

Church Worker Needs at Faith Lutheran Church

Introduction: Last month you asked me to spend some time in prayer asking the Lord to guide me to what ministry He would have me do at Faith and how that may interact and relate to the calling of another church worker. A bit of background then to my thoughts. I have been praying and seeking guidance from the Lord and from some of my pastor friends. One conversation opened my eyes to the possibility of working with the younger members of the congregation. Another conversation opened my eyes to the possibility that calling from the field rather than the seminary may be a possibility. Additionally, I am making a change to my 8th Grade Confirmation project this year which has led me to explore the category of “spiritual gifts”. Before I can expect my students to do this, I felt it important to do it myself. Based on all of these avenues, I offer the following suggestions.

Congregational Needs: Every survey for the past ten years has indicated a need for “help with the youth”. In conversations over the past four years, I find that almost as soon as you mention “youth” others will indicate need for “something for our older people”. What I gather from this is that at this moment in our congregation’s history, we need to consider congregational needs from the broadest to the more specific. Every sub-area of ministry needs support. I believe we need a second pastor.

Most Broad: Pastoral Ministry is first and foremost:

1. A Divine Call from the Lord and the congregation to Preach, Administer the Sacraments, Forgive Sins, and Teach;
2. To visit the sick and dying;
3. To pray for the congregation.

Every pastor does this work. Thus, these big-picture responsibilities would be regularly done by both pastors.

More Specific: I believe our congregation is such that we could easily split the specific work of the pastors into two categories: Ministry to the Novices in Faith (Young) **AND** Ministry to the Experienced in Faith (Old). We have a diverse congregation that encompasses all age groups and stages in life. The double category would be defined as follows:

- A. **Novice (Young):** Birth – Families with Children at Home
- B. **Experienced (Older):** Empty Nesters – Elderly and Homebound

Within these broad yet more specific ministry areas, I and a second pastor would have a much more focused outline of *how* we will carry out our Pastoral Ministry at Faith Lutheran Church.

Specific – “Novice” Ministry: Once again, this category of ministry is focused on the younger half of our congregation. In addition to the general Pastoral Duties within the congregation of preaching regularly, leading worship, praying for the congregation members, and visiting the sick and dying, this pastor would especially minister to newborns, children, Youth, young adults, college students, newly married, and families with children at home. The specific ministries that come from this area would include (and perhaps this is not exhaustive):

- A. Baptisms
- B. Newborn Visits and meals for new moms
- C. Family Ministry
- D. Children’s Ministry (Sunday School/VBS)
- E. Confirmation Ministry
- F. Youth Ministry
- G. College Ministry
- H. Young Adult Ministry
- I. Weddings (unless older adults)

Specific – “Experienced” Ministry: Once again, this category of ministry is focused on our older half of the congregation. In addition to general Pastoral Duties within the congregation of preaching regularly, leading worship, praying for the congregation members, and visiting the sick and dying, this pastor would especially

minister to empty nesters, men and women well established in their careers, those near retirement, the newly retired, grandparents, widows, homebound, elderly, and those nearing life's end. The specific ministries that come from this area would include (and perhaps this is not exhaustive):

- A. Adult Bible Studies
- B. Leadership/Volunteer Cultivation
- C. LWML/Men's Ministries
- D. Marriage Ministry
- E. Empty Nesters Ministry
- F. Retirement Ministry
- G. Grandparent/Aging Ministry
- H. Homebound Ministry
- I. Grief Ministry
- J. Funeral Preaching (unless person was in category of Novice)

Pastor Aker's Preferred Area of Ministry: Although I am interested in both specific categories of ministry and in no way want to be perceived in favoring one "group" within the congregation over another, I believe the Lord has gifted me and guided me at this stage in my life to be the pastor who takes the lead in the "Novice Ministry". I am excited about the opportunities this ministry provides me to use my gifts from the Lord. Additionally, I am excited at the prospect of clearly definable and measurable ministry areas that will be provided by such a "sectioning" of the congregation.

Qualities I believe we are looking for in an Associate Pastor: Any pastor we call will also have a heart for all members of the congregation, but we are looking for someone who would have a willingness to serve and work especially within the "Experienced Ministry" at Faith. It seems to me we want a pastor who is:

1. An outstanding and engaging teacher
2. A good preacher and worship leader who is comfortable with our "blended" style of worship
3. Comfortable reaching out and making contact with members and non-members
4. Good at building relationships and bringing people together
5. A person who has a heart for the aging
6. Likely an older pastor with about 10 years of ministry left before retirement
7. Other _____

Next Steps: As I see it, here is an outline of our next steps:

1. *Pray*
2. *Discuss and tweak this document with Elders (repeat step 1!)*
3. *Make recommendation to the Council (repeat step 1)*
4. *Communicate to the congregation (repeat step 1)*
5. *Form a Call Committee (repeat steps 1 and 4)*
6. *Meet with President Sailer (repeat steps 1 and 4)*
7. *Hammer out job descriptions for Lead Pastor and Associate Pastor in line with this document (repeat steps 1 and 4)*
8. *Receive a list of candidates and conduct interviews (repeat steps 1 and 4)*
9. *Bring candidates to the congregation at Voters' Assembly with agenda of issuing a call (repeat step 1)*
10. *Extend the Divine Call to the candidate of choice (repeat steps 1 and 4)*
11. *Repeat process (if necessary) until our Call is accepted*

Prayer: Lord of the Church, Jesus Christ, thank you for our ministry at Faith and for the wonderful members of our congregation. Thank you for the partnership that you raise between pastor(s) and laity. Thank you for the guidance that you have provided us in ministry so far and now bless us with continued wisdom as we take the next steps in seeking a pastor to help us in the ministry work you have set before us. Come to us and serve us in your powerful Gospel through Word and Sacrament ministry and through our working together to be the "Light of the World" here in Sioux Falls! Continue to bless our congregation and work! Amen.