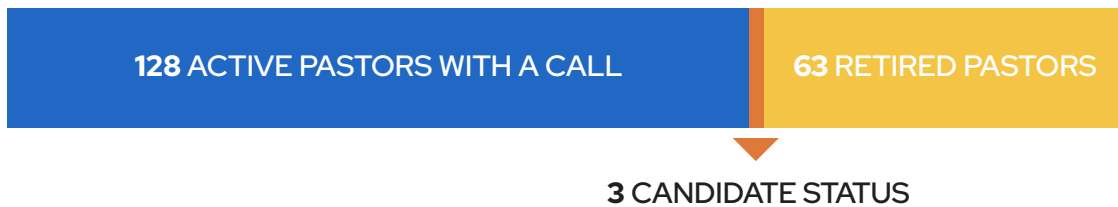


SURVEY REPORT | PASTORS RESPOND

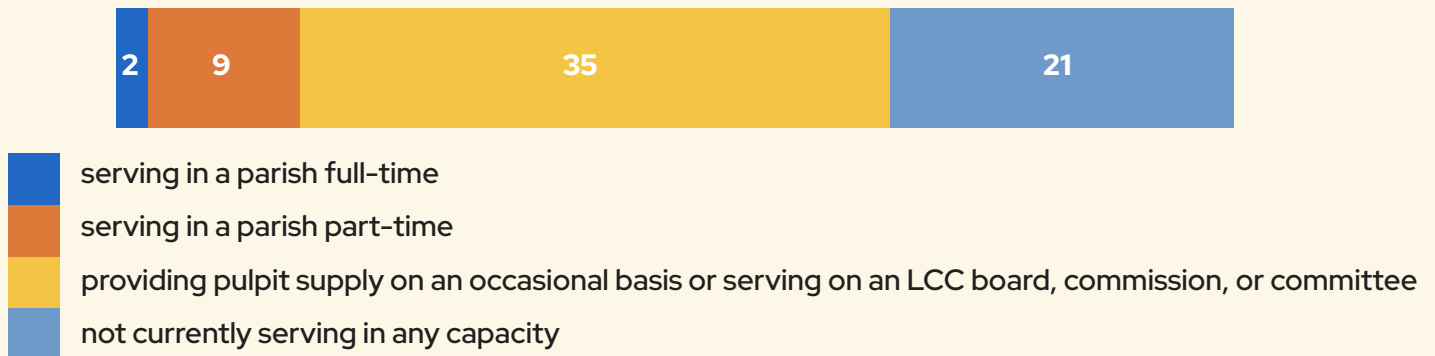
Congregation and Church Worker Future Planning

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.

Survey Participants include:

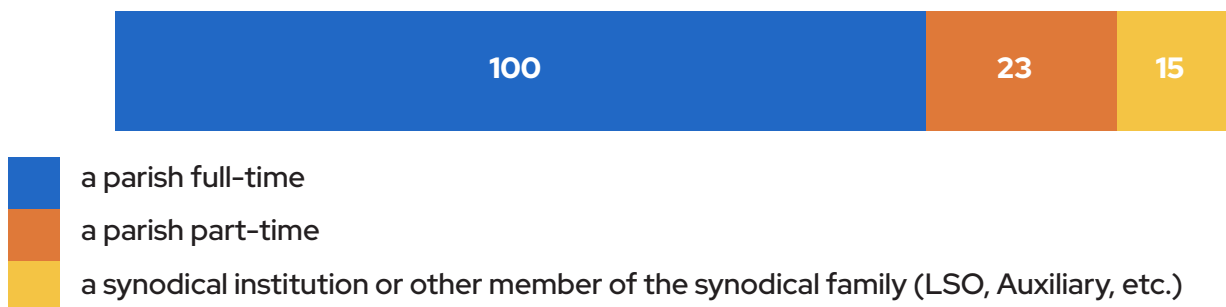


QUESTION: As a retired or candidate status, I am...



ANSWERED: 67

QUESTION: I am serving...



ANSWERED: 138

QUESTION: What best describes the parish you currently serve?



