

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: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

1. Describe your understanding of the church and its mission, especially regarding outreach to the lost.
2. Why was your congregation founded? Why does it exist today?
3. Describe your commitment to the doctrine and practice of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
4. What are the chief priorities in your present ministry?
5. Our congregation's strengths in ministry are . . .

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

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

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*

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

c. How does your congregation help individuals identify and use their spiritual gifts?

d. Woman suffrage/ service of women in the church

In our congregation women may serve as . . .

_____ Voters

_____ President

_____ Board members

_____ Vice President

_____ Board chair

_____ Elders

_____ Lectors

_____ Ushers

_____ Communion Assistants

_____ Other (Describe)

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?

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

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

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

12. Describe briefly your congregational practice or preference toward the following:
 - a. Writing of “own liturgies” or special services.

 - b. The frequency of the Lord’s Supper.

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

 - d. The use of common or individual cups.

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

- f. Do you have a Lutheran School, Preschool, Early Childhood Center, Day Care Center, or are you planning to start one? How do you understand the ministry of the Lutheran School?

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

- h. First communion: Before or after confirmation?

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

- j. Inter-Lutheran relationships.

- k. Inter-Christian relationships.

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

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

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

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

_____ parsonage

_____ housing allowance

_____ negotiable

(This means either of the above; housing allowance itself should always be negotiated with the pastor if offered.)

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

18. Use of this Self Evaluation Tool:

a. Who prepared the answers to this document?

b. Was a District Representative consulted?

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

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

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

Date completed: _____

Section Two

Demographics

1. Your Congregational Statistics are available for download from either LCMS.org (using the Church Locator) or LISN.LCMS.org (this website uses the congregation-specific User ID and Password utilized for submitting annual statistics to Synod). Please bring this sheet up to date and attach to this document.

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

Current 5 yrs. ago 10 yrs. ago

Average attendance:

Baptized membership:

Communicant membership:

Sunday School enrollment:

Bible Class enrollment:

Total budget for current expense:

2. The District in Partnership with Lutheran Church Extension Fund can provide you a free detailed demographic study of your community. Please contact the District office for more information. If you order that survey, please order an extra copy and include it with your profile.

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

Size of community:

Economy:

Racial composition:

Growth projections:

General description:

Does your congregation reflect the general population of the community? Explain:

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

Section Three

Financial Information

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

2. What did you pay your last pastor?

Salary:

Housing:

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

Salary:

Housing:

4. Do you offer Concordia Plans Benefits? Describe coverage (which plan and does this include only the pastor, pastor and spouse, pastor and family).

5. Compare your compensation figures with the SED guidelines in the call manual. You may also try the LCMS Salary Calculator, a tool prepared by Concordia Plan Services (<https://tc.cbiz.com/CompToolCPS/Login.aspx>). If your figures fall short, how do you think this will impact your ability to call a pastor?

6. When was the last time you had an organized stewardship campaign directed primarily towards financial commitment, beyond just asking for commitment cards to be completed? What kind of program did you use?

Section Four

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. (What have you done in the past to connect with those outside your walls?)
2. If you have one, attach a copy of your mission statement or vision statement.
3. What are your congregation's core values? (A principle that guides an organization's internal conduct as well as its relationship with the external world.)

Please give examples of how you live out (behave) each of the values you have identified.

4. What are the role expectations of the pastor beyond those things listed in the diploma of vocation and his call?
5. What are the top five abilities, skills, or talents your next pastor needs to have? (if possible, list them in priority order.)
6. How does the congregation understand the role of the following for its ministry:
 - a. The leadership (Do they supervise the pastor, set policy, manager the ministry or have some other role?)
 - b. The staff (paid or volunteer) (Do they manage the ministry, equip the laity or do they do the ministry for the laity?)

- c. The membership of the congregation for its ministry? (This is beyond things like readers, greeters, committee members, etc. Are members as a whole actively engage in visitation, evangelism, and other forms of ministry and if so in what specific ministries are they active?)

7. Budget:

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

8. Small Groups (This is where spiritual growth and discipleship occur):

- a. How many small groups meet regularly that provide opportunity for support and relationship building (not committees or boards, but things like small group Bible Studies, prayer groups and fellowship groups)?
- b. How many different members of the congregations are involved in these groups?
- c. What process is in place to promote the formation of new small groups?
- d. How many of the small groups meet outside of the church building?
- e. How many of the small groups are designed to welcome and include people from the neighborhood?

9. Participation:

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

10. Social Ministry:

- a. 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?
- b. How are relationships built between members of the congregation and the recipients?
- c. If it is not being done, what can be done to make this happen?

11. Guests:

- a. Where and when are hosts (greeters) introducing guests (visitors) to others both before and after the service?
- b. How long are they also active at the "coffee hour"?
- c. 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?
- d. What training and reminders are given to hosts and members in the pew to assist in welcoming guests?

12. Assimilation: 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?

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

14. Change:

a. What top three things are often suggested as needing to be changed in this church?

b. Are the congregation leaders willing to make the difficult decisions required for change to help your congregation reach the unchurched in your community?

c. What are those difficult decisions that need to be made?

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

15. What intentional efforts are being made to grow the kingdom? (This is not just attempts to add members, but to bring people to faith who may not necessarily join this congregation.)

16. What is being done to encourage members to regularly pray for their witness and for the conversion of those around them?

17. Outreach:

a. What do the people in your community need? How do you know this?

b. According to non-church members, what is your church's value to the neighborhood?

- c. What percentage of the newly-called pastor's time will be spent in the pastoral care of non-members?

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