

**ASSOCIATE PASTOR**

**About Our Redeemer’s Lutheran Church**

We are a growing and thriving community of faith where we welcome all on the journey of life. In our diversity we experience and celebrate the unconditional love of God as people of every race, ethnic background, social status, physical condition, sexual orientation, and gender identity. We have become a "Reconciling In Christ" congregation so that we may be shaped by the wide variety of gifts God's people bring to community. Join us as we model the life of Christ in our commitment to compassion, community and justice for all.

**Primary Objective**

The primary objective of your role will be to drive the second objective of our 2013 Strategic Plan: to deepen relationships and build community within Our Redeemer’s, and between Our Redeemer’s and the outside community, especially through ministry-focused outreach and social justice.

**Personal Characteristics**

You love people, empowering them, and seeing them grow and blossom. You easily connect people with one another, are perceptive, a great networker and connector yourself. You have a heart for people who are on the margins.

You inspire people with your communication and compassion, are a great listener, possess a healthy sense of humor, and live hopefully.

You don’t seek the limelight, or shrink from it. Comfortable with yourself and your talents, you are happy to be of service to others and the church.

Above all, you have a passion for God, social justice, community life, and a vitality that is evident in everything you do.

**Skills**

* You possess fantastic relationship skills and a depth understanding of group dynamics.
* You have solid organizational skills with an emphasis on organizing and motivating people.
* You possess strong communication and motivational talents.
* You have creative program development skills and your follow-through could be characterized as persistent and determined.
* You can identify and develop lay leaders with an enthusiasm and passion that inspires others.

**Responsibilities**

* You will share and carry the vision and passion of Our Redeemer’s, helping us execute and achieve our strategic plan objectives of transformational spirituality, deepening community, and invitational outreach through community/social justice partnerships.
* You will help drive Our Redeemer’s Vision-Aligned Building process.
* You will coordinate follow up and integration of visitors to Our Redeemer’s.
* You are responsible for small group development, working to incorporate elements of community building, service and theological reflection in all groups.
* You will oversee volunteer coordination.
* You will deepen and expand relationships between Our Redeemer’s and the community through 1. Developing programs (with the social justice staff person) engaging Our Redeemer’s members and community members in hands-on, face to face social justice accompaniment ministry. 2. Networking with local community groups to deepen partnerships. 3. Optimizing the existing overlap between the interests, passions, values and needs of Ballard and Our Redeemer’s. You will spend approximately 5% of your time in the wider community.
* You will lead music and coordinate worship for our Informal worship service.
* You will supervise the Social Justice Staff person, and the Children, Family, Youth and Young Adult staff person.
* You will regularly share preaching, worship leadership and pastoral care with the lead pastor.

**Experience**We don’t believe that experience can be measured solely in years, but should be measured by the quality of that experience. Rather than focusing on years of experience, we prefer to look at the body and quality of work of the individual as well as their passion and ability to take risks, learn, and grow from them.

* Demonstrated ability at group development especially as it pertains to social justice, youth, family, and congregational growth and community building.
* You have experience developing and executing community outreach, **networking** and social justice programs.
* You have managed staff and helped them reach their full potential.
* You have experience in developing leaders and in volunteer coordination.
* You possess proven experience creating bridges between different groups and fostering those relationships.

**Requirements**

* You must be ordained within the ELCA or a denomination with which the ELCA is in full-communion.
* You are comfortable with and appreciate Lutheran theology and liturgy.
* You love God’s church, God’s people and the gospel, with a heart for folding people into God’s community.
* You live within 20 minutes of Our Redeemer’s, so you can fully be a part of our and community.
* Have a valid driver’s license and proof of insurability

**BASIC MAKE-UP OF THE ASSOCIATE PASTOR CALL**

**ASSOCIATE PASTOR:** The primary aim of this call will be to drive the second objective of our strategic plan: to deepen relationships and community within Our Redeemer’s and between Our Redeemer’s and the outside community, especially through ministry-aligned outreach and social justice.  
  
**Internal Community Building/Integrating New Participants/Volunteer Recruitment and Coordination -- 35%**

\*Visitors and Volunteers:  
 Initial/welcome on Sundays  
 Tracking/Follow-up with visitors  
 Administration of the Journey - oversight, coordinate invitations, sponsors/companions, new participant info forms  
 Create interest Lists -- Get info to ministry leaders AND follow up  
 Arrange interviews to be sure relationships/niches in place  
 Develop a system for tracking and staying in touch with community volunteers/participants in Our Redeemer’s events. (e.g. Thanksgiving Dinner volunteers)  
 Nurture a culture of gratitude/thanking/celebrating leaders/volunteers.