1

- 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: 123

Ministry Languages reported in Lutheran Church–Canada:

- ARABIC
- DHA-ANYUWAA
- FRENCH
- MANDARIN
- PLATTDEUTSCH
- SPANISH
- ASL
- ENGLISH
- GERMAN
- NUER
- PORTUGUESE
- TIGRINYA
- CHINESE
- FARSI
- HINDI
- OROMO
- PUNJABI
- URDU

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+)

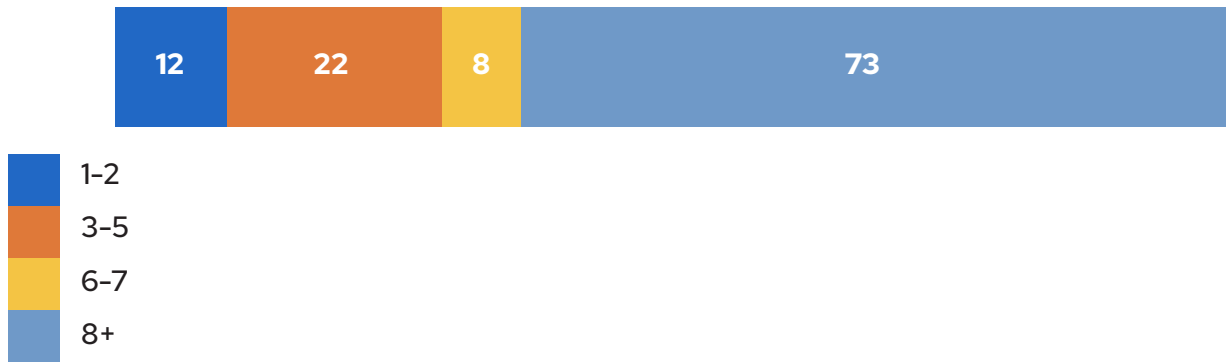
ANSWERED: 123

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



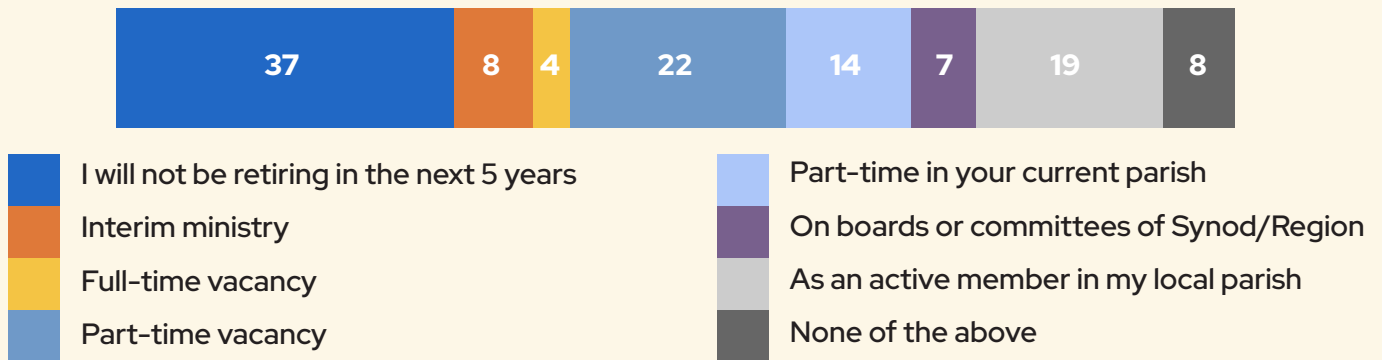
ANSWERED: 59

QUESTION: How many years before you plan to retire?



ANSWERED: 115

QUESTION: If you plan to retire in the next 5 years or less, how do you see yourself serving after retirement? (Select all that apply)



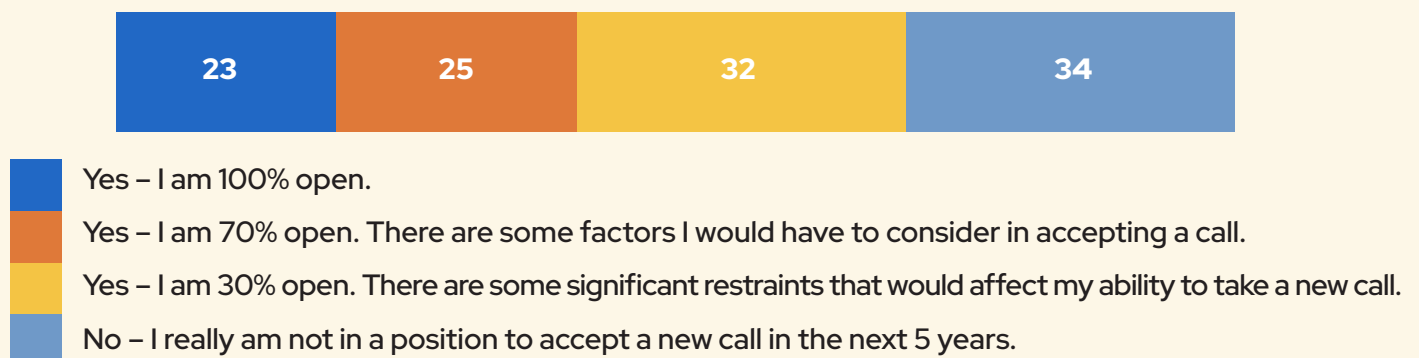
ANSWERED: 76

QUESTION: When you retire do you plan to worship where you currently serve?



