

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America – www.elca.org

Ministry Site Profile (MSP)

The Conference of Bishops has affirmed this revised form for use by all call committees in all synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

A sample of this form can be located following the instructions below. This can aid in filling out the form by printing copies and working on it before entering the form online which requires you to set up an account.

Please access the Ministry Site Profile at:

www.elca.org

Click on the icon saying “Call Process” located at the top of the ELCA home page. Click on “Ministry Sites” on the left side of the page that appears. On the right side is an icon to print a Sample of the MSP. Further down the page is the Ministry Site Profile button for entering and submitting your MSP.

Save the information and make sure whoever enters the information shares the access information (user name and password) with at least one other person.

The synod office cannot access your login information, so please share this information with someone else within the congregation.

On Part V: Call Process Contact Person – Jill Roznowski should be listed, Title is Administrative Assistant to the Bishop, Phone is 920-734-5381, Email is jill.roznowski@ecsw.org

Listing Jill as the Call Process Administrator releases your MSP to the synod office so that the call process can proceed!

MINISTRY SITE PROFILE PROCESS

Introduction

Development of the Ministry Site Profile (MSP) is very important because:

- 1) It provides the opportunity to review and assess the mission and ministry of the Congregation.
- 2) It provides the Call Committee with basic information and a description of leadership needs which will guide their work.
- 3) The MSP assists the Bishop's staff in recommending candidates to the Call Committee.
- 4) The MSP provides a picture of the Congregation and the community surrounding it for the candidates as they consider interviewing with the Congregation.

TIME FRAME: 3 – 6 months

The Congregation Council appoints 6-9 people who will be responsible for overseeing the MSP Process and completion of the MSP.

The **MSP Committee** is separate from the **Call Committee**. The **Call Committee** serves *after* the MSP process is complete. The Call Committee will receive names from the Synod, determine the candidate visit and interview process, conduct interviews and recommend a candidate to the Council for review and recommendation to the congregation. The Call Committee is established in compliance with Congregation's constitution. There should be representation from the MSP Committee on the Call Committee. This provides continuity and insight into the MSP.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the MSP Process is to enable the Congregation to:

- Claim ownership of the mission of the Congregation and the Call Process
- Review the Congregation's life and mission as the Church, the Body of Christ
- Discuss the Congregation's challenges & opportunities for the next 5 years
- Evaluate the Congregation's present strengths & areas that need strengthening
- Identify resources necessary to fulfill the mission of the Congregation, especially mission tasks to reach out to your own neighborhood.
- Arrive at a current understanding of the vision and mission of the Congregation
- Identify the gifts and vision that are most important for the next pastor to possess

The MSP Process

- The MSP Committee leads a process that seeks to define future directions and priorities for the mission and ministry of the congregation by involving the congregation.
- The MSP Committee plans an interactive process involving the Congregation which seeks input for developing a vision for mission and compiling data for the MSP.
- Synod staff is available to help support the MSP process and answer any questions.

The expected outcomes of the MSP process:

1. A statement of mission including completion of the Ministry Site Profile.
2. A definition of the outreach expectations for ministry to the community surrounding the Congregation.
3. Identification of the Mission Partnerships of the congregation within the community, in the Synod, and beyond.
4. A defined commitment to at least 4 mission strategies for the congregation for the next 5 years in order to grow in breadth and depth.

The Ministry Site Profile Committee:

- Select a chairperson, an MSP writer, & a PR person to do updates to the Congregation.
- Team member qualities looked for: organization, good communication, positive spirit, varied networking connections, creative/strategic thinking, and open minded.
- The MSP Committee should seek to increase the church member's awareness of and participation in the mission of the congregation.
- The MSP Committee should help the congregation see itself through the eyes of their neighborhood, community, and in the larger picture of being a congregation in the ELCA
- Finally, they should see involvement of community resources, other congregations and the Synod Staff as valuable to this process.

