

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church  
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## **Introduction**

St. John Lutheran Church will be transitioning leadership as our lead pastor retires later this year. We are confident that the Holy Spirit is preparing a call to our new leader, and we have already committed to pray for that person. Currently, we are receiving inquiries and applications. Interviews will begin after June 15. If you are not on the roster of our denomination, please contact us for more information about potential next steps and possibilities. If the Spirit is moving you, we want to hear from you!

## **Lead Pastor - Priorities**

1. Facilitate and guide vision of the congregation and its leadership towards God's future for this ministry
2. Preaching and communication that calls and equips
3. Lead continued development of discipleship culture, empowerment of the laity, and outreach to the community
4. Invest in missional leaders and families to express an outward focus through Missional Communities
5. Plan and lead worship with music leadership staff
6. Guide the function of resource ministries toward the congregation's mission
7. Build on opportunities to become an equipping center for other congregations

## **Characteristics and Competencies we look for in a Lead Pastor**

- Missional ministry leadership experience
- Spirit led, prayerful and discerning; invests in abiding in Christ, high integrity and character
- Preaching that connects to both newcomers and growing disciples
- Effective and healthy communication with individuals and teams
- Discipler and coach; missional and outreach focused
- Grounded in Lutheran theology
- Engaged in Church's wider mission - local and global

## **Who we are as a congregation?**

St John Lutheran Church has invested heavily (financially, emotionally, spiritually) in moving from an institutional model of managed ministry toward a culture that makes disciples of Jesus who can make more disciples. When Jesus said, "You will do greater things than me" he meant everyone, especially an Empowered Laity who know how to preach, teach, and heal in the name of Jesus and can do so walking in step with the Holy Spirit.

Our values create an UP-IN-OUT culture; the way we follow Jesus.

- We are in step with what the Holy Spirit is doing
- We are a healthy environment for spiritual growth
- We are a discipling culture
- We are families on mission

We know who God has called us to be. While we are not large, we continually witness the Spirit's transformative power as we follow Him. We see lives changed, people healed, and hope restored. We see people who once felt intimidated by sharing the Gospel, now naturally reaching out and connecting with others in confidence and wonder. We see disciples of Jesus who know how to make more disciples. The Spirit is moving! We listen, follow, and celebrate, telling the stories of what He is doing in and through us.

Our primary goal is to live out our calling as empowered disciples of Jesus, accepting Him into all aspects of our lives by inspiring, equipping and coaching our people to live this mission. In our surrounding community, our neighbors, co-workers and friends have predominantly never experienced a relationship with Jesus and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We are the priesthood of all believers, empowered to take the Good News to people of peace, the people whom the Spirit has prepared for us.

### **Our Strengths:**

1. Empowered disciples: We have disciples who know how to make disciples, and some are very skilled coaches. Our 25 lay pastors offer healing prayer and anointing in every worship service. Some of them have preached and shared ministry experience from the pulpit. Five of our lay pastors preside over the Lord's Supper in worship services. Other lay pastors offer the Lord's Supper in retreat and missional community settings, as to those who are hospitalized or housebound.
2. Moving worship: We have excellent worship music leadership for both traditional and contemporary worship styles. Each leader has developed an impressive team of musicians and singers. They truly lead the congregation into the worship experience, rather than perform.
3. Sacred reflection: As the people of St John have grown in prayer and listening to the Holy Spirit, it has become natural to allow time for sacred, personal reflection through lighting candles at the altar, healing prayer, and anointing of individuals and families. This time is reverent and relaxed, never rushed. Primarily this happens during worship services, but as it has become part of our identity, we have found it ministers during funerals and other special occasions.
4. A balance of UP-IN-OUT ministry: As a faith community, we have intentionally grown our OUT ministry component through development of ministry partnerships. We offer free space to ethnically, economically and denominationally diverse congregations because *we will all share heaven together*. We look for ways to partner together to reach our surrounding community. We also dedicate human, financial, and space resources for the county's cold weather shelter, meals for food-vulnerable students from the elementary school next door, a large home school co-op, and a summer camp for special needs children. For more than a decade, our global partnership with Good Samaritan Orphanage in Mbeya, Tanzania has enhanced the lives of AIDS orphans and their surrounding village.

## **Our mission priorities for the near future:**

1. Equipping young people and young families in a world that does not know Christ, that they will be His light into it. (We know that this is true for any age group, however, strengthening young disciples will especially build the Kingdom into the future.)
2. Deepen the competency and empowerment of disciples to plant ministry in their own context.
3. Explore how this faith community might be called to be an equipping center for other ministries.

## **Welcome to Columbia, MD**

Columbia is a diverse planned city that rapidly emerged 50 years ago when developer James Rouse acquired expansive land from the local farming community. It has become a bedroom community to both Baltimore and Washington, as well as various federal employers along the I-95 corridor.

- Work settings and schools in this community are racially and culturally diverse. Religious settings in this community tend to gather as ethnically and culturally segregated populations, rather than blended.
- Routinely in the top 5 wealthiest counties in America. There are still the poor and homeless, and more apparent because of wealth and a high standard of living. Debt can be a factor for many, even the wealthy.
- Highly educated residences, many with advanced degrees
- Education is a primary draw for families to Howard County with some of the best schools in the nation. This drives housing prices up. Usually a 2 parent, 2 career household to afford living here for the children's schools.
- Many are employed by the federal government, as well as military members and contractors who support it. Commutes are often long and challenging.
- Family life centers around children's school and extra activities, especially team sports. Many sports and marching band groups have travel team schedules that take the family away for the weekend.
- The surrounding community is 90% unchurched as a lifestyle choice. We see families who are highly stressed and over-scheduled. While Columbia was founded on created neighborhoods, family lifestyle often gets in the way of true community and friendships.