

**St. Paul
Lutheran Church - Startown**

Congregational Study

May 2011

**Report and
Summary Comments**



North Carolina Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

June 9, 2011

Mr. Bradley Scronce
Mr. Dick Walker
St. Paul Lutheran Church
3761 Startown Rd.
Newton, NC 28658

Dear Friends at St. Paul:

Thank you for your good work and long attention spans in compiling the data in this study. I appreciated your warm welcome and hospitality as we gathered for food, fellowship and conversation on Wednesday, May 25. Approximately 50 people gathered in 8 small groups to discuss the ministry at St. Paul. I am enclosing the answers as they appeared on the newsprint, as well as some question by question observations. None of this is scientific, and much is open to interpretation. I am also including a Percept Demographics study of your area and a trend report from the ELCA. Please use all of this information for conversation and study among yourselves, and to help you more fully develop a clear picture of your ministry and the type of pastor you will need to lead you into the future. Please be in touch once your call committee has been trained so that we can begin to send names of potential candidates.

You all continue to be in my prayers as we seek to determine whom it is that God is calling to be your next pastor.

Grace and Peace,

The Rev. Philip T. Tonnesen,
Bishop's Staff – NC Synod

Cc: Bishop's Staff

St. Paul - Startown Self Study May, 2011

1. Some important events in the history of congregation are:

- 100 year anniversary – We've made it over 100 years (8)
- Pavilion added in 2001 (4)
- Hand bell choirs established for adult and youth (3)
- Scouting program established (3)
- Church expansion (2)
- Loss of pastors: Managed to runoff 5 pastors in 27 years, average 1 every 6 years (2)
- Mission Campus building (2)
- Live nativity (2)
- Rebuilding after fire in 1920s (2)
- Sanctuary and building major renovation (2)

AGAPE Day Camp started

Baptisms/confirmation

Children's programs like KFC

Choir Director (paid) added

Education building built in 1955

Fire (burned) of original church in 1922

Food Drives

Great pastors who have led the congregation

Mission property acquisition

Mission Trips

Music Director hiring

Outreach congregation (key) when Hurricane Hugo hit our area

Pastor Glen Yount in 1944 – 1st full time pastor

Present structure built in 1924

Trunk n Treat

Vicar program started in 1990s

Volunteer programs started: Hospice, CVMC, Corner Table, ECCCM

Youth mission trips to Forest City

2. Our most important current ministries are...

- Agape day camp at Pavilion (5)
- Youth groups' mission trips (5)
- Corner table (4)
- Food Drive annually (4)
- Live nativity at Christmas for community (4)
- Outreach: ECCM, Soup Kitchen, Scouts, Youth, AA, Seniors, Singles (3)
- Children's ministry Thursday (2)
- Communion (2)
- ECCCCM food drive (2)
- Kure Beach Retreat (2)
- Music Ministry (2)
- Sunday School (2)

Bible School

Bloodmobile

Confirmation

Hospice

In As Much

KFC and Little Lams

Lay ministries

Learning ministries/Puppets

Lent and Advent service

Scouting (boy & girl)

Sunday service

Support of synod and benevolence by congregation

VBS

VCS

Volunteer programs

WELCA

3. In the next few years I hope we can:

- Music program for youth build and established (2)
- Outreach ministries continue and grow (2)
- Membership increased with by attracting new, active members (3)
- Music programs expanded brought back to the level once were (3)
- Youth programs expanded and continue to move forward (3)

Attendance increased

Become Alive!

Become unified

Bell choir added back

Building upgrades

Children's ministry to be larger

Community outreach grown

Community outreach program expanded

Congregation growth

Congregation healing

Congregation increased (expand)

Congregation's vitality restored

Encouraging all to become involved

Evangelism in community

Find a pastor

Giving increased – Stewardship

Grow in Christ

Hire a pastor for the long term

Learn to forgive

Men's group development

Mission campus utilization

Pay the bills

Praying and supporting each other continued

Senior program growth

Sharing and fellowship development with other churches/denominations

Special occasion dinners, outings, etc.

Spiritual growth

Sport League at church (volleyball, softball, etc.)

