



**POSITION DESCRIPTION**  
**Associate Director for Youth and Family Ministries**  
**St. John's Lutheran Church**

### VISION

The Associate Director for Youth and Families Ministries (hereafter “the AD”) will work with staff and leaders of the congregation to design, implement, and facilitate a comprehensive program of Christian faith formation from infancy into young adulthood. The program will integrate all related ministries currently undertaken at St. John’s and coordinate the work of leaders of those ministries. The program will also develop intergenerational participation and support.

The six overlapping circles in the graphic above represent the six major areas of the program to be developed. In some areas, the AD will be the person primarily responsible for leadership; in other areas, the AD will work with existing leaders in a supportive and facilitative capacity.

### DESIRED OUTCOMES

- To promote the engagement of young people in the mission and ministries of the congregation from baptism into young adulthood
- To cultivate the attention and participation of the congregation in the Christian faith formation of young people
- To nurture the Christian identity of young people toward lifelong commitments

### DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Personal Christian faith grounded in baptismal vocation
- Relevant pedagogical experience and/or education
- Relevant theological experience and/or education
- Active membership in an ELCA congregation or a congregation of an ELCA full-communion partner

## INTEGRATING THE SIX AREAS

### ***Baptism***

The AD will work with other staff of the congregation to develop a comprehensive ministry of teaching and support for families and sponsors of young people being brought to baptism. This will include pre-baptismal preparation and instruction, the scheduling of baptisms, and post-baptismal support for parents and sponsors.

**NOTE: A ministry of teaching and support for adults coming for baptism will be developed separately from the program here described and will be integrated with Luminaria.**

### ***Pre Sunday School***

Drawing upon Luther's teaching about the role of parents in the faith formation of their children, the AD will develop a ministry of instruction and encouragement for parents – and baptismal sponsors – to promote their continued engagement in the promises they made on behalf of their children at baptism.

#### **Initiatives:**

- In collaboration with the pastor(s) of the congregation, the AD will develop printed resources that offer guidance to parents about (a) cultivating prayer habits with their children, (b) introducing biblical stories to their children, (c) celebrating baptismal anniversaries with their children, (d) orienting their children to worship, etc.
- The AD will facilitate gatherings of the families of young children to foster engagement in the practices described in those printed resources.
- Those printed resources will be given to all families in follow-up to baptisms, and copies will be kept available at key locations in the sanctuary and other appropriate locations of the church facilities.
- The “children’s space” in the sanctuary will be arranged, furnished, and equipped for the support of the ongoing faith formation of young children in the company of their parents and/or other primary adults.

### ***Sunday School***

The AD will support the work of the director and teachers of Sunday School in the enrollment and continued participation of children in Sunday School over the years/grades prior to confirmation classes. The AD will collaborate with the director and teachers of Sunday School in the ongoing development of the Sunday School ministry, adapting to changing circumstances, challenges, and opportunities. The AD will help to recruit, equip, and enable teachers and leaders of the Sunday School. The AD will guide and equip teachers in theologically sound and age appropriate pedagogical practices.

**NOTE: This will be the area of the program that will include instruction for first communion, and the AD will work with other staff of the congregation and the director and teachers of Sunday School to plan and provide that instruction.**

**NOTE:** The AD will help to facilitate the VBS ministry of the congregation in coordination with Sunday School.

### **Confirmation**

The AD will support the work of confirmation teachers and promote the engagement of confirmation-age young people in the confirmation ministry of the congregation.

#### Initiatives:

- Similar to the practice in Luminaria, a rite of entrance for confirmation students will be planned and scheduled for inclusion in the worship of the congregation on a suitable occasion in the liturgical calendar.
- A “news about our young people” feature will be designed for and included in all congregational media. Parents and other adults in relationships with young people will be encouraged to publicize news about the achievements, endeavors, milestones, and other notable experiences in the lives of young people in that feature.

### **High School**

The AD will facilitate existing opportunities for high school youth, such as the summer youth trip, youth Sunday, and Holy Week participation. In collaboration with other staff and leaders of the congregation, the AD will work to develop new approaches to and new initiatives for St. John’s ministry with high school students tailored to their gifts and their interests.

#### Initiative Possibility 1:

- The congregation’s ministry with high school students will prioritize formative events such as retreats, local service/mission projects, service/mission trips outside the local area, participation in synod/ELCA events, and so forth. Each formative event will include aspects of service, learning, and fellowship. The AD will serve as the primary leader for planning and facilitating such events and for engaging other members of the congregation in supportive roles as teachers, chaperones, etc.
- The AD and other leaders will meet with high school students during Sunday School time for preparatory learning regarding upcoming events and for reflective debriefing following each event.
- The AD will collaborate with high school youth, parents, and other leaders to develop activity-based as well as lesson-based opportunities for ongoing faith formation of high school students during the Sunday School time. Priority will be given to the interests of high school students, especially as those relate to artistic and other vocational aspirations.

#### Initiative Possibility 2:

- Following confirmation, high school students will be invited to participate in congregational ministries with younger ages, helping, for example to teach younger Sunday School classes or confirmation classes, assisting in the nursery, or helping to train acolytes.

#### Initiative Possibility 3:

- The congregation will develop a fund to provide annual stipends to all confirmed high school students for an “internship” opportunity. A specified amount (c. \$2,000?) will be made available to all high school students participating in the internship opportunity for each year of high school (ninth through twelfth grades).
- High school students participating in the internship opportunity will work with the AD and other leaders to choose and tailor their opportunity. Possibilities include serving in an existing ministry of the congregation or working beside members of the congregation in a shadowing capacity in vocations beyond the congregation.
- High school students participating in the internship opportunity will help the AD to craft a covenant of agreement that will specify the commitments of the opportunity. The annual stipend will be awarded to the students in an appropriate way as determined in consultation with the students’ parents.
- Students may participate in the same internship opportunity for as many as all four years of high school or may choose and tailor a different opportunity as often as each year of high school.
- At the end of each year, participating students will make a presentation to the congregation (in a manner yet to be determined) regarding their experience.
- No application will be required of any student choosing to participate in the internship opportunity and no student who chooses to participate will be denied.
- This initiative might replace the existing scholarship program of the congregation.

### ***Post High School***

The AD will help to develop initiatives for ongoing connections between the congregation and high school graduates who leave home for education, military service, employment, etc., publicizing news about their endeavors and achievements. High school graduates who permanently relocate outside the local area will be commended to the care of another congregation. High school graduates who remain in the local area or return to it after a period away for education, military service, etc., will be integrated into the young adult ministry of the congregation.

### **ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

The AD will work with staff and leaders of the congregation to ensure compliance with the child safety policies of the congregation.

The AD will facilitate all congregational fundraisers intended to support ministries with and for young people.