

Reflections on Ministry and Context

# Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

San Jose, CA

Completed:



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

*Congregations and Organizations in the Call Process are invited to expand their Ministry Site Profile (MSP) by reflecting on the several key aspects of ministry and context given below. You are encouraged to give short, thoughtful answers (a maximum of 250 words) on at least four of the seven topics. This form is optional unless specifically requested by a synod bishop. The form is submitted electronically and becomes a part of the Ministry Site's MSP.*

1. What key issues or concerns of our church and society are reflected in the ministry that is centered in your congregation or organization?

**Like much of the nation, San Jose has seen a significant increase in the number of unhoused people in our area, due in large measure to the high cost of living here and an increase in mental health issues stemming from drug use and other things. We also try to do our part to help the numbers of immigrants and refugees in our area who face issues of acculturation, resettlement, jobs, and education. Finally, we try to maintain an awareness of the issues faced by the LGBTQ community, in particular LGBTQ youth. Beginning with a workshop (Intercultural Development Inventory) led by Julie Boleyn of the Kaleidoscope Institute, CGS is working on creating awareness and learning about the topic of anti-racism both at CGS itself and throughout our Synod.**

2. How do the stewardship practices and allocation of financial resources of the congregation or organization reflect your priorities for mission?

**Generally speaking, CGS is in a good financial position with significant reserves, although many of our recent budgets have relied on spending taken from our reserves. This spending, however, has been more than offset by appreciation of our portfolio. We do so because we believe many of the areas we spend on reflect our priorities for our mission. It is important to us that we support our Synod by tithing. We provide a discretionary fund for our Pastor to use when needed to help our community. To that end, we keep a number of "survival kits" and gift cards in the food pantry ready to give to people who come to our door asking for help. We also see maintaining our budget as a way to avoid reducing our staffing; and, finally, we include funding in our budget (and rely on cash donations) so that we can continue to contribute to Youth Space (for LGBTQ youth), the Giving Tree (at Christmas time to provide for families in need), the Safe Car Park program, the Grateful Garments program, the Second Harvest Food Bank, and for shelter cooking for the Julian Street Inn. We do have needs for upgrading our current facilities, especially our kitchen and two bathrooms. Planning for the kitchen and bathroom remodel is moving forward with the expectation that significant funding will come from financial reserves. On a more positive note, significant restricted funds (made available thanks to a donation from a past member) are available for the CGS library, the Sunday School program, and a diaconal ministry.**

3. In what ways is the membership of your congregation or organization similar or different from the people of the neighborhood in which you are located?

**The answer to this question depends on how we define our neighborhood. Our immediate neighborhood is quite mixed. Much of Willow Glen consists of upscale homes inhabited by very well-off people. At the same time, there are many rentals in our area, and one does not have to go far to see encampments of the unhoused, or people who are living in their cars (hence our Safe Car Park program). If we expand our neighborhood beyond Willow Glen, it becomes substantially more diverse. The membership of CGS tends to draw from the more privileged segments of our society. While CGS is more diverse in its membership than many Lutheran churches, it still is not as diverse as**



the community around us.

4. Identify the three most significant or formative events in the history of your congregation or organization.

**1. Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church was formed in 1971 as part of a merger between Christ Lutheran Church and Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.**

**2. CGS has been a welcoming church for many years. The congregation officially became a RIC (Reconciling in Christ) congregation in 1989. The congregation continues to minister to the LGBTQ community having supported domestic partnerships, marrying same-sex couples, and by participating in the annual San Jose Pride celebrations.**

**3. Since the beginning of the pandemic, CGS, like most congregations, turned to having meetings and services on Zoom, and, importantly, made its worship services available online via YouTube. It is also possible that while CGS lost some members while we were not having in-person worship, now that we have resumed in-person worship, the members who have returned are an even more close-knit community than before.**

5. Describe the way the congregation or organization is currently involved in community and ecumenical partnerships.

**CGS has been involved in fundraisers for the Second Harvest food bank, and it hosts the Safe Car Park program which is an ecumenical / community endeavor. CGS joins in the ecumenical / interfaith elements of our local Pride celebration, and we support the LGBTQ Youth Space. We do shelter cooking and have participated in the Grateful Garments Program. On God's Work Our Hands Sunday, we pack meals for the hungry. CGS sponsors a local Scout troop that has been at the forefront of inclusion of women and LGBTQ people in scouting. We host an ecumenical Christmas (and sometimes Easter) service for the German-speaking community. CGS has provided rehearsal space for arts organizations, including the Silicon Valley Gay Men's Chorus, Rainbow Women's Chorus, Mixed Chorus Kakehashi and various community music schools. Before the pandemic, we used to share a Thanksgiving meal with the unhoused community in conjunction with Encompass Homeless Ministry.**

6. Has your congregation or organization had significant conflict in recent history and, if so, what have you learned from that experience?

**The last time CGS experienced a church-wide conflict was in the 1990s when a long-time pastor left. While every organization (including CGS) experiences conflict on an individual basis, we believe we are correct in stating that there has been no serious congregation-wide conflict at CGS in recent years**

7. Describe your physical facilities: construction date, purpose, capacity, date of last renovation, any deferred maintenance, and any plans for upgrading.

**Facility: The CGS campus consists of four areas - 1) the sanctuary (seating ~250) including the narthex, office, nursery, and Fireside Room (built in 1965); 2) the original building, now the Great Hall (fellowship hall), kitchen and library (mid-1950's); 3) a classroom wing (1965); and 4) the parsonage (early 1950's).**

**Renovations / Improvements: The roof on Great Hall and office/narthex was replaced in 1990's. The sanctuary still has its original roof. The library was recently relocated and upgraded. The church has been proactive in reducing energy usage. The main heating systems were replaced in 2010, consisting of two boilers (Great Hall and classroom wing) and a new forced-air furnace for the sanctuary. Solar panels were installed on the Great Hall roof in 2011 and, whenever possible, lighting has been changed to LED throughout the facility. The HVAC system for the entire building was replaced in 2021 although the AC is quite limited and might need to be expanded in the future due to climate change. New windows were installed in the office in 2021.**



**Since the parsonage has been reclaimed for use by our pastor, improvements and updates to it have begun.**

**Deferred Maintenance:** Some of the facility is showing its age - the kitchen and main restrooms, although functional, are in serious need of an upgrade, and the electrical system is somewhat inadequate for a modern facility. We are working with an architect and contractor to develop plans to remodel/replace the kitchen and bathrooms, although funding for the project has not yet been secured beyond using our reserves.