

Report and Recommendations

from The Worship and Music Ministry Team

to Bethany Lutheran Church Council Executive Committee

August 31, 2009

The Worship and Music Ministry Team has held six highly productive meetings within the last three months. The focus for the first five meetings was a study and discussion of *The Sunday Assembly: Using Evangelical Lutheran Worship*.

Our reading and discussion of the book undergirds the recommendations that come to the Executive Committee regarding the characteristics/qualities that we would commend to you for consideration as a new Organist/Minister of Music is selected.

The Sunday Assembly orients us to a number of valuable perspectives about worship itself as evangelical, Lutheran and ecumenical. It discusses the role of music in worship, the centrality of the communal assembly song and the assembly's voice, and the diverse language of song to help us better apprehend an image of God, "of harmony in diversity."

Chapter 4 articulates the role of music in the assembly. The authors suggest, "The arts are an integral dimension of Christian worship. . . A Lutheran understanding of the arts in worship sees them assisting in proclaiming the word in the assembly." We affirm the authors' observation that, "music has historically played an especially prominent role in Lutheran worship." "Martin Luther, "the book continues, "believed that singing texts had the equivalent value of speaking them."

Not surprisingly, then, our team gathered some powerful information about Lutheran worship and the music within that worship. Also, again, perhaps not surprisingly, our Team voiced some clear ideas about the qualities/characteristics and dispositions that we viewed as important in our organist/minister/director of music. (We left the exact title of the person and the precise range of duties to the search committee. We reviewed several job descriptions from other churches and noted their features.)

Regardless of title, we felt that the individual would exhibit:

- *exceptional, experienced musical gifts (evidence is: a minimum of an undergraduate degree in organ or music performance, a minimum of several years of professional experience, superior organ expertise, demonstrated familiarity with choral music, documented skill with a variety of musical genres and styles)
- *knowledge of/support for and appreciation of Lutheran liturgical tradition (evidence may be: previous professional experience in a liturgical tradition, or membership in a liturgical faith tradition, behavior that demonstrates knowledge about the role of music in worship)

- * exceptional interpersonal and small group communication skills together with attitudes/dispositions of openness, flexibility, collegiality, and generosity of spirit (the position requires team work and collaborative skills in worship planning, scheduling and working with other musicians /ministry colleagues)
- * a mature, Christian faith tradition (the primary role of the organist/minister/director of music is to support the proclamation of the Gospel through music)
- *availability to serve as organist for special occasions, i.e., weddings, funerals, celebrations

Our Team also discussed, but does not offer a definitive recommendation on the exact hours of the position (20, 30, 40 or more hours per week), nor did we, as indicated above, determine the exact title/range of responsibilities for the individual. We acknowledged that the individual may be ordained as a pastor or as called as an Associate in Ministry. We are a bit uncertain about the exact number of years of experience that we would be seeking in the ideal person for the position, but we would not recommend that the Bethany position be the first professional position for the individual.

We commend to the Executive Committee the web sites of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians (www.alcm.org) and the American Guild of Organists (www.agohq.org) as helpful sites. Both sites are places for position postings and the AGO site contains salary recommendations for organists.

Our Team stands ready to be of assistance in any way as the Executive Committee commissions a search committee and refines the job requirements and qualifications. We trust that the recommendations here will be helpful as the Executive Committee moves forward in its work.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to be of assistance and service.