only the *Lutheran Service Book* (LSB). We use all of the settings and occasionally “mix and match.” *Lift Up Your Heart* (Red Paperback) is also a regular source of hymns. Occasionally, we pull from other sources for music and/or liturgy.

b. Pastoral services (weddings, funerals, visitation, etc.) to non-members, non-Lutherans, or the unchurched.

Historically, these services have been provided to those with a family connection to the church. For weddings, this has included instruction (i.e. premarital counseling).

Children are baptized with instruction to parents.

Visitation will be done at anyone’s request.

c. The Charismatic / Renewal Movement

We don't appear to be gifted in this manner.

d. Woman suffrage/ service of women in the church

We have the non-negotiable view that women are full partners in the ministry of the church and are encouraged and expected to serve consistent with their gifts from the Holy Spirit.

In our congregation women may serve as . . .

ANY/ALL OF THE BELOW.

Voters

President

Board members

Vice President

Board chair

Elders

Lectors

Ushers

Communion Assistants

Other (Teachers)

e. The place and participation of lay people in the life of the church. What is your understanding of the role of the laity in the congregation?

As the Body of Christ, we are each endowed with gifts by the Holy Spirit and should draw together to affect the work of Him who called us to both gather and serve. The congregation must own the mission of our church and work together to make it "go."

9. What is your understanding of the role of the ordained ministry in the church?

As a trained, full time servant, the ordained minister is called to join the priesthood of believers in our ministry. We look to our pastor:

*to engage with us in the ministry that God has called us to as revealed in the Strategic Ministry Planning (SMP) process and through the Intentional Interim Process (IIP)

*to encourage, teach and equip us to be effective in becoming a mission-driven, not pastor-driven, church

*to feed and nourish our spirits through the preaching of the Word and the Sacraments

*to provide appropriate pastoral care through hospital and shut-in visitation and sensitively deal with counseling and grief issues of congregants

*to passionately pursue God's will and submit in obedience to it in his life and ministry and help us do the same

10. What are the advantages and disadvantages of multi-staff ministry? (Pastor - pastor, Pastor - DCE, Pastor - school staff, etc.)

We are the Body of Christ. The Lord gathers people together in ministry because no one person (except Jesus Himself) can “do it all.” At Concordia, we have been blessed in a variety of multi-staff arrangements. Currently, we have:

- *An Interim Pastor who works a part-time schedule
- *A full-time Ministry Coordinator
- *A full-time Music/Choir Director
- *A part-time Youth Director
- *A full-time Church Administrator
- *A part-time Sexton

While this creates a challenge of coordination for the ministry, the positions largely evolved from a mission need and were filled to address a specific aspect of the ministry. In this environment, a pastor should value a diversity of opinion and be comfortable with shared responsibilities and accountability. Our pastor should invite dialogue with the other staff professionals as well as the laity on questions of mission and worship.

11. Describe your feelings about the church’s involvement in social ministries in the community.

We believe serving the community defines “Who We Are” as Concordia and fulfills our mission of “Serving Community by Sharing Christian Hope.” This commitment of service is so large at Concordia it is difficult to quantify. Please refer back to question #7 for a listing of ministries, and know that no commitments or services have dropped at all to these ministries, after the departure of Pastor David Mueller, who was a big supporter of such activity.

As an example, we will try to quantify a single ministry, Emmanuel Dining Room. Since its establishment in 1980 we have prepared and served a meal per month. On average, we have served between 200 and 250 guests per month, for 27 years. Every month 13 members bake large casseroles and brownies (our preschool families also help). On the 27th of every month at least five members work in the kitchen at the Emmanuel Dining Room to finish preparing and serving the meals.

A good portion of the congregation (all ages from teen to senior) supports this and our other ministries. The church feels strongly about being “blessed to be a blessing” to this community.

12. Describe briefly your congregational practice or preference toward the following:

a. Writing of “own liturgies” or special services.

While we typically use one of several of the LSB settings, we periodically have special services and/or services where the liturgy is expressed outside of the published version. We value these opportunities to freshly receive the Word of God. Historically, we have used pieces outside of the published settings created by Pastors and staff.

b. The frequency of the Lord’s Supper

We currently are celebrating this Sacrament weekly. Historically, we had observed a 1st and 3rd Sunday communion approach. The emphasis on every Sunday Communion seems to be welcome, but the congregation has a diversity of opinion on this subject and is receptive to discussion on the topic.

