

Dear ELC members

Many of you participated in our short survey recently. We greatly appreciate your input which helped us define some important characteristics of our church. We got a pretty good response (75) which was certainly significant enough to meet our objective.

We are following the synod's process for defining and selecting additional staff. The synod rightly points out that significant thought should be given to three aspects of a church before selecting staff members. Such a focus should insure a total fit for the new staffer.

The three are:

1. The demographics and needs of the community the church serves
2. Some important characteristics about the church and its culture
3. The specifics concerning the job (Tasks, responsibilities and accountabilities as well as the specifics of the job offered)

Your input helped us with the second aspect. Here is what we learned from your input.

Question 1...What excites you about the church right now?

Wow, you listed some 84 items. It was wonderful to see such a robust list. The most mentioned items were:

Music ministries

Youth programs

Powerful and fulfilling worship each week

The open and welcoming feeling of our people

Our Pastor's leadership

Work with kids and families

Serving outside the church

Young people having mission opportunities

Grove Sale & Christmas Fair

Question 2...Concerning our participation in the synod and Evangelical Lutheran Church of America:

Here is what you said about that:

Our leaders keep us connected

We follow the guidelines and routines of the synod

The synod should use us as their "best practices" model

We contribute funds generously

The synod modifies its position on social issues to become more relevant to the secular world or other similar comments

Question 3 ...What are our top assets?

Respondents were to choose three. The most mentioned are:

- A loving congregation (mentioned by 32% of respondents)**
- Pastor Vera (mentioned by 31% of respondents)**
- Active members who participate (mentioned by 19% of respondents)**
- Good staff (mentioned by 13% of respondents)**
- Our music (mentioned by 12% of respondents)**
- Katie and her programs (mentioned by 12% of respondents)**
- Bible based congregation and messages (mentioned by 8% of respondents)**
- Our property (mentioned by 8% of respondents)**
- Our outreach (mentioned by 7% of respondents)**

Question 4...What obstacles do we need to overcome?

Respondents were to choose any seen and no specific number was solicited. The most mentioned responses are:

- More empowerment of staff members (mentioned by 24% of responses)**
- There are no real obstacles (mentioned by 22% of responses)**
- The expectations of the pastor (for herself) are unrealistically high (mentioned by 8% of responses)**
- A small number of people carry the load (mentioned by 8% of responses)**
- There are some political factions within the church (mentioned by 8% of responses)**

Question 5...What should be our top mission priorities?

Respondents were to choose three. The most mentioned were:

- Local outreach opportunities (mentioned by 22% of respondents)**
- Continue to prioritize youth Christian education (mentioned by 13% of respondents)**
- Don't know (mentioned by 13% of respondents)**
- More focus on the fact that our mission comes from God & the idea of better living the faith (mentioned by 12% of respondents)**
- More support for poor and handicapped including mission trips (mentioned by 7% of respondents)**
- Move more church authority to members..or similar comments (mentioned by 7% of respondents)**
- More Christian education, learning the Word (mentioned by 5% of respondents)**
- Outreach to youth and young adults (mentioned by 5% of respondents)**

Question 6... Reflecting on the balance between a formal vs. informal culture:

According to respondent input we are neither very formal nor very informal, but rather we have balance between the two. 82.8% chose either somewhat formal or somewhat informal.

Question 7...Reflecting on our orientation to be driven by defined goals or not:

93.9% of respondents selected that we are either clearly or somewhat goal driven.

Question 8...Dealing with whether members see us as having an economically diverse membership:

60.8% of respondents believe we are very or somewhat diverse in terms of economics.

Question 9...Regarding whether we are open to new ideas vs. a focus on “tried and true” principles:

72.4% of respondents do believe we are either very welcoming or somewhat welcoming to new and challenging ideas.

Question 10...Regarding whether we are leader led or group led as an organization:

71% of respondents believe we are strongly or somewhat reliant on leaders for our direction

Question 11...Regarding if we use conflict constructively or whether we avoid it:

Here we are somewhat split. 62.3% feel we handle conflict constructively or somewhat constructively, but a significant number, 37.7% believe we avoid or somewhat avoid conflict.

Question 12...Regarding whether we are generous in sharing our facility:

85.6% believe we allow great or significant use of our facility.

Question 13...Regarding whether our ministry exists outside our walls or not:

Here we have overwhelming agreement with 95.5% agreeing that we train or somewhat train to minister outside our walls.

Question 14...Regarding whether we focus on beliefs or actions:

Respondents report balance on this question. With the balance being tipped towards beliefs with 60.9% believing we either strongly or somewhat focus on beliefs, while a significant 39.1% selected a focus on actions.

Question 15...Regarding how Lutheran we are in our practices:

Here there is a strong 91.3% response that we are either very or somewhat Lutheran in our practice.

Question 16...Regarding how active we are in the activities of the synod:

A strong 81.8% of respondents chose either that we are very or somewhat active in the synod.

Question 17...Regarding whether we focus on Biblical studies or contemporary issues:

Again we have a strong consensus with 81.8% selecting that we focus highly or generally focus on Biblical studies vs. contemporary issues.

Summary: Our purpose was always to define our culture as a step in adding a new staff member. With your help, we have done so. It has never been our purpose to alter our culture or pass judgment upon it. However, it seems appropriate to comment that while some improvement is always possible, we have a very strong and healthy culture. The data also points clearly to the reasons. In short, we have a great congregation of members who are willing to step up and give of themselves and of their talents for the glory of God and our church. It is also clear that we are well led by our Pastor and a talented and dedicated staff.

Jim Rohrer
Chair, Board of Personnel