

Ministry Site Profile

Faith Lutheran Church, Lexington, Kentucky

Summary Description

Faith Lutheran Church (FLC) is a medium-sized congregation located in an established neighborhood adjacent to the University of Kentucky in Lexington, Kentucky. Lexington, otherwise known as the “Horse Capital of the World,” is a beautiful and vibrant community in central Kentucky. US News and World Report recently ranked Lexington as the 21st best place to live in the country.

The mission statement for our congregation accurately represents who we are. We reflect God’s love in our care for each other and outreach into our community. We are a welcoming place for everybody including those in the LGBTQ+ community, and we observe inclusivity toward all peoples. We practice traditional liturgical worship and music serves as a vital expression of our faith. Faith Lutheran is blessed with an active ministry in our Faith Lutheran Learning Center that provides care and early childhood education for children in our community. We are a congregation in search of leadership who will work with us to grow our ministries and our congregation. In recent years, we experienced considerable turnover of all staff positions. Thus, we first seek to identify a caring, nurturing, and innovative pastor, followed next by filling leadership positions to shape our music and faith formation ministries. Members and regular visitors of Faith Lutheran are excited for the next chapter of our spiritual life in which we can worship together and share our gifts of time and talent with the community of Lexington.

PART II: OUR VISION FOR MISSION

Trends in the Community Context of the Congregation or Organization

Characteristics:

Write a description of your community in terms of socio-economic status, demographics, primary areas of employment and lifestyle. The Demographic ZIP Code report for your primary ZIP codes may be helpful.

Lexington is a wonderful place to live. It's the 9th Friendliest City in the U.S. according to Conde Nast Traveler, holds the 22nd spot on the list of Best Places to Travel in 2021 according to Travel & Leisure, and is one of the 50 Best Foodie Towns in America according to The Daily Meal. See more great things about living in the Bluegrass at https://www.commercelexington.com/uploads/4/6/5/2/46529867/guidetobg2021_online.pdf, and our demographic data at <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/lexington-ky-population>.

Trends:

List three changes or trends within the congregation or organization which have occurred in the last three to five years.

- (1) Resiliency - During all of the required changes caused by COVID-19, the congregation showed strength and resiliency. We set up a communication system to check in on all members and a remote broadcasting system for Sunday worship. Our preschool program maintained services (with a PPP loan) during COVID-19 and received a 4 star rating. We implemented a capital campaign that raised nearly \$100,000. We installed a new security system and air conditioners.
- (2) Staff changes - We have been without full time staff for both music and youth ministries for several years. We chose to not fill these positions during the pandemic, and to allow the new pastor an opportunity to have a voice in these hiring decisions.
- (3) Shrinking membership - Like many other congregations nationwide, active participation in our church has fallen over the last decade. This is especially noticeable in the case of families who have left, resulting in a significant reduction in our youth activities.

Context:

List three ways that the community in which you are located has been challenged by change and transition in the last three to five years.

Lexington faces many of the same challenges as other cities of similar size, including stretched resources, aging infrastructure, and overcrowded schools. A few challenges, though, have a greater impact on Lexington when compared to other cities due to Lexington's unique characteristics. Lexington uses an Urban Service Boundary in order to control the sprawl of development and to preserve its iconic horse farms. This constraint combined with a growing population and a growing university places a premium on land available to develop housing, and more specifically affordable housing. Fortunately, this issue is being acknowledged by city leaders: the mayor and city council are putting American Relief Plan Act funding toward affordable housing; the mayor has asked the community for more input in governance; and public entities and some private businesses have acknowledged the need to pay employees at least a living wage. BUILD (Building a United Interfaith Lexington through Direct-action), of which Faith Lutheran Church is a member, has further identified that this lack of affordable housing especially impacts our citizens who have severe mental illness. In addition to this issue that was brought forward by BUILD during their 2021 Nehemiah Action, two other challenges currently facing Lexington are problems of equity, or rather lack of equity, in our education system that harm our children and set them up for failure; and increases in violence for which they are proposing a community-wide solution.

Programs:

Describe your congregation's or organization's current programs for mission and ministry.