Revised - Oct. 2007

Printed 3/9/2008

c. The priority of the Lord's Supper in parish worship.

Communion is important to us and we treat these gifts appropriately and with respect.

d. The use of common or individual cups.

We currently offer both. Grape juice is also available in individual cups for those who desire it for medical or health reasons.

e. The use of lay people to assist in worship.

Deacons act as assisting ministers and lectors as well as helping in the distribution of Communion. We are considering expanding the use of members as readers.

f. Do you have a Lutheran School or are you planning to start one? How do you understand the ministry of the Lutheran School?

We have a Preschool, established over 25 years ago as a non-profit outreach program and service to families in our community. The mission of the preschool is to provide an excellent preschool education in a Christian environment. Our certified and licensed preschool currently has an enrollment of about 100 students and a staff of 20. The students have Chapel time, including singing Christian songs and Bible stories and lessons, with Deacon John (who doubles as our Ministry Coordinator). Chapel is opened as an outreach to extended Preschool families at Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. Congregational members also read Bible stories to classes weekly.

The Preschool operates on its own annual budget of about \$200,000 and compensates the church for facility usage: utilities, maintenance services, etc. Congregational members sit on the Preschool Advisory Board and the Preschool Director serves on the church Board of Trustees. Cross communication is shared in Preschool and Congregational Newsletters, and at meetings and other events.

Preschool families share in our service to the community in baking brownies for Emmanuel Dining Room, and donating clothes and other items to Hilltop and Orphan Grain Train. The Preschool also fundraises for scholarships to offer to needy families seeking an excellent education in a caring Christian environment.

g. An interview by a calling congregation before a call is issued.

We will hold "conference call" conversations with candidates interested in talking with us after reading this profile. The objective of these calls is to exchange information in an effort to discover if there is reasonable "fit." Where there appears to be the possibility of "fit," the candidate (and spouse) would be invited (at our expense) to spend a long weekend in the area to get to know some of the members of the congregation as well as to experience the area as a potential residence. While the conference call(s) and the weekend here could be considered interviews, this is really an effort to discern God's will for your family and our congregation. "Fit" will help the professional ministry here be successful, and we truly want your family to be happy here, too.

h. First communion: Before or after confirmation

Historically, first communion has happened after confirmation.

i. What is your communion policy with regard to those who are not members of your congregation?

We are all dependent on God's grace and therefore, seek to find reasons to commune those seeking His grace rather than reasons not to. In our bulletin, we publish a statement of our best understanding of what's occurring in the Lord's Supper and encourage those who share that belief and have been baptized to join us. We seek a Shepherd who shares this heart.

j. Inter-Lutheran relationships

We work with other (non-LCMS) Lutherans in a wide range of community ministry. We would welcome them in prayer, worship and at our table in communion.

k. Inter-Christian relationships

We support ecumenicalism in public prayer and worship.

We have a goodly number of members who were not, and many regular guests (including some spouses of members) who are not, Lutheran. In our services, we publish a statement of our best understanding of what's occurring in the Lord's Supper in the bulletin and encourage those who share that belief and have been baptized to join us. We seek a Shepherd who shares this heart.

13. What provision in time and finances do you make for the pastor's continuing education?

The Pastor and others are encouraged to attend conferences in the Circuit, District and Synod, the costs of which are reimbursed. Circuit meetings are held monthly in Dover, DE. Professional Church Workers' Conferences for the District are held twice each year. The conference line item in our 2008 budget is \$3000. For the Pastor, two weeks each year and funds are set aside for this use, or a three-month (which does not include vacation) sabbatical every 7 years, if time and money are allowed to accrue. Arrangement and authorization is through the Board of Deacons.

14. How can the District / Synod assist you to have a more effective ministry?

Help us find a GREAT fit for our ministry in an OUTSTANDING Pastor in a reasonable timeframe.

15. What strengths or ministries would you like to share with other congregations?

See 7 and 11.

16. What provision for housing is offered to the pastor?

_____ parsonage - NO

 X housing allowance - YES

 X negotiable - YES

17. Is there anything else in your present ministry that you would like to share that might be pertinent to a new pastor?