MSP COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The persons selected are responsible for focusing on the following areas:

- *Assessment of the Congregation's history and how it functions now.
- * Identifying the Congregation's mission and direction for the next five years.
- *Determining concrete steps for carrying out the defined mission strategy.
- *Completing the ELCA Ministry Site Profile.

The Committee will need to be made up of people who can make a serious time commitment. It will be best served by persons who are not "stuck" in their own personal ideas and visions for the Congregation. They must be able to consider a broad perspective of ministry, and they must be able to represent the various demographics and opinions within the congregation. It is helpful to have some members who understand the Lutheran heritage and structures of the ELCA.

The Ministry Site Profile

This is a form used throughout the ELCA. The Ministry Site Profile has five parts:

Part I. Who We Are (Items 1 through 5)

- Before recording membership or attendance statistics, talk to the people responsible for these numbers. When was the last time the membership rolls were updated? How accurate are your church records? What is the policy for maintaining accurate records? (The Interim Pastor can help if work needs to be done in this area.)

Part II- Our Vision For Mission (Items 6-9)

- As you think of your congregation and the way it tends to live out its faith life and pursue its mission, what tends to characterize your life together? You will be identifying not only the needs and trends within your community but also the intersection of your purpose, giftedness and context.
- This is an opportunity to take a serious look at your community. Plan a day to have someone from outside your church re-introduce your congregation to the community. (A local history buff, a community organizer, a neighboring pastor may be good resources for this.)
- It is helpful to draw on materials, information and resources gathered during the MSP Process sessions to learn from others about how your congregation is perceived and what some of the basic needs of the community may be.

Part III- Leadership Needs (Items 10-17)

- Most Call Committees survey the congregation to identify the characteristics of the pastor they seek. NOTE: While helpful, most people will think primarily in terms of worship and their own personal relationship with the Pastor. The Call Committee is to use this information along with the rest of the profile to establish the key leadership needs.

Part IV- Commentary (Item 18)

- The Commentary section of the MSP is your opportunity to share with potential candidates more information about the Congregation, your hopes and dreams. Consider writing about the Congregation's understanding and participation in mission, highpoints of ministry within and outside of the walls of the Congregation, what the Congregation is excited about, what the Congregation is looking forward to as it begins ministry with a new pastor.

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Part V-Completion of Profile (Items 19-21)

This section includes synod contact person (Call Process Administrator) and an outside reference for the congregation. The Call Process Administrator to be listed on the MSP is Jill Roznowski (jill.roznowski@ecsw.org).

Each section is designed to create opportunities for a congregation to think about who they are and what the mission and ministry of the congregation is. *It is a guide. Many sections will take a significant amount of energy, research and conversation to complete.*

How to Complete the Ministry Site Profile

The MSP Committee is expected to find the information for the Profile. Information gathering

can be done in many ways. Congregations often use:

- Surveys
- Demographics and congregational statistics from the ELCA (Go to www.elca.org. In box on left, click on "congregations." Fill in zip code or State/City, click on "Locate!" Click on the name of the congregation. Click on "Trend Report for this Congregation.")
- The annual Parochial report that your congregation fills out for the synod each year.
- Congregation treasurer
- Focus groups
- Interviews with individuals or committees
- Other congregational records
- The local Chamber of Commerce, city hall, business associations, libraries
- Interviews with the Interim Pastor
- Conversations with other local pastors

THE MSP PROCESS

MSP COMMITTEE ORIENTATION

The Interim Pastor will meet with the MSP Committee for an orientation session. The Synod staff will be available for consultation and support.

COMMUNICATION

The MSP Committee will report regularly to the Church Council and the Congregation. In addition, they should plan regular updates in weekly worship, bulletins, monthly newsletters and on the website.

A Possible Format for the Process:

Step 1: WHO ARE WE?

What is our history? Who were the founders?

Are there any original/old mission or vision statements? What do we say about ourselves?

How do others describe us?

