

ONE CONGREGATION'S UNDERSTANDING OF ITSELF AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE PASTOR

The following paragraphs offer a way in which one congregation (Fictional name: Shalom Lutheran Church) gave expression to its understanding about its own history, direction, and needs, and how these translated into a set of expectations for its next pastor.

OUR PERSPECTIVE OF SHALOM LUTHERAN CHURCH'S MINISTRIES AND PASTORAL NEEDS

Date

Dear President Newman,

During our ____ year history, we have been richly blessed with pastors who, through the leading of the Holy Spirit, have preached and taught God's Word to us, and who have faithfully administered the Sacraments for our spiritual strengthening. We pray for a pastor who will continue to serve the Lord at Shalom Lutheran Church in this same manner.

Also, we have been blessed by stimulating and varied settings for worship. Our Director of Music, _____, serves a dual calling to the church and to Shalom Lutheran School. He actively participates with the pastor in planning worship services around a variety of Lutheran liturgies that often includes choirs and accompaniment by piano, organ, stringed and brass instruments. As yet, we have not planned for purchasing the new hymnal, but we anticipate beginning the process soon. Presently, we have a single worship on Sunday, although if our growth in attendance continues, we will return to two services because of seating and parking limitations. We pray for a pastor who enjoys variety in worship and who will continue to lead in its planning and preparation.

Our congregation follows a planning process for most of its 10 departments that is structured according to program areas and long-range and short-range objectives. The programs are being implemented by lay leadership and active committees involving more than 125 people. The scope and effectiveness of this planning process will benefit from a continuing pastoral involvement in which the pastor serves as a resource person in planning and a motivator in attaining successful implementation. We pray for a pastor who has leadership and organizational skills to help provide ideas, give encouragement, and develop the God-given skills of members.

Shalom Lutheran Church places much emphasis on Christian education. We support Shalom Lutheran School, which has a program for kindergarten through grade eight. For adults we normally have two Sunday morning Bible studies, four mid-week Bible studies in homes, and a core of members who have been trained and are capable of leading studies. Our Sunday school in the pre-confirmation ages could benefit from regular pastoral involvement in teaching God's Word and encouraging its study. In addition, our worship service has occasionally included special object lessons and songs for young children, and this has been a special blessing to our youth. We pray for a pastor who supports Christian education at all age levels and will be an active participant in both our parish and parochial education program.

Our congregation, perhaps because of its urban setting, has need for all types of counseling. The membership has benefited from skilled professional counseling by our previous pastor and the congregation has supported seminars and workshops for improving his counseling skills. We pray for a pastor who is willing and able to counsel others.

Our area is also one where people move rather frequently. We perceive our congregation as being very friendly toward strangers and welcome those who visit and those who wish to join us. We have a process administered by the board of elders for introducing, informing, and integrating new members into active parish life. We welcome members of all nationalities and ethnic backgrounds and in recent years we have been blessed by an increasingly diverse heritage. Usually new members are asked to participate in important committees within a few months after joining. Among our organizations that provide fellowship opportunities, along with other important functions, are the Mary and Martha Guild, made up of five circles, the Shalom Adult Fellowship, the Young Adult Fellowship, the Lutheran Youth Fellowship, Scouting, adult and youth choirs, and Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Branches. We pray for a pastor who is warm, friendly, and loving in his interaction with people and who can stimulate those feelings in others. We also pray for a pastor who values fellowship and has the capacity to direct its use to the spiritual up building of our members.

Historically, we have been served by a staff consisting of the pastor, a part-time (called) director of music, a full-time secretary, and a part-time janitor. The seven teachers who belong to Shalom have voluntarily teamed together to support the pastor and have followed the practice of meeting at least twice a year to evaluate their roles in the parish. Recently, we began the process of calling an associate pastor to work primarily in Christian education and youth ministry. This process has now been stopped until the senior pastoral office is again filled. At that time we probably will be receptive to calling a second pastor. We pray for a pastor with physical abilities by way of age, health, and stamina to deal with our challenging ministry. We further pray that he will be able to work effectively with other professional staff, such as the school faculty and a possible second pastor.

In summary, we pray for a pastor who is filled with the Holy Spirit to teach us, lead us and stimulate us to grow in Christ and to know Him better and, in knowing Him better, to help others to know Him also. These things are our prayers, but above all, we pray that God's will may be done to His glory.

Yours in Christ,

_____ Call Committee
Congregation Name

_____, Chairman
Name