A few issues have “been on Concordia’s plate” for some time. These are the purchase of a new organ, the expansion of our existing facility, our style of worship, and our relationship with our preschool. These topics are all inter-related.

Our congregation moved into our current facility in 1985. We brought our organ from the old church and installed it in the new church to save money, but also realizing that it was not designed for our new worship space and that it would need to be upgraded. We have an established ‘Organ Fund’ which members donate to and has a current balance of over \$80,000. The congregation voted to move ahead several years ago and a committee was formed to receive designs and quotes for a new organ, with the recommendation being a \$350,000 pipe organ that would take 3 years to build. With the years passing, this same instrument will probably cost much more than that figure.

Prior to making this large financial commitment, the congregation decided to study our mission and ministry and we invested funds and time into Strategic Ministry Planning (SMP). A summary of SMP for Concordia and our updated Action Plan are attached to this Profile. The idea for us to engage in SMP was to prepare for the departure of Pastor David Mueller and to lay the foundation for our next settled pastor. Facility upgrades or expansion (including the organ) would now be tied to mission and ministry priorities.

The organ is now one of the ministry items included in our overall facilities plan that will be required to support the vision and goals revealed to us through SMP and IIP. The congregation has approved a concept “master” plan, and site plans have been submitted to the county for their approval. The congregation has invested in architectural, engineering, and county planning fees. Once our plan is approved, the congregation will then be asked to make pledges toward the project. We will then be able to determine the size of loan we can support and the facility we can build - or the phased upgrades we can make. We believe, once actually built, the project may cost around \$5 million, and will be constructed in phases. It is important to note that our current facility is paid for - no mortgage debt.

The organ project is also impacted by the congregation’s desire to broaden our worship style in hopes of attracting others to our worship. As noted earlier, our Sunday morning worship is traditional and conservative. Special services with alternative styles like Youth Sundays and our Christmas Pageant are offered occasionally throughout the year. Our congregation has made attempts over the past few years to integrate new elements of worship into our traditions. There is some energy for a completely different style of worship, but there is also a desire not to divide the congregation. A “blended” style on a regular basis is most likely the way to reach the most people.

We are good stewards of our facility, which is used almost every day throughout the year. During the school year we have a preschool in the mornings every day. Community groups use our facility during the days and evenings during the week for meetings and activities. Church and preschool meetings happen in the evenings as well. All of the spaces in our building are “shared” - Preschool classes with Sunday school, community groups with our Youth Group, etc. The new plans call for a real Fellowship Hall / Family Center that could double as worship and recreational space.

A new preschool wing is also proposed. There has been some tension expressed in the past that “we,” the congregation, are building this new facility for “them,” the preschool. Relations are now strong between the preschool and the congregation with good leadership on both sides; however, some of these perceptions are still around.

18. Use of this Self Evaluation Tool:

a. Who prepared the answers to this document?

The Call Committee with input, review and comment by the Deacons, Trustees and the Interim Pastor.

b. Was the Mission and Ministry Facilitator consulted?

A late draft was submitted to him as well as the Circuit Counselor for review and comment.

c. Was this information shared with and discussed by the congregation?

This document has been made available to the congregation in hard copy and will be published on our website.

d. Was a congregational survey done? If so, attach results.

The congregation's involvement was primarily through the Strategic Ministry Planning (SMP) Process (2005) and the Intentional Interim Process (2007).

e. Do you plan to share this information with the pastor you are calling?

Absolutely. We're hoping the District and potential candidates use this as a crucial first step in determining "fit."

Date completed: December, 2007

Demographics

1. Your Mission and Ministry Facilitator can provide you with a sheet giving the statistics you have submitted over the past ten years. Please bring this sheet up to date and attach to this document.

If these figures are not available, please complete the following:

	<u>Current</u>	<u>5 yrs. ago</u>	<u>10 yrs. ago</u>
Average attendance:	155	175	177
Baptized membership:	371	337	453
Communicant membership:	291	235	352
Sunday School enrollment:	92	90	100
Bible Class enrollment:	25	25	20
Total budget for current expense:	\$450,000	\$360,000	\$320,000

2. Your Mission and Ministry Facilitator can describe a community demographics survey available through the Lutheran Church Extension Fund. If you order that survey, please order an extra copy and have it sent to the facilitator.

