

Reflections on Ministry and Context  
First Lutheran Church

Lincoln, NE

Completed:



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

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*Congregations and Organizations in the Call Process are invited to expand their Ministry Site Profile (MSP) by reflecting on the several key aspects of ministry and context given below. You are encouraged to give short, thoughtful answers (a maximum of 250 words) on at least four of the seven topics. This form is optional unless specifically requested by a synod bishop. The form is submitted electronically and becomes a part of the Ministry Site's MSP.*

1. What key issues or concerns of our church and society are reflected in the ministry that is centered in your congregation or organization?

**Being a welcoming congregation. FLC welcomes all regardless of background, individual beliefs, personal struggles, or identity, as a child of God and member of our community. There is room for all at the table.**

**Being a community partner, FLC is engaged in numerous initiatives to support our neighbors in need. Since the 1970's, FLC has participated in the Crop Walk. In 2014 we began our half-day community service project, "God's Work, Our Hands," where members help with yard work, minor home repairs, etc. FLC's Kicks for Kids provides new shoes and socks for school children. We regularly support Lutheran Metro Food Pantry, Matt Talbot Community Kitchen, Tabitha Meals on Wheels, FoodNet, and the Backpack Program.**

**The congregation also opens its doors to community groups. Prior to the pandemic there were 10 outside organizations that used the church facility for meetings. Groups included: Alcoholic Anonymous (four separate groups), Election Commission, Friendship Force, Genealogical Society, MADD Impact Panels, a Cub Scout pack, Active and Retired Federal Workers, Camp Carol Joy Holling, Faith Coalition Lancaster County, and Lincoln Literacy. Individuals in the congregation have been trained in the ELCA's AMMPARO program to be Guardian Angels, who accompany migrant children through the court system.**

2. How do the stewardship practices and allocation of financial resources of the congregation or organization reflect your priorities for mission?

**The congregation budgets for and donates a portion of its receipts to over a dozen different organizations each year. In 2020, 17% of the budget was for benevolence. In 2021 it will be 16%. The Nebraska Synod received 11% of our income in 2020. Due to the mortgage for the building renovation, benevolence to the Synod was reduced by 1% last year and by another 1% for 2021. The tradition at FLC has been to "double tithe."**

**Organizations that regularly receive support from the congregation include: World Hunger, Backpack/Food Bank/Bridge, Lutheran Metro Food Pantry, Bread for the World, Global Mission in Action, Lutheran Family Services, Fresh Start, Tabitha Meals on Wheels, and Camp Carol Joy Holling.**

3. In what ways is the membership of your congregation or organization similar or different from the people of the neighborhood in which you are located?

4. Identify the three most significant or formative events in the history of your congregation or organization.



5. Describe the way the congregation or organization is currently involved in community and ecumenical partnerships.

6. Has your congregation or organization had significant conflict in recent history and, if so, what have you learned from that experience?

**During the pandemic FLC lost all of its rostered staff. This was due neither to the pandemic, nor to conflict with the congregation, but the losses have created feelings of grief, fear, and uncertainty. Questions naturally have arisen. How are we to be a church when we can't meet in person? How do we carry on with limited leadership? Was there conflict we were unaware of that caused these staff departures? Why couldn't we just hire our associate pastor? Why do we need coterminous contracts for rostered staff?**

**Staff and Council have addressed these and other questions with love and patience. They have worked long hours to ensure there is open communication with the congregation, that resources are available, and meetings continue online when we cannot meet in person. Volunteers have conducted monthly calls to all households since March, so members feel they are cared for.**

**We have learned that we are resilient. We have learned to connect and operate in new ways, while continuing to show love and care to our members and our community. We have learned to be present to one another, even when we are not physically near.**

7. Describe your physical facilities: construction date, purpose, capacity, date of last renovation, any deferred maintenance, and any plans for upgrading.

**FLC's current building was constructed in 1966, with subsequent additions in 1982 and 1997. A third major renovation project was completed in May 2020, its purpose to provide better accessibility in the spirit of our Welcoming Statement.**

**Accessible restrooms were added throughout the building. The choir area was moved from the loft to the main level of the sanctuary. The sanctuary was widened, the chancel redesigned, new pews were installed, and the floor was retiled. A new entrance/gathering area allows for better traffic flows to and from the sanctuary. Outside, a portico was built to allow for easier pick up and drop off, and to protect those coming and going from the elements.**

**The kitchen was significantly expanded and updated with new appliances and pantry, and a break room was added in the lower level.**

**Improvements in the education wing, including the creation of an outdoor classroom, have allowed this area to be rented out as a day care and preschool facility.**

**FLC recently replaced a skylight near the activity center that had been leaking for years. The roof, which is over 50 years old, is currently being evaluated by the insurance company after a hailstorm in April, 2020.**