



## Senior Pastor Opportunity

March 2021

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### Overview of Church and Community:

Founded by German immigrant families in 1961, St. Mark's worship services are taking place in one of Vancouver's heritage buildings, with one of the last remaining functioning organs in the city. Those who come for the first time realize that the people of St. Mark's love their church. The tender loving care is evident everywhere. Most important of all it is evident in being part of the St. Mark's family. We have almost 60 years of history in Vancouver, welcoming each other into the fellowship of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Vancouver's St. Mark's Evangelical-Lutheran Church is a group of down to earth Christians who have a love for the Lord.

Prior to COVID, Sunday German Worship Services were held at 9:30 am and English Worship Services were at 11:00 am. Our Senior and Associate pastor work together with a terrific team of dedicated Christians to make the Kingdom of God a reality in our shaken world.

As part of this search the calling committee has asked our membership to pause and think how they envision the congregation's future, and what qualities we wish to see in our new Senior Pastor. The complete survey including responses can be viewed by clicking on the following link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-9D7HBY32/>

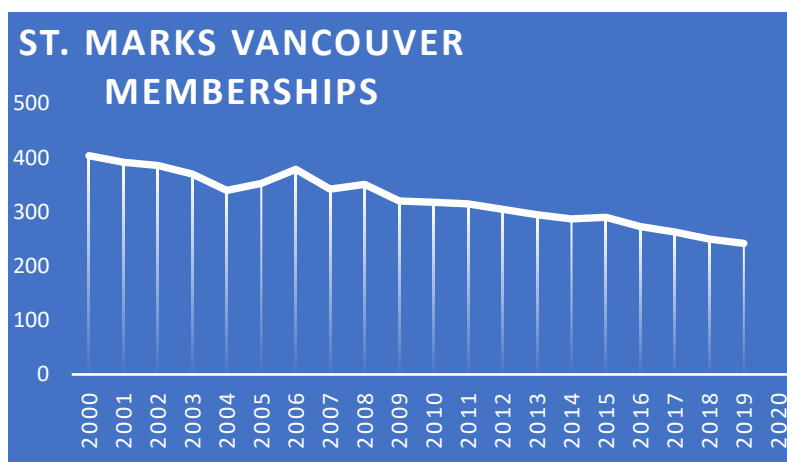
Briefly, here are some of the current strengths of our congregation:

- Senior pastor of last 30 years has inspired and motivated congregation significantly
- Membership decline much lower than in other congregations in the area
- Significant worship attendance for the German service (prior to COVID)
- Large number of parish activities and groups (in both German and English)
- Diverse and active ethnic-based ministry

Significant challenges have also been identified in the past:

- Independence from BC Synod (ELCIC) has not always been an advantage
- Openness to challenge the status quo
- Average age of membership currently stands at 70+ years
- How to expand English-speaking ministry
- English worship service has low attendance
- Large number of other churches in the area
- Membership is physically spread over a large area
- Older facilities
- Limited parking
- Location, 2 blocks from main road

Below graphic shows how church membership has declined over the last 20 years.



## The Opportunity:

Due to the upcoming retirement of our senior pastor of 30 years this fall, we are currently seeking a permanent full-time Lutheran pastor whose theology is inclusive and 21st Century oriented, and who has experience in pastoral care and spiritual counselling. The candidates will primarily be evaluated on:

- how he/she is planning to continue our retiring senior pastor's legacy
- innovative yet sensitive concept for renewal of ageing congregation

As a guidance for candidates here is how our retiring pastor best describes the opportunity during the exit interview:

*"The main focus in my ministry was always our German Sunday Service, the preparation of my sermons and secondly the direct contact with the people God entrusted to us. Therefore, I tried to make myself available as much as possible, which included the visitation of our members, visiting the ill and elderly and also maintaining the contact with the friends of our congregation. This was and probably should be in the future a vital part of our ministry, because these are for my estimation the two major support beams which are holding the congregation together and we cannot overlook the fact that there is undoubtedly an ongoing need for pastoral care and counseling. For that reason, I spend about 45-60% of my time for these duties, die "Seelsorge".*

The anticipated start date will be October 1, 2021, provided the COVID pandemic does not get worse.