IDEA: Create a wall of history. Cover one wall with paper. Create a time line from the beginning of the congregation through today. You may want to leave a portion at the end for dreams for the future.

Give everyone a marker and have them list important events and people on the wall. Information can be about your church, or society at large. (Wars, depressions, disasters, previous crises or significant losses—death of a pastor e.g. affect the ministry too.) Have people gather in small groups and review the wall. **ASK:** "What do you see? What's missing?" Ask each group to create one or two sentences that describe **who you are**.

Questions: How have we changed? What has not changed? Are we who we were intended to be? What do we say about ourselves?

SURVEY THE WORSHIPPING CONGREGATION USING THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTED FORMAT OR SOMETHING SIMILAR:

IDEA: For 3-4 Sundays ask folks in worship to respond to a written question.

Sunday #1—What do you like about our congregation?

Insert a ½ sheet of paper with the question printed on the top. Ask folks during announcements to answer the question as best as they can.

Sunday #2—What one thing would you like to see improved in our congregation?

Insert a ½ sheet of paper with the 2nd question printed at the top. Include a complete list of the previous Sunday's answers, so folks see the responses. IT IS IMPORTANT TO INCLUDE EVERY RESPONSE.

Sunday#3—How do you feel about worship? (Any praise or suggestions?)

Insert 3rd question on ½ sheet of paper printed at the top. Print answers to 2nd Sunday's questions. Again, it is important to include every response.

Sunday #4—As a community, how are we doing with sharing the good news of Jesus with our neighbors and those in need? (any suggestions?)

Insert 4th question: Print ALL answers to 3rd question.

Sunday #5— What do you like about our city/town? How would you describe the community?

Insert 5th question: Print ALL answers to 4th question.

QUESTION: How do we perceive ourselves? Is there a common sense or common themes in what we say about ourselves? Are people satisfied with the way things are?

How do others describe us?

ELCA: Are you seen as a partner in Synod or Conference activities?

How do you participate in the "larger church"?

Local: How are you involved in your neighborhood, in the community?

What do your neighbors think/say about your congregation?

QUESTION: Does the love of Christ shine forth from our congregation? In what ways?

Step 2: WHERE ARE WE LOCATED? WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY WE SERVE?

In this step, the MSP Committee begins to look at the Mission and Purpose of the Congregation. As the people of God, we are called to serve those in need and to share the good news of Jesus with all people. The "where" question focuses on the context of the congregation. It is an opportunity to look at the need and opportunities for sharing the good news of Jesus in your neighborhood. What is the specific geography, or neighborhood of your congregation?

IDEA: Make an appointment to see local leaders and ask about the community. What trends do they see? (include bankers, principals of schools, local government folk, helping agencies, YMCA/YWCA leaders, other pastors or church leaders, etc.)

IDEA: Create a neighborhood and community map.

Break into small groups with a piece of newsprint. Each group creates a map of the neighborhood and community being sure to put in important details.

IDEA: Have small groups walk or drive through the neighborhood and the greater community.

Silently each person notes the signs of hope and the signs of despair in your community.

Have people gather afterwards to share their observations.

QUESTION—What are the specific needs of our community? Where did you see signs of hope or signs of despair in our community?

(1) What groups of people (demographics), businesses, institutions are in your congregational boundaries? Create a list of these groups/institutions on a large piece of paper.

ASK: What do you see?

ASK: Are these folks represented in our congregation? Why or why not?

(2) What or who is missing? Create a second list of groups of people or institutions which are not in your boundaries. List on a large piece of paper.

Who is missing? (Groups of people of color? Rich folks, poor folks, banks, other congregations, non-Christian community groups?)

ASK: What do you see?

ASK: Why are these folks not represented in our congregation?

QUESTION—What are the strengths of your geographical location? What are the weaknesses or opportunities?

Step 3: WHAT IS OUR OUTREACH?