\*Affinity group and other group formation and strengthening  
 Priorities: Men, Parents (Family Movie Night?), Everybody Place and/or seniors

\*Retreats/Mission Trips -- Oversee organization/publicizing/admin. (Content overseen by Pastor Kathy.)

\*Auction -- Oversight, with team.

\*Optimize opportunities for connections with the community in existing ministries/events. (e.g., Rally Day, God’s Work Our Hands, Sunday School Year-End, social justice movies.)

\*Supervise Children, Youth and Family Minister

**Pastoral Tasks -- 20-25%**:

Preaching -- 1/month + special worship  
Presiding at worship regularly  
Pastoral Care  
Weddings/Funerals  
Compline  
Nurture spiritual/practical dimension of staff and lay leadership.

(During Pastor Kathy’s sabbatical, this will increase.)

**Informal Worship and Music -- 20-25%**

With Pastor Kathy and Karen Lee, develop seasonal congregational themes.  
Choose and arrange music, in consultation with Pastor Kathy.  
Lead ensemble groups, nurture members’ faith, inter-relationships and leadership gifts, as well as music. (A form of comty-bldg.)  
Oversee all worship volunteers, environment and elements.Help envision/think through Vision- Aligned Building worship space.  
Help bridge/bless connections between the 2 services.  
Develop opportunities to engage neighbors through their love of music. (*Build the path where people are already walking.)*

**Community Interface: Social Justice and Neighborhood Partnerships -- 10-15%**

Get to know Ballard:  
 Network and go to meetings to find out who’s who, what’s happening, what needs/opportunities are.  
Work with social justice volunteers to develop job description, create search team, and find the right part-time staff person to spearhead this effort.  
Work with social justice staff person to develop Our Redeemer’s social justice ministries, particularly face-to-face accompaniment ministries.

Supervise Social Justice staff person.

Provide leadership and support as needed until new staff person arrives:  
 For social justice team and ongoing projects:  
 Nyer Urness, LWR, etc.  
 for God’s Work Our Hands Sunday.  
 for group working on fall reconciliation./race relations focus.  
 for Thanksgiving Dinner.   
 for Giving Tree (kind of does itself)  
Attend monthly Road to Housing meeting (until social justice staff in place?)

Build relationships with facility users: Co-op preschool; P-Patch; Scouts; AA, Microsoft, Goodwill, etc.

**Non-Specific Meetings (5-10%):**

Regular staff meetings/retreats   
Regular leadership meetings with Don & Pastor Kathy, exec team  
Council Meetings  
Annual check-in with Pastor Kathy/Consultant.

**FAQ on the Call Process**

*Background: Lutheran pastors are not hired to do a job, they are “Called” by congregation. If the pastor feels “called” to serve that congregation, s/he accepts the call and steps into a pastoral relationship with the congregation. As part of the strategic planning process, and in recognition of the fact that we need more than one pastor to serve a congregation our size in our non-church-going context, Our Redeemer’s decided to call an Associate Pastor to work with our Lead Pastor, Katherine Hawks.*

**Who Made the Decision to Call Gretchen Mertes as Our Redeemers’ Associate Pastor?** The Call Committee. The Call Committee were assembled in Fall 2014 for the purpose of discerning who to call as Our Redeemer’s Associate Pastor. The council appointed people to the Call Committee who have the congregation's trust, and represent different groups in the congregation, particularly those involved in and passionate about ministry areas the position will lead: social justice (Tom Bernard), community building (Tamara Anderson, with a background in counseling); Britni Chabot -- young adult and a leader of our youth; Eric Olson -- active in the Journey and its community-building aspect; Mark Buening -- teen daughter, Faith Formation leader; Lisa Watkins -- 3 school-aged children.) The attempt was to span a range of ages and length of involvement in the congregation; 3 were men; 3 were women; 1 was gay; 1 a single parent; 1 a senior; one a single young adult, etc. 3 were long-term members who had served on Pastor Hawks’ call committee, so familiar with the call process and Our Redeemer’s recent mission and life. Each one is known to be a faithful, thoughtful individual.

The Committee was formally “installed” (introduced and blessed) at services on October 26 (Reformation Day!) and met for the first time in early December.

