

Servant of Christ Lutheran Church Ministry Site Profile Meeting Notes

Sunday, April 27th, 2025
11:50 AM - 1:00 PM

Introductions

Bishop Jen Nagel, Pastor Melissa, Call Committee members, and several members of the congregation were in attendance.

Ministry Site Profile (MSP) At-A-Glance

Attendees were given a copy of the [MSP At-A-Glance](#). The MSP At-A-Glance highlights the key information from the actual MSP (which is a 12-page document).

Opening Prayer - Bishop Jen

Overview of Ministry Site Profile (MSP) - Bishop Jen

The Call Committee had shared their work on the MSP with Bishop Jen.

This is what she noticed about the MSP and our church:

- Mission Focus - making disciples, biblical connections, connectedness to God
- Generosity - to the Synod, ELCA, and to the community
- Associate/Assistant and Pastor/Deacon - good to be flexible
 - Word and Sacrament ministry is a Pastor
 - Word and Service ministry is a Deacon (no sacraments - baptism and communion, but they do preach)
- Position has a nice “roundedness” - Plan, coordinate, and lead Children’s Ministry, oversee Sunday School, lead/coordinate special events, lead social action committee, preach once a month...newer Pastor coming in will probably like this since they will want to be involved in a lot of things
- Be mindful that some newer Pastors may want to be in the Sanctuary more than downstairs in Sunday School, but that may be something that can change structurally over time...give them what they are trained to do and what they are excited about, while also getting the things that our congregation needs
- Survey - good to ask congregation, valuable feedback, some “out of the box” ideas are exciting to try while also balancing in what has been working
- Significant-sized church...Servant of Christ is big enough that having only one leader doesn’t allow for flexibility

Open Discussion - How would you respond to this question from a candidate:

Why would I want to be a Pastor/Deacon of Children’s Ministries at Servant of Christ?

- History (40 years) of congregation being very supportive of their Pastors
- “Most friendly church” comment
- Congregational survey showed our church is welcoming
- Kid-friendly church, prioritizing children/youth, “kids come first”
- Pastors greeting before/after services
- Many volunteers
- Social justice issues are not preached on from the pulpit (not that people don’t believe in them), but the focus from the pulpit is on the Gospel and how to spread God’s love in the community
- You can make the position “your own” through creativity and openness to try new things
- Growing congregation/more children with new developments in neighboring community of Dayton

- Children's program is established, but is flexible...we're willing to try new things
- Building/facility is a good space for community activities (Scouts, Blood Drive, etc.) which builds awareness for the church
- Community awareness through activities: Servant Suppers, Trunk or Treat, Monthly Buy Nothing Event, etc.
- Joy-filled community at Servant of Christ
- It's OK to try new things, even if they don't work...we learn from that and try something else
- Donuts/coffee after service
- Build, innovate, and create on our already stable program

Open Discussion - What would be a challenge for the Pastor/Deacon in this role?

- 2 Sunday School times...10:30 AM time is usually less attended
- Children may have other activities so that could cause sporadic attendance
- Must be organized with volunteers, being clear and timely with various forms of communication (emails, texts, posters in church, etc.)
- Congregation is changing
- Opinions from others
- Keeping parents involved with their children's faith and their own faith, too...like Family First Sunday, etc.
- Self-starter/self-motivated to get things done, since we have a smaller staff
- Be effective working with children...have a heart for kids
- Understand child development and what is appropriate for activities, conversation, understandings at each age
- Innovation and adaptability don't always go with structure and timeliness
- Up on things that kids are interested in...being relevant
- Need to communicate across generations...tailored communication

Follow-up Comments - Bishop Jen

- Flexibility in the position...How do the candidates hear that clearly? How does the congregation get that message?
- MSP At-A-Glance - put into commentary section on the MSP

Open Discussion - What questions/concerns do you have?

- Communication with congregation - what is the difference between a deacon or pastor? Could it be put in the E-News?
- Congregation please pray for this Call Process every day...Holy Spirit works in this process
- Call Committee confidentiality, they can tell the congregation where they are in the process...but can't share things like candidate names, etc.
- Candidates come to us via Synod Office (about 1 month from submission of MSP), self-nominating candidates from website/word of mouth, and church nominations
 - For church nominations, can put in E-News: now accepting candidates online form (maybe QR code) or paper form
 - Post job description on the website, they will contact John Hulden - MPLS area synod
- How wide of net does Synod cast when looking for candidates?
 - MPLS Synod based
 - Beyond MPLS Synod (if they mentioned that they are interested in MPLS)

Best Practices for Going Forward - Bishop Jen

- Use the 7 Checklists from John Hulden
- First Call (or pastors in general) want to "be pastors"...some parts of this position feel kind of like "youth director" so be really honest about what you are looking for with candidates
- If you don't get the right "fit" with a candidate, don't settle

- Don't promise anything in the communication about a timeline for filling the position...you just don't know
- Even when you want continuity, you don't always get continuity, but you seek that
 - Natural trend...reach a point when it's time to move on
 - Avery (Next Gen Ministries) will be doing her internship in 2026-2027
 - Conversation about reconfiguring how the workload is divided or hiring at that time
 - Possibility of this Pastor/Deacon of Children's Ministries taking on Confirmation on Wednesday nights and being in Sunday Worship more
 - Let candidates know that in 2 years we will be reconfiguring the roles
 - Reconfiguring "language" can be misinterpreted as you are reconfiguring someone "out" of a position, that's not the intention...be careful with this
 - When things are running solid in Sunday School with volunteers, this Pastor/Deacon could be in worship more
 - Possibility of children's director in future
- This position allows for a lot of growth and development...long term flexibility (maybe add this to the MSP)
- Associate positions are tricky, sometimes not an easy position to be in...good relationship with Pastor Melissa and the candidate, creative enough that it works with Pastor Melissa's style
- Bishop Jen is praying for us, the process, and the candidates