Sunday school attendance renewed

Van: get a new one

WELCA growth

Young adult program started

4. Before we call a pastor, we need to . . .

- Pray consistently for guidance and commonality of purpose (6)
- Forgive and forget (2)

Agree to disagree

Be honest with ourselves

Come together more in unity as a congregation

Continue to work together

Establish a "Vision"

Exhibit patience

Find peace as a congregation

Increase giving

Learn to Love

Merge into one congregation from two services, hopefully

Outreach built back up to the community

Patience

Personal commitment of each member to nurture and support the will of the group

Prayerfully consider what we're looking for in a pastor

Read "in Pursuit of God" by A. W. Towcer (?)

Realize no one is perfect

Recommit ourselves to the church

Review congregational needs

Set priorities for pastor and church

Spiritual growth

Support church ministries

Unify the congregation

5. Our next pastor should be someone who is . . .

- Able to enjoy and work with all age groups in congregation (5)
- Energetic (very) (4)
- Good sense of humor (2)
- Innovative (2)
- Preach Gospel and Bible (2)
- Visits shut-ins and sick (2)
- Thick skinned (2)
- Well-organized (2)

Active with children

Allows the congregation to love and support him/her

Attentive, caring

Be able to work 36 hours in a 24 hour day

Born leader

Christian leadership qualities are evident

Committed to God

Compassionate

Conventional Lutheran who can teach our beliefs

Deliver a good sermon/message

Does not try to please everyone

Driven

Effective Liturgist

Fits our congregation

Hardworking

Holy Spirit inspired

Honest with congregation

Inspirational; and motivational

Like Pastor Ken

Loves

Motivator (he can't do it all himself)

Open minded

Outgoing

Self motivated, not a follower

Sermons interesting

Sets good example

Supports the congregation

Understanding

Visits prospective members

Well spoken

Well-rounded

Young

CONGREGATIONAL STUDY SUMMARY

St. Paul, Startown

QUESTION 1: Important events in the history of this congregation are:

The majority of the responses in this category revolved around the long and rich history of the congregation; including building projects and the Mission Campus acquisition. Several of groups also mentioned the significance of the coming and going of several of the pastors who have served the congregation.

QUESTION 2: Our most important current ministries are:

It's obvious that St. Paul's supports the entire range of congregational members, from youth to active seniors. Items related to Youth Ministry clearly top the chart. It is also significant to note that several of the groups mentioned items related to outreach to the community; i.e. Corner Table, Food Drive, Live Nativity, ECCCM, etc.

QUESTION 3: In the next few years I hope we can:

There was good discussion for this section which suggests to me that folks are excited about the future of St. Paul. Most groups mentioned responses that deal with growth; mostly in terms of increasing membership and commitment. Notice how many times the following words are mentioned; grow, expand, recruit, increase, add, etc. As noted in the previous questions, many of groups also mentioned things related to youth activities and outreach in the community.

QUESTION 4: Before we call a pastor we need to:

Thanks be to God that six of the groups mentioned prayer. It will be extremely important for every member of St. Paul's to pray for your council, call committee, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As I have mentioned several times, the goal in this process is to determine whom it is that God is calling to be your next pastor. Several of the groups mentioned things related to "finding peace" and moving on. It is clear that St. Paul's has had a trying couple of years, but for the most part, folks appear to be ready to focus on the future as it relates to mission and ministry. Good

communication during this process will be very important so that all members are aware of where things are in the call process. With transition comes change, and I commend you for thinking creatively and openly about what the future might hold.

Question 5: Our next pastor should be someone who:

It is obvious that your next pastor will need to have good people skills, including the ability to laugh, listen well and work with all age groups. A good worship leader and a pastor who enjoys visiting members and prospective members will be important as well. As we talked about, I've yet to meet the pastor that has all the gifts/qualities that you list, so your call committee will need to pay attention to particular gifts that will benefit the ministry of St. Paul's as you look to the future.

This congregational study will be used by the call committee to develop questions and discussions with pastoral candidates. If you have questions or concerns about the study, you may discuss them with a member of the call committee. The call committee will prayerfully seek to do the will of God through the call process. Please pray for the call committee, the congregation and the pastor that God is preparing to shepherd the St. Paul – Startown congregation. The call committee members are: Dick Walker - Chair, Paul Lail, Brandon Williams, Sharon Frye, Joyce Warren and Sharron Scronce.