



**Christ Lutheran Church**  
Whitefish, Montana  
**Associate Pastor for Family and Youth**  
**Opportunity Profile**

December 2022

**Overview**

A new day is happening at Christ Lutheran Church in beautiful Whitefish, MT. Under the leadership of the newly called Senior Pastor Dylan Curtis, attendance is rising, people are engaged, and the church is excited to move forward to reach their community. The next piece for the ministry is to add a dynamic, relevant and relational Associate Pastor for Family and Youth to complement the good work already taking place.



**The Opportunity**

Christ Lutheran Church (CLC) sits in the middle of the picturesque and growing Flathead Valley in northwest Montana. The population growth in Flathead County has increased significantly in recent years, with many of those moving into this growth belt located within easy driving distance of the CLC campus. People are moving to the area as they realize the benefits of small-town life and are looking for community, places to connect, and ways to develop new relationships and friendships. Those who are looking for a church are interested in one with ministries that meet the needs of their entire family. CLC is fortunate to offer a great location, a modern and well-equipped facility, and a financially generous church. They are well established to be a vibrant ministry hub for all ages.

CLC is a 103-year-old church, and since 2010 has been associated with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC). The LCMC was started as an alternative for Lutheran churches no longer believing it was possible to remain in the ELCA. They are congregational in structure, conservative in theology, and focused on mission. Those who attend CLC find a warm greeting and are welcomed to develop their faith with this body. While the church is a Lutheran Church and wants to remain distinctly Lutheran in theology, they embrace people from other faith traditions. They are a church who holds the Bible as the center of their faith. They want children and students to not only know the great stories of the sacred text but also to experience the transformative power of the gospel communicated in the text. CLC believes their mission is

to joyfully proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ through living worship, growing faith, serving fellowship, and sending saints. They envision this renewed ministry as a powerful force in moving their mission statement from being a catch phrase to an impactful reality in people's lives.

Several years ago, the church went through a Senior Pastor transition with a short-tenured pastor that was less than ideal and left the congregation hurting. An intentional interim was brought in to bring stability to the church. The search for a new Senior Pastor began, and the church was blessed to call Pastor Dylan to the role. Since his arrival in May 2022, the church has already seen about a 30% rise in attendance. Former members who left during the difficult days are returning, but more significantly, new people are entering into church life – and are even volunteering in a variety of ministries. The energy around the campus is vibrant, contagious and people are rejoicing in the good things happening.

CLC is serious about its faith. Congregants readily worship Jesus and appreciate the value the Scriptures bring to a life of faith. In addition to the clear presentation of the Word, the Sunday morning experience is tailored to respect the Lutheran heritage and to be meaningful to the contemporary context. Both morning worship services (at 9 and 10:30 a.m.) are a thoughtful blend of contemporary and traditional music. The entire family worships together in the service of their choice until a designated moment in the second service when children from nursery through 4<sup>th</sup> grade transition to the children's wing for their own Sunday school time. On Wednesday evenings, children have another learning experience while students from 5<sup>th</sup> through high school meet for discipleship, fellowship and fun. Adults are engaged in Bible Studies and Small Groups at various times throughout the week.

Like many churches in the United States, the congregation is older and faces challenges in reaching younger families and students. The leaders acknowledge this reality but are not discouraged by it. They deeply desire to ensure the next generation knows Jesus and loves him the way they do. They are willing to do what it takes to see their church filled with young families, children and youth. Financial and physical resources are available to the ministry, and they are willing to invest in a reasonable strategy to accomplish the goal. The incoming pastor in this situation will find enthusiastic partners in the work.

One of the more noteworthy aspects of CLC is its commitment to getting their hands dirty by serving in the local community. For example, the church has generously shared its facility for various community programs such as "Shepherd's Hand Free Clinic," (which provides medical services to uninsured or underinsured people), meals for the hungry in the region, and donuts and coffee to those on the front lines of the pandemic at the local hospital. The annual VBS program is a well-known and well-attended children's event in the community and attracts over 200 kids annually. When the church moved to the new property in 2007, they intentionally built their facility to be a resource to the community. In fact, they can envision it being more actively used throughout the week to reach a wide range of people in relevant ways. There is a clear recognition that family life in the community is growing ever more complex, and they would love to think creatively about ways to engage the next generation of families so people can experience the love of Jesus and the community of faith. They want to be a church the community turns to when it has a need, knowing that CLC is ready to respond with the love and hope of Jesus.

The Associate Pastor for Family and Youth is a critical leader in the ongoing renewal and reach of CLC. This position will have a wide scope of responsibility, serving families through the lifecycle beginning with infants and culminating with high school seniors. The role necessitates establishing a God-honoring vision, pertinent goals and positive action steps for family and youth ministries that are aligned with the overall vision of CLC. This pastor will desire to not only grow the ministry, but disciple children and students in their faith as well as training volunteers to lead. Currently, the church has about 25 children and 20 youth-aged students connecting regularly with the ministry. The incoming Associate Pastor will develop and guide a team of volunteers. Since the annual summer VBS is a signature ministry of the church, the new pastor will champion this event with excellence. The Associate Pastor also will have the opportunity to provide support in preaching in the Sunday morning worship service. This pastor will further assist the Senior Pastor in shepherding the direction of the church.