If you do not order the survey, please describe your community giving attention to . . .

Size of community: 220,000

Economy: Strong Banking (MBNA – now Bank of America and other Credit Cards), Chemical (DuPont) and Pharmaceutical (AstraZeneca) presence

Racial composition: 69% Caucasian, 23% African-American, 6% Hispanic, 2% Asian

Growth projections: Wilmapco projects that population in New Castle County (in which Wilmington and our church are located) from 2000 to 2010 will grow from 501,856 to 542,818 and by 2030 this number will reach 601,343 (19.8% increase).

General description: Concordia is located in the northern suburbs of Wilmington, Delaware and draws many members from Southeast Pennsylvania – generally of the same demographics.

Does your congregation reflect the general population of the community? Explain: Mainly Caucasian congregation in middle class families. Unfortunately, we have only a small number of minority members. “Core” of Concordia’s congregation is retired and aging, but there has been some recent growth in young families.

What percentage of your membership lives within two miles of the church? 10%

Section Three
Financial Information

1. Please provide a copy of your current budget and latest financial report. Attached.

2. What did you pay your last pastor? \$95,477

Salary: 2006 Actual – Salary plus benefits = \$66,977

Housing: 2006 Actual = \$28,500

3. What do you plan to pay your next pastor? Give a figure or a range.

Actual compensation for next pastor will be determined by years in ministry, housing, family benefit needs, etc. but the following budget was placed in our 2008 spending guide:

Salary: 2008 Budget/Guide – Salary plus benefits = \$70,535

Housing: 2008 Budget/Guide = \$30,000

4. Do you offer Concordia Plans Benefits? Describe coverage

Yes, offered to all full-time staff including Health Plan, Retirement Plan, and Disability.

5. Compare your compensation figures with the SED guidelines in the call manual. If your figures fall short, do you think this will impact your ability to call a pastor?

We believe our compensation figures are in line with SED guidelines.

6. When was the last time you had an organized stewardship campaign directed primarily towards financial commitment? What kind of program did you use?

Fall of 2007 – Pastor David Betzner led a Sunday morning study based on Rev. Peter Stienke’s guide, and we had an organized campaign which culminated in a Consecration Sunday led by Rev. Ken Carlson, in which we were invited to bring an “estimate of giving” to the altar during the worship service. Those pledges, together with others that were made in subsequent weeks provided the following result:

	<u>This Year</u>	<u>Last Year</u>
Total dollars pledged for our “Spending Guide”:	\$325,935	\$280,758
Percent of “Spending Guide” underwritten:	73%	64%
Percent of active households making a pledge:	48%	39%

Additional pledges were also made to ministries (e.g. BBB) and funds (e.g. Organ and Building) apart from the operating budget.

Future Planning - We have also solicited assistance from Rev. Art Scherer, and we will use Capital Funding Services for a campaign in support of our facility expansion and upgrade project in the next 18 months. Its goal will be to finance construction of new fellowship and educational space and renovating our existing facility for improved worship, music and educational capability. We intend to embark upon a three-year capital campaign, 2009 to 2011. However, a number of members have already made pre-campaign pledges and donations, several taking advantage of the Charitable IRA Option for those over 70 ½ years of age. Thereby, pledges and gifts for the upcoming capital campaign at this early date already total **\$37,500!**

Revised - Oct. 2007

Printed 3/9/2008

Missional Information

1. If possible, attach a missional history of the congregation -- not just dates and names, but the story of significant attempts at mission and outreach.

Concordia has successfully planted two churches – Faith Lutheran, Bear, Delaware in 1954 and Our Redeemer Lutheran, Newark, Delaware in 1957. Another congregation, St. Timothy was attempted, but did not sustain.

Concordia has several “sons” in the ministry – Rev. David Mueller (Food for the Poor); Rev. Chuck Neugebauer (Christ the King, Memphis, TN); Rev. Jim Kusko (St. John, Munson, PA); Rev. David Panning (Holy Lamb, Myrtle Beach, SC); and Rev. Stephen Hand (Atlantic District Communications)

Concordia is part of the Circuit’s current support of Rev. Ray Roger’s mission ministry in Maryland.