**What did the Call process entail?** The Call Committee worked within fairly strict parameters to ensure that the process was fair and thorough and prayerful. Every meeting had to be attended by every Committee member. Even before beginning the interview process, the Committee met several times to review the job description, meet with a representative of the Bishop’s office regarding the process, and develop interview questions.

In their Call Process Handbook, the Synod (that is, the regional governing body in the church) sets forth strict guidelines for Call Committees. A key provision is that the Call Committee is absolutely not allowed to share the names of clergy people they are interviewing as part of the call process. This is largely because pastors who are interviewing for a position may hold another position in the area, and relationships may be compromised if that person is known to be participating in a call process. (Some of you may recall that Steve Grumm and Ethan Hulme were Called in more of an “open” process. This was because in each of these cases, the candidate was the only person being considered, and existing congregational relationships weren’t a consideration.)

**What were the guiding parameters for the Call Committee, and how did they prepare to Call our new pastor?** The Committee primarily looked to the Associate Pastor job description, which was developed by the Strategic Engagement Team, then reviewed and edited by Council. They followed the process laid out in the synod handbook for the Call process, with the guidance of the Assistant to the Bishop.

The Committee met twice alone to review the job description, Strategic Plan and the Ministry Site Profile (a voluminous document completed by the council and used by the synod to select names appropriate to our congregation, our context and our position), each of which speak deeply to the goals of the church and our hopes and intentions surrounding the Associate Pastor call.

The Committee met four times with the Assistant to the Bishop to go over the process, review the Ministry Site Profile, and review the interview process. The Committee then met three times to refine interview questions. The questions were carefully constructed to hear from each candidate about demonstrated past experience and experience in the desired areas of ministry here.

**What was the Selection Process like?**

Part One: The Synod advanced 5 candidates' names based on our Ministry Site Profile, job description and strategic plan, with the rationale for recommending each one. One candidate was from Minnesota, one from another part of Washington, and 3 from the Seattle area.

Since this is an associate position, the synod recommended Pastor Hawks talk to each candidate prior to the call committee interview to be sure she felt she could work with any candidate they chose. Pastor Hawks drafted a series of questions and got the call committee's input on them. She then Skyped with each of the 5 candidates and asked each one the same questions. Eric Olson was present for each of these interviews as an observer and sounding board.

As a result of those conversations, one candidate was declined for lack of experience; another because the individual was too similar to Pastor Hawks in terms of gifts and strengths to provide a helpful complement.

Three candidates' profiles were then forwarded to the call committee. This was the point at which they became aware that Pastor Gretchen Mertes (who was acting as our Interim Music Director for the 9:00 a.m. service) was one of the candidates.

Part Two:

Three candidates were interviewed by the Committee; 2 in person and one, because they were unable to come to Seattle, by Skype. Each interview was conducted as identically as possible, using the identical questions in the same order.

Each interview lasted more than an hour. Each candidate was recognized as being very strong in certain areas and certain ways. After each of the first 2 interviews, there was enough positive response and openness as to each candidate that there was no clarity about who to call. After the interview with the third candidate, Pastor Gretchen Mertes, the committee agreed that she was the best candidate. Due diligence was performed by calling references.

The call committee agreed that this confirmed what they had discerned, that Gretchen was the one God is calling to this position in this place at this time. One Committee member explained, ***“Gretchen Mertes blew us away with her energy, compassion and general pastor-worthiness.  She is someone I would follow and I believe she has the ability to attract the kinds of neighbors we've not had attend the church in the past.”***

**Why wasn’t there more transparency in the Call process?**

As discussed above, it is a policy of the Synod to maintain confidentiality during the Call process. For that reason, a Call of this type never involves interviewing or vetting by the congregation as a whole. Choosing and empowering a Call Committee entails a leap of faith in these people to prayerfully discern who God is calling for us to invite into our leadership.

While the Committee can’t share the details of its process while it is happening, our Call Committee made regular reports to the congregation. Updates on the Call process were published in the Visitor (our monthly newsletter). In the January, 2015 edition of The Visitor, readers presented with a detailed article from Tom Bernard headlined “Call Committee Begins Their Work!” We had call committee updates in every subsequent Visitor except March.

**How can we get to know Pastor Mertes better?**

There are Meet and Greet opportunities set for Sunday, July 26th. In addition, Pastor Mertes’ talents are on display weekly at the 9:00 service. As the leader who focusing on development of community both inside and outside the church, she will be easy to find around Our Redeemer’s and Ballard. Please don’t hesitate to reach out, introduce yourself, and let her know what excites you about Our Redeemer’s and Ballard.