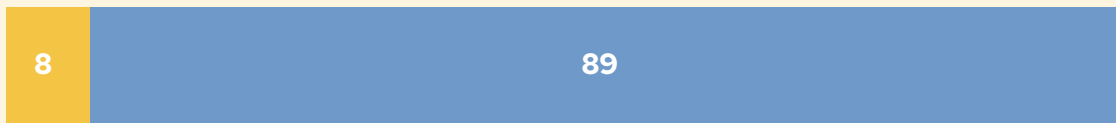


SURVEY REPORT | LAY LEADERS RESPOND

Congregation and Church Worker Future Planning

Lutheran Church–Canada pastors and congregational leaders participated in a survey in the winter of 2024. The surveys were sent out by the President’s Ministry Council on behalf of our synod and seminaries. This survey report serves as a tool for our synodical, seminary, and congregational leaders by providing a better understanding of the issues facing our congregations—so we can work together to address the concerns of our synodical family.

QUESTION: What best describes your congregation?



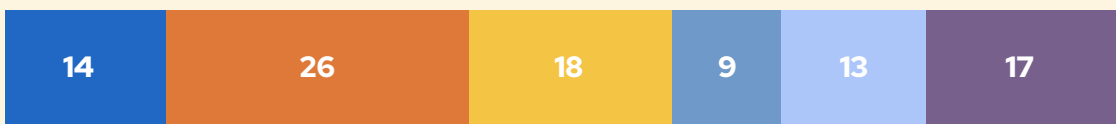
- Ministry is in a language other than English.
- Most ministry is in a language other than English, but some ministry is in English.
- Most ministry is in English, but some ministry is in a language other than English.
- Ministry is done in English.

ANSWERED: 97

Ministry Languages reported in Lutheran Church–Canada:

- | | | | |
|-----------|---------------|----------|------------|
| • ARABIC | • DHA-ANYUWAA | • GERMAN | • MANDARIN |
| • ASL | • ENGLISH | • HINDI | • OROMO |
| • CHINESE | • FRENCH | • KOREAN | • SPANISH |

QUESTION: What best describes the community your church is located in?



- Rural – Country Church
- Small Town (<10,000 people)
- Small City (10–60,000 people)
- Medium City (60–150,000 people)
- Large City (150–800,000 people)
- Metropolitan Area (800,000+)

ANSWERED: 97

QUESTION: If you are located in a Metropolitan area, is your congregation...



ANSWERED: 38

QUESTION: Is your congregation a single or multi-point parish?



ANSWERED: 96

QUESTION: Our congregation is...



- Currently served by a full-time pastor (including multi-point parish)
- Currently served by a part-time pastor
- Vacant and calling
- Vacant and not calling

ANSWERED: 97

QUESTION: If your pastor was to leave your congregation, do you believe you are in a position where you could call another full-time pastor?



ANSWERED: 94

QUESTION: If you would not be/is not in a position to call a new pastor, is there at least one layman who might be called upon to lead worship?



ANSWERED: 86





QUESTION: If you would not be/is not in a position to call a new pastor, is there at least one layman who might be called upon to lead Bible Study?



ANSWERED: 88

QUESTION: If there is such a layman, do you think he would be open to taking classes from the Seminary via distance education to be better equipped for this service?






-  Yes – He would be very open to the possibility.
-  Yes – He might be open to the possibility.
-  No – He’s not likely to be open to the possibility.
-  Not applicable – No layman available.

ANSWERED: 84

QUESTION: How good is the internet connection at your church facility?



-  We have no internet connection at the church.
-  Somewhat connected – We could not stream but we could easily download a video presentation.
-  Very well connected – We could reliably stream a presentation that was occurring at another location.

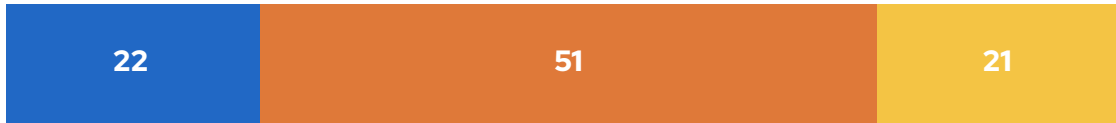
ANSWERED: 86

QUESTION: If your congregation would not be/is not in a position to call a new pastor, is there a congregation within reasonable driving distance with which you could form a multi-point parish?