2. If you have one, attach a copy of your mission statement or vision statement.

Please see Strategic Ministry Planning document attached.

3. If you have a list of your core values, please attach. If not, please complete the following statement:

Please see Strategic Ministry Planning document attached and answer to question #4 below.

4. What are the role expectations of the pastor?

Concordia Lutheran Church wishes to call a pastor to serve according to his calling, “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” and to use his God-given gifts, serving as our pastor, “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ,” “speaking the truth in love.” (Ephesians 4:2-3,12-13, 15a)

WORSHIP

Worship at Concordia is lifted up as a core value of our congregation. Our pastor will be expected to properly administer the Word and Sacraments. Our worship has a traditional and conservative style, yet a more progressive theology. We utilize the worship settings in *Lutheran Service Book*, and regularly add to or amend the liturgies to “fit” Concordia including offering unique worship experiences, like Youth Sundays.

Especially during the Interim year, we have provided a variety of worship experiences and presentations of differing formats for the sermon which have been generally well received. Our Director of Music currently selects the hymns and other worship music to compliment the Scripture and themes of the day. Our pastor should be open to helping us expand our worship styles, while maintaining the substance of Lutheran worship. It is our intention to have our worship speak (reaching all ages) to our members and guests alike, and for it to be lively in spirit and truth.

The preached Word is significant in our worship, and we have been blessed in the past, and present, with gifted preachers. We hope our sermons will be delivered from the heart as well as the mind, with expository teaching combined with inspiration, encouragement, and challenge. A simple message that can be easily applied to a worshipper's life is preferred over being preached at with intellectual superiority.

Holy Communion is currently offered at every service, and this practice seems to be welcomed by many. Our tradition for years had been first and third Sunday plus Feasts. Our Table is "open" as we invite all who believe according to a statement included in our worship bulletin. Lay assistants, male and female, serve with the pastor in the distribution.

Our baptismal font is in the center of our worship space, and we believe that our baptisms are at the center of who we are as Christians. Our pastor will be central in administering the Sacrament of Baptism, most of the time during our Sunday morning worship. Our congregation makes promises to help the families care for and nurture the newly baptized along his or her spiritual journey in Christ.

A Chapel experience for our Preschool students is currently offered twice per month. As a tool for outreach Preschool families are invited to Chapel at Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. "Deacon John" currently leads Chapel worship with songs, stories, lessons, and prayer.

PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral Care at Concordia will include visiting members who are unable to get to church, shut-ins and the infirm. At any given time in our congregation (in its current size), the number of members requiring this care would be between 15-20 people. We would hope that these members would be visited at least monthly. We are blessed to have many people who regularly check on and care for each other, but a visit from the pastor with a message and Sacrament is necessary.

Counseling of members will include personal, family, (pre) marital, grief and others as needs arise. Our pastor will be the officiant at our funerals and engage with the families before (planning the service), during, and after the funeral. The core of our congregation is aging and this area of ministry (care, funerals, grief counseling) will be expanding in the coming years.

While we continue to care and counsel our aging members, we also aspire to increase our ministry to and with our youth and young families who encounter a different world than our aging members. These young families will require counseling and care as they face this changing world.

EDUCATION

Education at Concordia consists currently of Sunday school for all ages, weekly adult Bible studies, and Confirmation for Jr. High-aged students. The Sunday morning Adult study is currently led by Pastor Betzner which has been a blessing. In the past this study has been both lay-led and pastor-led. We also have a "Young Adult" study led within the group. Adult Bible studies are offered on Monday afternoons and Wednesday evenings, and both are currently lay-lead. As a community service, a lay-led Bible study is offered on Wednesday mornings at a local homeless shelter.

Confirmation is offered weekly to 7th and 8th Grade students. Currently the class is combined because we only have one 7th grade student. "Deacon John" is the lead teacher for this class with assistance from Pastor Betzner. Our study includes the six chief parts in Luther's Small Catechism, Christian ethics and lifestyles, and visiting other Christian churches for worship and reflection. All Sunday morning Sunday school classes are led by volunteers from the congregation. Pastoral leadership and / or guidance would be welcomed in all these areas.