Our mission: "As followers of Jesus Christ, we embrace, reflect and proclaim God's unconditional love." Current programs for ministry internally include Sunday in-person worship at 8:30 and 11:00, with 11:00 livestream on YouTube and Facebook. Our handbell choir took a brief break during the early portion of the pandemic, and our vocal choir is about to restart. Adults participate in Bible studies, Sophia book groups, and men's breakfast group. We are restarting our program for school age children (Godly Play) remotely, and will re-institute a preschool program (Children Worship and Wonder) when we feel it is safe to do so. Our youth are beginning a virtual community with abbreviated in-person activities. Confirmation class and a new member class continue. Programs that were initiated in our congregation over the last decade have moved toward independence, specifically the Harstad Fine Arts Series and Taste of Grace, which is an annual fundraiser for a community partner. Our external missions are extensive and include Blessings in a Backpack which provides weekend meals for students of a local elementary school, supporting God's Pantry, cooking Thanksgiving turkeys for Nathaniel Mission, providing Christmas gifts for The Nest (program for families and children) and Santa for Seniors, supporting Mission Health Lexington (free dental and medical care), and engaging with student outreach at UK. Beyond Lexington, we also support an orphanage in Haiti and a foreign missionary. Many of our external missions programs are supported or partially supported by the dividends and interest from FLC's Mission Endowment. The Mission Endowment is separate from the church's operating budget and its current value is \$463,000. We address community injustices by participating in Lexington's social justice group (BUILD). We house a preschool and after school program onsite for 70+ children daily. Many community groups use our facilities for their meetings and events, including Boy Scouts, AA, League of Women Voters, and others. We provide rent subsidies, transportation vouchers, and other support through our pastor's discretionary fund both for members and in concert with another local church. We have also sponsored several refugee families who have located to Lexington over the years.

Goals:

What are the primary goals of your ministry site (please refer to any Strategic Plan that has been adopted).

As we move forward with a new shepherd, our immediate goal is to collectively work toward unifying our congregation, followed by working together to increase our membership, specifically the demographics of younger families and youth. We seek to enrich worship and the spiritual life of the congregation. With rejuvenated spirit, we will continue to reach out to the community to share God's love.

Energy:

What is your congregation or organization really excited about right now?

Faith Lutheran is a welcoming, caring church grounded in traditional worship. We find energy in new growth in baptism, the presence of music in our midst, and we thrive in community with one another.

Partnership:

How does this congregation or organization see itself as a member and active participant in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the synod?

We support the Synod financially, we participate in the Synod's youth conventions, and we send representatives to the Synod Assembly. When we have a need, we do reach out to the Synod for help; however, for the most part, Faith is low maintenance congregation.

Ministry Site Characteristics

AS A COMMUNITY

	A LOT	A LITTLE	A LITTLE	A LOT
	LIKE US	LIKE US	LIKE US	LIKE US

We tend to be formal and programmatic. ✓

We have clearly defined goals and plans for our future. ✓

We are racially and economically diverse. ✓

We tend to be informal and spontaneous.

We have no stated goals or plans.

We are demographically homogeneous.*

OUR LEADERSHIP STYLE

We welcome ideas that are provoking and challenging. ✓

We rely on our leaders for direction. ✓

We have learned how to use conflict constructively. ✓

We prefer ideas that are tried and true.*

We rely on group decision-making.

We tend to perceive conflict as something destructive.

OUR PROGRAMMING

Our facilities are often used by community groups. ✓

We train people to minister outside our walls. ✓

We focus on ideas and beliefs. ✓

Our facilities are only used for our activities.

We train people to minister inside our walls.

We focus on skills and action.

OUR THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

We are obviously Lutheran in identify and practice. ✓

We participate in synod and ELCA activities. ✓

We focus on Biblical studies and doctrine. ✓

We are less obvious about our Lutheran heritage.

We are not very active in the synod and ELCA.

We focus on contemporary issues and topics.*

**Answers split fairly evenly between "A LITTLE LIKE US" and "A LOT LIKE US" for our responses to the * items in the right column.*

Purpose, Giftedness and Mission

Purpose

How does this congregation or organization understand its reason for being in the light of God's call to mission and service? Who are you? Why are you here?

As followers of Jesus Christ, we embrace, reflect and proclaim God's unconditional love. We enact this internally through worship, and externally through our missions.

Giftedness

What are your gifts and resources for fulfilling this purpose? What are the congregation's or organization's top three assets and how are they being used? Are there obstacles that must be overcome to be able to use these gifts and accomplish the mission?

Our congregation is blessed with a tremendous talent among our members who lend their time and talents to numerous committees organized around congregational life and well-being, worship, missions, and property / grounds. A relatively large group of worship servants helps to celebrate God's Word as Assisting Ministers and Cantors. All of these committees are organized and scheduled by volunteers. Our level of volunteering can be considered healthy. In the wake of pastoral and staff turnover in recent years and the impact of the pandemic, there was no interruption in worship and the other essential elements in the life of our congregation. Our financial health has remained strong regardless of external challenges.

We are an inviting and caring community of believers, and we possess a strong commitment to outreach in our community.

The biggest obstacle for us to overcome, so that we may use our gifts to fully support our mission, is to mobilize members and participants beyond the active core membership. There exists a serious and resounding demand among our entire congregation to increase our active membership, especially the younger demographic. We hope to identify a shepherd to build engagement of our talented members, in all age brackets. Our best hope is that a pastor will help us honestly struggle with this issue and lead us to discoveries of ways to address it.

Mission

In light of the way you have described your ministry context in this Ministry Site Profile, what are the top three mission priorities which, if accomplished, hold the most promise for the continued development of this ministry?

Our current status presents as a great opportunity for our new pastor to (re-)activate spiritual purpose and excitement in our members, thus making our church an attractive place again where members of all ages are engaged in all ministries of our church, where we celebrate being unified in the Holy Baptism, and from where we can go out in our daily lives to proclaim God's Word.