## Key Responsibilities:

- Spiritual and Pastoral Duties
  - Stimulating preaching in the German service and filling in for Associate Pastor with English worshipping community when needed, due to current pandemic these services are pre-recorded and available online
  - Pastoral counseling / Seelsorge / grief counseling in particular
  - Administration of the sacraments (Holy Communion and Baptism) including preparation sessions for Baptisms
  - Preparation of devotions for newsletter, different groups and committees during the year
  - Pre-marriage counseling and wedding preparations
  - Wedding services
  - Funerals. On request and as Outreach also for people outside the parish
  - Home Visits and visiting the sick / "Krankenbesuche"
  - Preparation of Bible Studies in collaboration with Associate Pastor
  - Engagement of youth, confirmation classes

- Administrative Duties (in conjunction with church secretary)
  - certification of documents and German pension papers
  - preparation of AGM in co-operation with the Church council and its president
  - contact person for all kinds of outside requests regarding the congregation and its ministry
  
- Representational Duties
  - Keeping the contact with other Lutheran Congregations and Organizations and their representatives (ELCIC, DELKINA, Canadian Lutheran World Relief)
  - Preparation of special services to commemorate important historical events in our German history, often in cooperation with the German Consul General
  
- Committees and Group Work
  - Participate in Mission Committee, Nomination Committee, Refugee support group, Fitness and Prayer, “Literaturkreis – Deutsche Gegenwartsliteratur”, Lectures at the German Care Home, Monday Playgroup
  - attending meetings and educational events of the ELCIC, the BC Synod in particular

## Education and Experience:

An ordained Lutheran minister with several years’ experience in the Lutheran faith. To accomplish the mission of the church the Senior pastor is expected to honor and equip believers for their ministry in the world. Willingness to uphold and abide by the Church Constitution. Proven track record of leading another congregation through a similar renewal process in the past will be a benefit.

## Skills, Knowledge and Attributes:

The ideal candidate will bring the following skills, knowledge, and attributes:

- is an effective bilingual and inspiring preacher/speaker (German and English)
- is a compassionate and caring person
- is approachable
- demonstrates passion in “Seelsorge”, and enjoys catering daily to an elderly congregation
- is accepting of people with divergent views
- is familiar with North American culture and in particular the history of German immigrants
- is eligible for legal employment in Canada with the congregation’s upmost assistance to overseas candidates
- is an honest person of integrity, who is dependable and trustworthy
- is interested in and have some experience in evangelism and parish development (support of additional education or training given)

- is interested in development of youth ministry for mostly English-speaking younger generations
- provides leadership and feedback for Associate Pastor and be able to work in a team as well as independently, that includes potentially redefining roles and responsibilities within the pastoral team
- has the proven ability to make God's Word relevant
- demonstrates empathy, a sense of humor and patience
- has proven knowledge how to manage the church (as a corporation)
- has the gift to inspire volunteerism

## We offer:

- rent-free living at onsite parsonage (not before Dec 1, 2021 due to expected renovations)
- car allowance
- paid vacations
- benefits package
- competitive salary commensurate with experience
- potential employment opportunity for spouse as church secretary
- engaged team of associate pastor, church council, and volunteers

## How to apply and next steps:

To apply, please submit a PDF Cover Letter and Resume by email to the calling committee outlining your interest, qualifications, and past experience **no later than May 12, 2021**.

Only shortlisted candidates will be invited to an interview in May/June. At this moment we envision the interview to occur via video conference. Shortlisted candidates are also envisioned to 'meet' the congregation by holding a service online prior to the calling committee making a recommendation to membership to vote on the final candidate. This vote is currently anticipated for July 30.

Due to the many unknowns the current global health crisis presents to us we are open to discuss other employment arrangements with you, for example if you would rather be interested in an interim position for 6months to 1 year please indicate that in your application.