Education in outreach and evangelism is critical to the growth of Concordia. Outreach toward community, inviting people to our church, and sharing our faith with others has not been a priority for a long time mostly because growth came to us and our church was strong in our service to the community. While this service is embraced by those who would visit Concordia and wish to engage in such ministry activities, the service was not outreach that invited others into our congregation. Through our recent studies we now realize the distinction between our service to the community (in which we are strong) and our outreach to seekers (in which we are uncomfortable). We hope our next pastor will emphasize outreach (new disciples) and help to train folks to be a part of it.

ADMINISTRATION

Concordia is blessed with a gifted staff and lay leadership. Our full-time staff includes a Ministry Coordinator, Music Director, Preschool Director, and Church Administrator. Additional part-time staff consists of a Youth Director and a Sexton. Lay leadership includes Trustees (business leaders) and Deacons (spiritual leaders). The day-to-day operation of the church, including facilities, runs smoothly and would not require hands on leadership by the pastor to function. Finances are handled by the Trustees.

Concordia's staff meets weekly to plan worship and ministry for that week and the season ahead, and it is hoped that this would continue to be a "team" effort as we move into the future. Deacons and Trustees meet at least monthly to review the needs of the congregation and plan the necessary responses and actions. Our pastor is an integral part of these meetings. The Deacons are also charged with care for the pastor, in addition to helping him care for the congregation. We hope that the pastor, and his family, will be open to such a ministry.

The congregation meets quarterly at Voters' Assemblies to review our mission and ministry, approve budgets and large expenses, and vote on issues and actions needing attention. A report from the pastor is offered at each meeting, as well as devotions and / or prayer. The pastor also reports to the congregation in seasonal newsletters and other direct mailings as needed. The Deacons also host small group meetings in which the pastor can engage the congregation in smaller, more informal, settings.

Our next settled pastor will probably be asked to help us engage in a building program and related capital funding campaign. Plans should be approved shortly by New Castle County. The church has voted to engage Capital Funding Services to help the congregation with a fund drive to determine the size of the first phase of our project, and the size of a loan our congregation can carry forward. There is much sentiment in the congregation that we should not move forward with a facility upgrade project until we have a new pastor on staff to help lead and inspire growth to fill and utilize the new facility.

Our established leadership is aging and will soon shift from being ministers to requiring ministry. New leadership must be developed, equipped and inspired in order to continue our ministry. Concordia has become very comfortable, even complacent, and needs to move off of its plateau and have the courage and strength to start climbing to greater heights. We recognize that we are uncomfortable with change, but also see the need for growth, which requires change. Our new pastor may be asked to help us face this challenge and lead this congregation through this discomfort in order to fulfill our mission and ministry goals and to grow spiritually and in number. Our Interim Pastor has referred to us as a "sleeping giant" ready to be awakened.

Part of the awakening that we will need to be addressing, in one way or another, is the pastor-driven or mission-driven church dilemma. In worship, size and staff we are a mission-driven church but in many ways we act like a pastoral-sized church. Some members say, "We can't do anything until our new pastor arrives" while others say "We are the body of Christ and His mission and ministry continue through us." Creating a spirit that encourages every member to take "ownership" of our ministry is important. Acknowledging where we are, where we want to be, and providing for that will be critical to our future together. We hope that our new pastor will be a positive agent of change and growth in this area.

In preparation for the interim pastor search, the congregation was asked “what characteristics were desirable and undesirable for a pastoral candidate?” A sample is provided below.

Desired

- Experience in leading a well-balanced ministry as indicated by references from former churches and reputation
- Feel genuinely called to lead and support us in our SMP journey
- Respect Pastor Mueller’s ministry and its value in growing our church in the community
- Be a “pastor” in true sense
- Integrity
- Eloquence, not glibness
- Community involvement
- Compassion
- Listening skills
- Sense of humor
- Follow the word in teaching/preaching
- Continued excellent liaison with members
- Informality
- Caring for those less fortunate
- Believes in ecumenical Christianity
- Preaches Jesus – love, peace, non-judgmental
- Intellectually honest
- Married with children
- Committed to ministering to this church and its members first, other activities second
- Full support of traditional LCMS church/worship
- Unifier
- Strong pastoral abilities

Not Desired

- Arrogance, materialism, lack of humility (especially if he is young)
- Inexperience with community relations, preschools
- “Super intellectual pastor” who does not relate to congregation’s needs
- Thinks that Lutheranism is the only way to heaven
- Believes in closed communion
- Against women being involved in church organization/running

5. How does the congregation understand the role of the following for its ministry:

a. The leadership

Trustees – are the business leaders of the church and include President, VP-Business, VP-Administrators, VP-Deacons, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary. These leaders oversee the operations and facility of the church.