PART III: LEADERSHIP NEEDS

Top Five Ministry Tasks

The five most critical tasks required in this position.

Administration	Building a Sense of Community	Campus / Young Adult Ministry
Chaplaincy	Children's Ministry	Christian Education
Communications/ Media	Community Organizing	Conflict Management
Counseling/ Social Work	Early Childhood Administration	Ecumenical Work
Evangelism/ Mission	Financial Management	Global Service
Innovation / Creativity	Interim Ministry	Interpret Theology
Inter-personal Climate	Ministry in Crisis	Ministry in Daily Life
Ministry with Seniors	Multicultural Ministry	Music / Worship / Arts
Outdoor/ Camping Ministry	Parish Nurse / Health	Participant in the Larger Church
Pastoral Care and Visitation	Preaching / Worship	Public Policy / Advocacy
Recruit and Equip Leaders	Self Care / Family Life	Small Group Ministry
Social Ministry	Spiritual Formation / Direction	Stewardship
Strategic Mission Planning	Teaching	Volunteer Coordination
Youth and Family Ministry		

Gifts for Ministry

The five gifts essential in this position, and the five that are very helpful in this position.

Top Priority		Very Helpful
2	Help people develop their spiritual life.	
	Help people understand and act upon issues of social justice.	
3	Provide care and nurture.	
	Be active in visitation of members and non-members.	✓
	Be effective in working with children.	
4	Build a sense of community among the people with whom he/she works.	
	Help others develop their leadership abilities and skills for ministry.	
	Be an effective administrator.	
1	Be an effective communicator.	
	Be an effective teacher.	✓
	Encourage support of the Church's wider mission.	
	Work regularly in the development of stewardship growth.	
	Be active in ecumenical relationships.	
	Be effective in working with youth.	✓
	Organize people for community action.	
	Be skilled in planning and leading programs.	
5 (tied)	Have a strong commitment and loyalty to the Lutheran Church.	
	Understand and interpret the mission of the Church from a global perspective.	
5 (tied)	Deal effectively with conflict.	
	Bring joy and good humor to relationships.	✓
	Be able to share leadership and work in a team.	✓
	Be creative and innovative about his or her tasks.	
	Be able to use technology and media.	
	Appreciate cultural diversity in language and customs.	
	Have talents in the areas of music, arts and writing.	

Mutual Expectations

Please list the five primary areas of activity or focus that you with your newly-called rostered leader to give special attention to during the first year of his or her ministry at this congregation or organization:

- A. Supporting our current membership and encouraging them to reinvigorate their level of involvement so that we may be more engaged in our shared ministries.
- B. Initiating the exploration of how to best reach potential new members.
- C. Building back our youth programming by initiating the search for a Minister of Youth and Families.

- D. Building back the ministerial team by initiating the search for a Minister of Worship / Music, who will assist the pastor in providing spiritual life enrichment opportunities for the congregation.
- E. Offering a consistent leadership style by engaging with the membership, church council, and our many committees.

Please list the five ways that this congregation / organization will support and encourage the rostered leader during the first year in order to help her or him accomplish these responsibilities:

- A. The congregation will be available and open to meet with our new pastor and offer them guidance, support, and prayer when requested and even when not requested. We will build a relationship that is based on trust and open and honest feedback on how things are progressing.
- B. Our families with younger children will be committed to partnering with our new pastor in the search to find a Minister of Youth and Families.
- C. Our congregation will be committed to partnering with our new pastor in the search to staff our ministerial team by providing them with our goals for these roles. We also will assist in the call process for those positions.
- D. Our congregation leadership and committees will commit to partnering with the new pastor in developing a plan for the administration of the church, with accompanying expectations of each of their roles.
- E. Our committees will be very transparent with our new pastor. The pastor is always welcome to attend any meeting.

PART IV: COMMENTARY

You are encouraged to offer information or commentary that will help the reader appreciate the vision, opportunities, challenges and nature of your ministry site. Use this opportunity to creatively promote and commend your ministry possibilities.

In this Ministry Site Profile, the Call Committee and Council have presented an overview of Faith Lutheran Church (FLC) as we seek pastoral leadership. The Congregation has had the opportunity to review and comment on this narrative. We believe that it is imperative that the candidate feel the excitement present in our congregation. FLC is a church that is founded on Lutheran traditions and seeks to engage and support all individuals in our community. Like many other houses of worship, FLC has experienced a decline in membership, especially absent are young families, thereby resulting in an aging congregation; however, FLC is an eager and motivated body of stewards of the Word. We desire growth in our membership and in our faith practice in hopes of moving toward a more robust communing and serving membership. We are looking for those persons who want to worship with and serve our congregation as well as our community partners. We acknowledge that this is not an easy task in the current environment both within and outside of our red doors. We anticipate that a successful pastor will be energetic, innovative, caring, and present.