

# Position Description

(Created in conjunction with the LCMS Office of National Mission)

## Parish Pastor

- The official language of the *Supplement to the Diploma of Vocation for Pastor* expresses the expectations of a parish pastor in this way:

“In the name of the Triune God and by His authority we hereby authorize and obligate you:

- To administer to us the Word of God in its full truth and purity as contained in the Sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and as set forth in the confessional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as found in the Book of Concord;
- To administer the holy sacraments in accordance with their divine institution;
- To perform the functions of a pastor in an evangelical manner; to aid, counsel, and guide members of all ages and social conditions; to visit the sick and the dying; to admonish the indifferent and the erring;
- To guard and promote faithfully the spiritual welfare of the members of this congregation, in particular to instruct the catechumens, both children and adults, in the Word of God and thus prepare them for communicant membership in the church;
- To guide the congregation in applying the divinely ordained discipline of the church according to the Word of God;
- To promote and guide the mission activity of the congregation as it is related to the local community and to the endeavors of the Synod and its districts, in particular to train workers and guide them in evangelism and to enlist the support of the congregation for mission work;
- To assist the congregation in adopting administrative policies and procedures that will help it carry out the mission of a Christian congregation;
- To serve the congregation as an example of Christian conduct; to endeavor earnestly to live in Christian unity with the members of the congregation, fellow workers, and sister congregations in the Synod; and by the grace of God to do everything possible for the edification of the congregation and the upbuilding of the church of Christ.”

In a practical manner of speaking, the obligations listed above are accomplished through some or all of the activities listed below.

## Administration

Ex-officio member (with varying levels of expectation to provide opening devotion, closing prayer, and meeting agenda) for the following:

- Church Council
  - Board of Elders
  - Board of Education
  - Board of Stewardship
  - Board of Evangelism
  - Board of Trustees
- Induction and orientation of new Board members
  - Strategic vision – long range planning
  - Participation in building the annual congregational budget
  - Short range planning (includes):
    - Evaluation, identification, and acquisition of materials for annual programs
      - Stewardship drive
      - Church – family picnic
      - Vacation Bible School
      - Annual community events
      - Sunday School
    - Recruitment of personnel to facilitate annual programs
    - Development and dissemination of publicity for annual programs
  - Staff leadership
    - Participate in the selection process for staff
    - Staff meetings
    - Staff support
      - Devotion/spiritual growth
      - Morale – “esprit-de-corps”
      - Evaluations
      - Discipline/discharge

- 
- Correspondence
    - U.S. Mail
    - Telephone
    - Email
    - Communication with denominational entities
    - Membership communication
  - Weekly bulletin
    - Material
      - Worship guide
      - Information related to parish life
    - Layout
    - Printing
  - Newsletter
    - Gather material
    - Layout
    - Printing and preparation for distribution (bulk mailing)
  - Website
  - Oversight and purchase of supplies
    - Materials connected to special observances and celebrations
    - Paper and printing supplies
    - Janitorial and groundskeeping supplies
  - Room setup for meetings
  - Maintain regular office hours for member accessibility

## Worship

- Long range – strategic planning for
  - Annually recurring festivals and celebrations
  - Denominational/congregational anniversaries and celebrations
  - Weekly worship
    - Sunday (Saturday)
    - Midweek
      - > Hymn selection
      - > Special Music
      - > Schedule guest preachers for special occasions/vacation
    - Children’s Chapel
      - > Sermon Themes
      - > Newsletter “Encouragement from Pastor”
- Execution
  - Weekend (1-3 services)
  - Midweek
  - Children’s Chapel
  - Nursing home (1 or more)
  - Weddings
  - Funerals
  - Holidays and Festivals
  - Special celebrations (congregational, family, and community)

## Teaching

- Adult Bible Study
  - Sunday (Saturday)
  - Midweek
  - Inspirational/devotional for members' personal spiritual growth
- Junior Confirmation
  - Daily (Monday – Friday)
  - Midweek
- Adult inquirer's
- Special event (ie. pre-baptism)

**On-call crisis availability** to all members and staff – 24 hours/day-7days/week

## Visitation

- Private Confession/Absolution
- Every member
- Hospital
- Shut-in
- Bereavement
- Visitor to worship
- New to community
- Delinquent members

## Counseling

- Premarital
- Marital conflict
- Family conflict
- Member conflict
- Individual dysfunction

## Preparation-Study-Prayer-Meditation

- Sermon
- Classroom
- Special events (congregational, family, community)

## Continuing Education

**Provide a model of Christian decorum, extending to members of his family** – a pastor is rarely “off-duty.” Pressures and varying expectations exist when the pastor is functioning in daily and family activities in the community, not connected to “pastoral responsibilities.” These pressures are not limited to members (especially in a small community), as everyone knows he’s “the pastor.”

**Discernment related to prioritizing member expectations** – a pastor’s work is really never “done.” Many different individuals will constrain the pastor with expectations (some of them unrealistic) based upon their own perceptions and preferences.

**Maintain a balanced connection with every member** – avoiding the appearance of favoritism to, and overly-close relationships with, any member or member family.

January 26, 2013