Deacons – are the lay spiritual leaders of the church; currently nine are serving. These leaders provide for the spiritual welfare of our members and our pastor. They also assist in leading worship.

Administrators – are leaders responsible for specific areas of ministry currently consisting of Stewardship, Fellowship, Education and Property.

b. The staff (paid or volunteer)

See question 10 in Section 1

c. The membership of the congregation for its ministry?

As the Body of Christ, we are each endowed with gifts by the Holy Spirit and should draw together to affect the work of Him who called us to both gather and serve. The congregation must own the mission of our church and work together to make it “go.” Current “core” leadership is maturing and a new generation of leaders needs to emerge to carry the ministry forward. We look for help from the pastor to train and equip this new generation of leaders.

6. What percentage of the congregation’s budget supports ministry to its own members and what percentage is used for missions, evangelism, outreach and ministries beyond its own membership? How does this relate to the stated mission and vision of the congregation?

Concordia mission of “Serving Community by Sharing Christian Hope” is reflected in our budget. We define Community as both internal (we cannot neglect the body of Christ) and external (we are told to feed the hungry, house the homeless, care for the sick, etc.). Of our \$450,000 budget, \$50,000 (over 11%) is set aside for outreach- mission and social ministry. \$35,000 of the \$50,000 is proposed for the District and Synod.

The leaders of the church feel if we use the tithe (10%) as a goal for our members’ giving, that the church should do the same. Our Beyond Budget Benevolence (BBB) giving is outside of our operating budget, and goes directly to the homeless and housing ministries in the Wilmington community. Our BBB distributions totaled an additional \$22,000 in 2007.

Our George H. Mueller (former pastor) Endowment Fund receives, again outside of our operating budget, donations from various sources and special events and its annual earnings are distributed to various ministries. The distributions for 2007 totaled \$7000 and went to Lutheran Community Services food distribution and rental assistance programs, Lutheran World Relief, Student Financial Aid – SED, Intersity Christian Fellowship, and Concordia’s Organ and Building Funds.

7. How many small groups meet regularly that provide opportunity for support and relationship building (not committees or boards, but things like prayer groups and fellowship groups)? How many different members of the congregations are involved in these groups? What process is in place to promote the formation of new small groups?

Several years ago there was a concerted effort made to establish small groups to minister to and with each other called Life Enriching Groups. Many of the groups below retain the spirit of that effort:

Adult Bible studies are offered three times per week and average about 25 per group. There is some overlap between the groups.

Our Young Adult Group meets separately on Sunday mornings and has about 10 people. This group also meets socially for fellowship periodically through the year. This group just formed last year at the initiative of one of our young couples.

Our Men's Group meets for a fellowship breakfast 3 or 4 times per year. Usually about 40 people gather for these breakfasts.

Our Women's Group (Sisters in Service) is currently idle.

The entire congregation is divided into small groups geographically (20 -30 families per group with each group assigned a Deacon or two). A few times a year the Deacons gather these groups together for communication, fellowship and / or care.

Our service ministries provide small groups – packing and shipping clothes for Orphan Grain Train, serving meals at Emmanuel Dining Room, etc.

Fellowship activities provide small group opportunities as well – Church Christmas Decorating, Lenten Suppers, Youth Easter Breakfasts, bus trips to see shows, etc.

The Junior and Senior High Youth of Concordia meet periodically for social and service events. The geographic spread of our congregation has made weekly "Youth Group" activities difficult. The group also "meets" electronically through email and conference calls.

All the groups and activities are promoted in our newsletters, Sunday bulletins, worship announcements, and on our website.

8. How many of the activities, programs and ministries of the congregation open to anyone, how many require that one be a member to participate? How are members encouraged to invite non-members to participate and how often do they extend invitations to friends, neighbors and associates? How many guests attend weekly on average? How many return within a month? What kind of follow-up is used for guests and for repeat guests?