Basically, the committee assesses what the congregation is doing in order to set a path for mission. Often Outreach gets confused with social ministry. The basic question for this section is: **“How does our congregation invite others to share in the love of God through Jesus Christ in our neighborhood & community? How do people come to know Jesus through us?”**

IDEA: Arrange for a presentation on Outreach/Redevelopment from the Bishop’s Associate for Evangelical Mission (Pastor Jean DeVoll-Donaldson).

(1) Define current outreach efforts/initiatives of the congregation. Perhaps you could post these on a large sheet of paper for the congregation to see.

(2) Look at the congregation’s budget and determine what proportion goes to Outreach/Inviting ministries. What does this say about the value of Outreach/Inviting in your congregation?

QUESTION—Where is our congregation in its sense of Outreach? What are some possible opportunities for growth?

Step 4: ASSESSING OUR MISSION

In this step, the committee looks at the current mission of the Congregation and sets priorities.

Key questions to be answered include:

(1) What have we learned about our mission and ourselves?

- (2) What is our Outreach/Inviting plan?
- (3) What is the relationship of the Congregation with our neighborhood & the community?
- (4) Who are our mission partners?
- (5) What is our mission focus now... where are we being led?

IDEA: Arrange for a presentation time to clarify current efforts of the congregation looking at:

- (a) Are we turned outward in ministry? Are we an inviting congregation?
- (b) Congregational partnerships (FOR EACH PARTNERSHIP) ASK:

Is it global? Synod-connected? Local?" Who is being served?

How does this mission strengthen who we are?

Who is involved (names, groups from the congregation)?

What are the hoped-for outcomes within the congregation and for the mission partner?

IDEA: Have a Mission Day. Lift up all the ministries you support within and outside the ELCA.

Step 5: DEVELOPMENT OF A MISSION PLAN

After listening and assessment comes the task of creating a plan for the Congregation. The plan needs to include a vision with a specific strategy to work toward that vision.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR THIS STEP INCLUDE:

What parts of our current MISSION needs to be preserved? Current plans, mission statements

What are our gifts/passions as a congregation?

What is our Mission?

How has our Mission changed over time?

What do we expect of our Pastor in terms of helping fulfill our Mission work?

What do we expect of the Congregation's members in terms of helping fulfill our Mission work?

IDEA: Write a Mission Statement or review current Mission Statement for relevancy.

IDEA: Look at bulletins, newsletters, annual reports, website, financial reports. ASK: What does this say about our mission? What is missing? How might we strengthen our mission emphasis?

IDEA: Create a list of gifts needed for mission work by the Congregation. Identify resources in the Congregation and the Community.

Step 6: PRESENTATION OF THE MSP TO THE CONGREGATION

The MSP Committee will present its final work to the congregation at an informational meeting. Materials need to be prepared ahead of time and shared with the Church Council for approval prior to this important "DEBRIEFING MEETING" with the Congregation.

A FINAL NOTE:

In reading this description of the MSP Process some will think this is a lot of unnecessary work—“Let’s just fill out the forms.” It is hard work. But congregations who take time to do the work invariably describe it as among the most useful elements of the entire call process. It is well worth the effort! You will learn so much about yourselves, your community and doing mission.

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Evaluation

Throughout the Call Process, periodic evaluation is helpful to assess if things are working well. After the **Mission Site Profile** has been created, it’s a good time to ask some questions in review.

Evaluation Questions - After the Ministry Site Profile is completed

1. Did the process we used get the job done? What worked well? What not so well?
2. What did it cost (in time, money, materials, etc.) to assess the congregation’s needs?
3. Did the process ensure input from a cross section of the congregation?
4. Do we know how to proceed?
5. Were synod staff and materials helpful along the way? Why or why not?
6. Do we have a better idea of what type of pastor we need?

Synod Staff Contacts

Synod office phone number: (920)734-5381

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(This Ministry Site Profile Process originated and is adapted from the Greater Milwaukee Synod Call Process Manual)