ANSWERED: 31

QUESTION: Do you believe your congregation would be open to forming a multi- point parish if pastoral services became an issue?



- Yes – We would be very open.
- Yes – We would be somewhat open.
- No – We would not be open at this time.

ANSWERED: 94

QUESTION: Is your congregation considering adding an additional worker?



- Yes – We are looking at adding a pastor.
- Yes – We are looking at adding a DPS.
- Yes – We are looking at adding a non-rostered worker.
- No – We are not looking at adding workers.

ANSWERED: 86

QUESTION: How many people in your congregation would be well-suited to a church work position? (i.e. people you could encourage to consider full-time ministry)



- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5+

ANSWERED: 53

SURVEY REPORT | LAY LEADERS RESPOND

Thematic Summary of Comments

This following summarizes the responses provided by lay leaders in the 2024 Future Planning Survey. Comments are organized thematically for each of the key questions.

QUESTION: What unique challenges does your congregation face?

AGING & DECLINING MEMBERSHIP

Most frequently reported theme.

- Many noted a lack of young families or youth involvement.

"Aging congregation. Lack of young families with children."

"Declining, aging population. No children."

FACILITY & LOCATION CHALLENGES

Some congregations rent space or are geographically isolated.

- Several mentioned sharing buildings or lacking their own.

FINANCIAL STRUGGLES & STAFFING

Difficulty affording full-time pastors; reliance on part-time or retired clergy.

"Not enough income to pay a full-time pastor."

"Two-year vacancy; multiple returned calls. Congregation is losing optimism."

INTERNAL RESISTANCE & CHANGE FATIGUE

Hesitancy toward change or collaborating with others.

- A few cited members resistant to outreach or adaptation.

"Members resistant to change to better enhance our ability to reach more people."

QUESTION: What unique challenges does your part of the country face?

COST OF LIVING & ECONOMIC STRAIN

High housing and living costs prevalent in many regions.

"Inflation is high and most parishioners are on fixed income."

SECULARISM & RELIGIOUS APATHY

Communities increasingly disengaged from churches.

"Religious affiliation is not an important factor in daily life."

GEOGRAPHIC ISOLATION

Rural settings and vast distances between congregations.

"Distances are large between parishes."

"Very large circuit, very few pastors, harsh winter travel."

QUESTION: What challenges do you see Canadian society in general facing?

SPIRITUAL DECLINE & SECULARISM

Widespread decline of faith and Christian values.

"Society is slowly becoming Godless."

"People turning away from God. Immoral government."

ECONOMIC & SOCIAL INSTABILITY

High cost of living, housing crises, and social stressors.

• Many cited inflation, unemployment, or strained healthcare.

"Housing shortages... need to be more vocal against assisted end-of-life."

CULTURAL POLARIZATION & DIVISION

Increased polarization and social disconnection.

• Multiple concerns about 'woke' culture, liberalism, and lack of civility.

"Society drifting from Christianity."

"Conflict and tensions... high degree of self-interest."

QUESTION: What challenges do you see LCC in general facing?

PASTORAL SHORTAGES & SEMINARY RECRUITMENT

Major concern across nearly all respondents.

"Shortage of pastors and church workers."
"Not enough seminary applicants."

NEED FOR ADAPTATION & OUTREACH

Call for modernizing outreach methods while retaining doctrine.

- Many suggested improved communication and youth outreach.

"Need to connect with young people... Evangelism not stressed enough."

AGING MEMBERSHIP & DECLINING ATTENDANCE

Shrinking, aging congregations and low engagement.

"Very few young people attending services."

"Small congregations struggling to remain viable."

QUESTION: What ministry aptitude and skills for church work are most needed in your context?

COMMUNICATION & RELATIONAL SKILLS

Pastors need to connect with people of all ages.

- Many responses emphasized empathy, listening, and relevance.

"Someone who can preach and connect authentically."
"Be more focused on relating to people than on ritual."

FLEXIBILITY & INNOVATION

Ability to adapt, use modern methods, and support aging populations.

- Several called for reform in pastoral training.

"Train laypeople and use technology effectively."
"Need leaders with enthusiasm and creative thinking."

OUTREACH & EVANGELISM ABILITIES

Skills to engage non-members and youth.

- Emphasis on technological competence and community presence.

"Need someone with strong outreach and evangelism skills." **"Use media to reach the younger generation."**