The Associate Pastor for Family and Youth is teamed with a quality group of dedicated and enthusiastic staff. Like the congregation, they also are filled with hope and optimism for this new chapter of ministry. Staff share they are having a lot of fun serving together and the atmosphere around the office is jovial and supportive. The staff look forward to coming to work and seeing one another and tackling the work of the gospel. In addition to the Senior Pastor and the Associate Pastor to be hired, the team includes the Worship Leader, Business Administrator, Accounting, Administrative Assistant, and Custodian. The former Children's and Family Ministry Director is transitioning into another, but yet to be defined role.

## **The Candidate**

CLC is excited to call a person possessing a vibrant and passionate relationship with Jesus. They foresee someone who walks by faith and leverages the opportunities of life to share their faith with others. The incoming pastor is one who has in-depth knowledge of the Scriptures and can communicate this knowledge in age-appropriate and captivating lessons. They will be an energetic public communicator who uses humor and real-life examples to ensure the lesson plans come alive. While the ideal candidate needs to understand the intricate dynamics of organizational life in the church and is able to do the "nuts and bolts" of ministry, they also are equally skilled in shepherding the flock they oversee. This role appeals to a person who genuinely expresses love for people of all ages and who does so warmly and with affection. The incoming Associate Pastor for Family and Youth adequately balances the demands of each age group such that no one area of ministry is neglected.

This new Associate Pastor acknowledges the challenges of being a family today are substantial, and the demands are especially taxing for those seeking to be a Christian family. The ideal candidate will be able to offer strategies to households on how to maximize life together and how to serve the world as a family. They understand family systems and how to perceptively speak into the difficulties and complexities of family.

The history of CLC has been filled with some amazing accomplishments, but very often a new day requires a new way. The incoming Associate Pastor will be a person who can think outside the box and give birth to creative ideas to retool the ministry for success. They will be able to understand the current landscape and then pioneer new strategies for going forward. The new Associate Pastor will not just seek to innovate for innovation's sake or for the "coolness" of it but will deliver value-based programming with high gospel content and missional purpose.

CLC desires a new Associate Pastor who will serve as a skillful strategic partner with Pastor Dylan as well as a helpful and valuable teammate with the other staff. They will be serious minded, but fun loving; industrious, but know their boundaries. They will be respectful, kind, and eager to serve. The incoming Associate Pastor will be someone who is not afraid to climb the big hills in ministry.

## **About Whitefish**

Christ Lutheran Church (<https://www.clcwhitefish.org>) is situated in beautiful Whitefish, Montana, a town on the shores of Whitefish Lake and just a short jaunt to Glacier National Park. The town has a population of just over 8,000 residents but Flathead County consists of 100,000 people. Whitefish has the unique distinction as being listed as one of the "Top 25 Ski Towns in the World" by National Geographic. The active person can enjoy a year-round playground of activities including skiing, snowboarding, hiking, biking, boating, fishing, hunting as well as live professional theater and stellar dining. With a highly rated school system, low crime, and one of the lowest tax rates in the U.S., the quality-of-life in the region has not gone unnoticed. Whitefish, Montana offers the small-town lifestyle people are seeking, especially in the post-pandemic world. There are few better places in the country in which to grow a family and to build a ministry.

## CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS

- A theological master's degree, with a preference for an M.Div.
- A willingness to become a member of Christ Lutheran Church and subscribe to the LCMC Statement of Faith and Pastoral Admonition, (<http://www.lcmc.net/statement-of-faith/231>) including the characteristic practices of the sacraments in the Lutheran tradition.
- Ordination, or ability and desire to become ordained with the LCMC.
- Demonstrate a mature relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
- A skilled written and oral communicator with both students and parents.
- A clear and compelling expository preacher of God's word.
- Experience in innovating and growing ministry in a multi-generational context, with an emphasis on reaching younger families.
- Missionally focused toward serving and reaching the community with the Gospel.
- A preferred minimum of three years of pastoral leadership experience, or equivalent, including oversight of staff and volunteers.

## Inquiry Process

If after reading this description you have some interest in the Associate Pastor position at Christ Lutheran Church and you feel you meet the qualifications for the role, you are invited to submit the following information for consideration:

1. Your resume or CV (**in Word doc format only**).
2. Results of any personality or strengths assessments you have taken in the past three years (StrengthsFinder, DiSC, Myers-Briggs, etc.).
3. At least two links to video sermons.
4. Five references (one supervisor or board leader, two staff associates, and two personal). These references will be contacted later in the process and only with your prior approval.
5. Written responses to the following questions (**in Word doc format only**). Your responses will help us to gain a more complete picture of you and your leadership.
  - A. Describe your faith in Jesus Christ. Tell us how you came to personal faith and something about your call into ministry.
  - B. What is it about the opportunity at Christ Lutheran Church that piques your interest?
  - C. Describe your approach to family ministry.
  - D. How have you helped your ministry to grow younger or engaged the families with children and youth in meaningful ways?
  - E. How do you stay current in issues relating to family and student ministry?
  - F. What are the key factors that you believe should be present in your next ministry for you to be most effective and engaged?

Please submit your information to:

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