

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY IN THE MANITOBA/NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO SYNOD

Name of Congregation: Brokenhead Shared Ministry

- Ostenfeld Lutheran Church, Ostenfeld
- St. John Lutheran Church, Lydiatt
- Redeemer Lutheran Church, Whitemouth
- St. Paul Lutheran Church, River Hills
- Pinawa Lutheran Church, Pinawa
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Cross, Lac du Bonnet

For the position of: Pastor

1. Brief overview of the history of the congregation and the wider community in which it is located.

In 2017, six ELCIC congregations in the Brokenhead Area of Eastern Manitoba agreed to participate in experimenting with a *shared staffing arrangement* known as the Brokenhead Shared Ministry (BSM). Lutheran Church of the Cross – Lac du Bonnet, St. John Lutheran Church – Lydiatt, Ostenfeld Lutheran Church – Ostenfeld, Pinawa Lutheran Church – Pinawa, St. Paul Lutheran Church – River Hills, and Redeemer Lutheran Church, Whitemouth share the pastoral services of a pastor. Prior to forming the BSM these six congregations were either in two-point parishes (served full-time or part-time), served part-time through arrangements with retired pastors or served by shared supply and/or lay leaders. Through the BSM congregations who cannot provide for full time ministers individually are able to collectively call a Regional Pastor to serve all the congregations of the BSM. The BSM Council is the oversight body of this shared ministry. They work with the Regional Pastor and the Manitoba Northwestern Ontario Synod (MNO) in order to assure the provision of pastoral ministry for these congregations. The call to this special ministry is issued by the MNO Synod on behalf of the BSM congregations that share the pastor's services.

Initially nine ELCIC congregations in the Brokenhead area explored shared ministry but for different reasons Zion Lutheran Church – Beausejour and the Rural Beausejour Parish of Trinity – Thalberg and St. Paul – Green Bay chose not to become part of the BSM. Until the onset of Covid these nine Lutheran congregations in the Brokenhead Area were doing ministry jointly and supporting each other's events and ministries when and where it was feasible. This was beneficial for all our congregations. During 2017-2018 the Brokenhead Area Lutheran congregations experienced a very successful sharing of ministry when we partnered to support an intern, Jeremy Langner, on our territory.

Unfortunately this arrangement of sharing between the nine congregations has not continued after Covid.

2. Brief description of the current opportunities and challenges for the congregation.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Explore what ministry is in the modern world/educating people that church is not a building.
- Cooperation with area churches and communities.
- To become more relevant in our communities.
- Workshops to train lay leaders.

CHALLENGES:

- Ageing/declining membership.
- Dwindling finances.
- Personality conflicts.
- Members not wanting to be in shared ministry (i.e. they want their own pastor).
- Cemeteries and buildings are very important in many of the congregations.

3. Brief description of the worship, program, staffing, volunteer, and stewardship practices of the congregation:

WORSHIP:

- Each congregation is different in worship style – some are very traditional, some incorporate contemporary music and items into worship, some use power point to project the service, some use hymnals, etc.
- When the pastor is not present worship is lead by lay leaders with some of the congregations projecting a recorded sermon.
- NOTE: The BSM has discussed everyone using the same worship format to streamline worship services for the pastor and to utilize volunteers more effectively (eg. we would only need one person creating the weekly power point).

PROGRAM:

- Each congregation is responsible for their ministry program. Examples include:
 - Hospital and care home visiting by lay leaders.
 - Bible Study (Pinawa)
 - Meditation group (Lac du Bonnet)
 - “Take Part Tuesdays” (River Hills). Members and others meet on Tuesdays to work on different projects (eg. quilts, *Days for Girls* reusable feminine hygiene products)

STAFFING:

- One paid pastor is shared by the six BSM congregations.
- Church of the Cross has an Anglican diaconal minister associated with their congregation.
- Jobs such as maintenance, clerical, music, etc. are done by lay volunteers.

- Some congregations do occasionally hire cleaning persons or contractors to complete jobs that the lay volunteers are not able to do.

VOLUNTEERS:

- The work done for our congregations is done by wonderful volunteers who contribute as they are able. These volunteers lead lay worship services, read for worship, select hymns and play music for worship, create power point presentations for worship. Although there is no longer a national ELW, our women have remained faithful in gathering to continue with some of the work they always did, hosting special events, Bible study, quilt making and sharing with those in need (eg. mitten tree, local food bank collections).

STEWARDSHIP:

- None of the BSM congregations have a formal financial stewardship program. Benevolence is on an “as given” basis.

4. Brief description of the priorities for ministry over the next 1-5 years:

- Committing to remaining open and viable
- Being welcoming/outreach
- Addressing the ageing population through ministry
- More cooperation between Eastern Manitoba Lutheran congregation/other denominations
- Identifying lay leaders and getting training for them

5. List the top 5 Areas of Ministry for your next rostered minister to prioritize in the first 1-5 years of ministry, as listed in the Congregational Profile:

- Weekly worship and special worship (eg. weddings, funerals, etc.)
- Visiting – hospitals, care homes, congregants and church councils
- Training lay leaders
- Communication and connection to the congregations and church councils.
- Ensuring records and reports are current and available – the pastor does not have to do this job but should have oversight of it.

Please note that it may seem daunting to work in a 6-point parish. However in each congregation we wish to work collaboratively with the incoming pastor. We have been part of this shared model for years and working jointly is the key to this model succeeding.

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