All worship and fellowship activities are open to everyone and guests and visitors are encouraged. Vacation Bible School last year had over one third of the kids coming from outside the congregation.

There are regularly about 10 guests in worship on any given Sunday. A personal note is written to every guest who visited. If the guest becomes "regular" (returning a few times in a month) a visit may be scheduled and an invitation given to attend our "Membership Inquiry Class." We currently have 15 people from 7 families enrolled in our new member inquiry class.

9. In the social ministry programs and activities of the congregation how is there an intentional effort made to share the Gospel with the recipients of the congregation's ministry and how are relationships built between members of the congregation and the recipients? If it is not being done, what can be done to make this happen?

Most of our service and social ministries do not involve personal evangelism. When we serve meals at Emmanuel Dining Room it is from the kitchen. One social ministry, Bible study at a homeless shelter, Sojourner's Place, is an obvious evangelism vehicle and we have invited some of those people to our worship, and even had one join the church. However, most of our social ministries are embraced by our congregation as service to our community and not as a source for gaining new members.

10. Where and when are hosts (greeters) introducing guests (visitors) to others both before and after the service and how long are they also active at the "coffee hour"? What percentage of the members understand and exercise their role to greet and meet with those they do not know and seek to build relationships with one another? What training and reminders are given to hosts and members in the pew to assist in welcoming guests?

Different greeters welcome members and guests before every service. The Pastor and Deacon of the service are usually present to greet as well. Coffee hours are offered periodically throughout the year. The Pastor, Deacon of the service, and the Ministry Coordinator greet members and guests after worship.

Concordia is frequently lifted up as very welcoming to guests. It is very difficult to sneak in and out of worship as a guest at Concordia. We are very welcoming and friendly, and almost every member will reach out to a new face in the group.

11. What kind of intentional efforts are made to assimilate new members and regular non-member attendees to make them feel needed and appreciated, using their gifts, talents and abilities in ministry, rather than trying to fit them into pre-defined roles within the congregation?

We offer a Membership Inquiry Class for guests to understand the Lutheran Church in general and Concordia in particular. We have also offered a Spiritual Gifts Inventory class to discern each person's gifts and then encourage them to serve accordingly. We have defined roles of Trustees (business leaders) and Deacons (spiritual leaders) where people fill "offices" for set terms, but also ad hoc groups that meet for specific functions and short-term responsibilities.

We recognize this as an area where we could be more intentional and do seek to improve. One possibility is to encourage established members to formally mentor new and perspective members.

12. How many adult baptisms (conversions) has your congregation had on average for the past five years?

Less than one per year on average.

13. What kind of life changes are taking place in the members of the congregation as a result of their participation in Word and Sacrament?

By God's grace, the forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life is offered to all. Therefore, all lives are changing – see the old has gone, the new has come. We have heard some powerful testimonies about these changed lives when we give our members opportunities to stand before our congregation in special worship settings. Members of our youth have shared their testimonies as well.

14. What intentional efforts are being made to grow the kingdom? What is being done to encourage members to regularly pray for their witness and for the conversion of those around them?

Our community service is an intentional effort to be God's hands and heart in our neighborhoods, and extend His kingdom by being agents of His grace, mercy and love with those in need. We pray that we can bring people to the knowledge of the Truth, and rely on the movement of the Holy Spirit for conversion.

As stated earlier, education in outreach and evangelism is critical to the growth of Concordia. Outreach toward community, inviting people to our church, and sharing our faith with others has not been a priority for a long time mostly because growth came to us and our church was strong in our service to the community. While this service is embraced by those who would visit Concordia and wish to engage in such ministry activities, the service was not outreach that invited others into our congregation. Through our recent studies we now realize the distinction between our service to the community (in which we are strong) and our outreach to seekers (in which we are uncomfortable). We hope our next pastor will emphasize outreach (new disciples) and train folks to be a part of it.

15. What is the vision for a growing, living congregation, sharing the Word of Life, reaping a harvest? Explain how this is taking place.

We don't know where we will encounter people on their spiritual journeys. Maybe we will be planting seeds, nourishing growth, or reaping a harvest. We hope to be obedient to God's calling and available to the people He places along our paths. Our worship, fellowship, stewardship, and community service are visible expressions of our efforts – to the glory of God.