ANSWERED: 101

QUESTION: Are you open to a call?



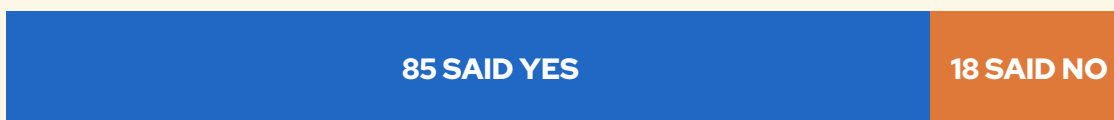
ANSWERED: 114

QUESTION: If you were to leave your current parish, do you believe they are in a position where they could call another full-time pastor?



ANSWERED: 119

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



ANSWERED: 103

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



ANSWERED: 102

QUESTION: If there is such a layman, would he 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.

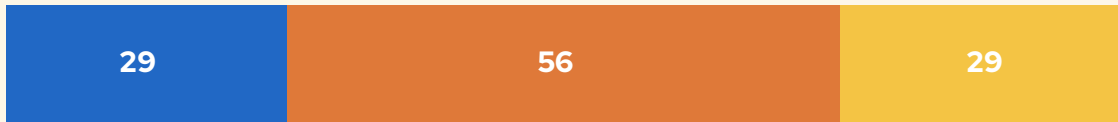
ANSWERED: 100

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



ANSWERED: 104

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



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

ANSWERED: 114

QUESTION: Is your parish 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: 111

QUESTION: How many people in your parish 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: 88

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: 112

SURVEY REPORT | PASTORS RESPOND

Thematic Summary of Comments

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

QUESTION: What unique challenges does your parish face?

DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES

Aging congregations, youth disengagement, and declining attendance.

- Many noted few or no young families.

"An aging congregation with no younger families."

INTERNAL DYNAMICS

Leadership shortages, divisions, difficulty in cooperation.

- Many noted internal conflicts or leadership gaps.

"Division in goals among the congregation."

FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

Budget shortfalls, inability to afford even pastoral salaries, building upkeep issues.

- Many rely on part-time pastors.

"Paying for a full-time pastor uses almost all of our resources."

OUTREACH & EVANGELISM

Difficulty connecting with community, and cultural change.

- Many mentioned challenges in outreach or immigrant integration.

"The world has come here... we need training in intercultural outreach."

GEOGRAPHIC & STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

Challenges of multi-point and rural/remote parishes, lack of church buildings.

- Geographic isolation.
- Several rent space for worship.

"150 km between points. It's difficult to provide pastoral care."

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

COST OF LIVING & HOUSING

High housing prices and cost of living limit church and community sustainability.

"High housing prices, both renting and purchasing are a major issue in my area."

SECULARISM & SOCIAL SHIFTS

Decline of religious interest, rise in spiritual confusion.

"There is a general apathy regarding church, faith and God."

GEOGRAPHIC ISOLATION

Rural settings and vast distances between congregations.

"6.5 hours' drive to the nearest LCC church."

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

MORAL & SPIRITUAL DECLINE

Secularization, erosion of Christian values, and confusion in identity.

- Many comments reflected this.
- Topics include LGBTQ+, euthanasia, abortion, and post-truth culture.

"We live in a post-Christian society... we are afraid to offend."

ECONOMIC & SOCIAL INSTABILITY

Rising cost of living, housing crises, economic disparity.

"Cost of living is putting stress on families and spiritual needs are on the back burner."

CULTURAL POLARIZATION & DIVISION

Increased political and ideological polarization.

"Ongoing fracturing, chaos, disunity."

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

DECLINING MEMBERSHIP & AGING DEMOGRAPHICS

Shrinking congregations and aging members.

"Shrinking churches, shortage of pastors."

LACK OF OUTREACH & ADAPTATION

Disconnect between leadership and congregations, cultural engagement challenges.

- Many called for better communication and adaptability.

"Disconnect of leadership with people in congregations... need to fund new ministries."

PASTORAL SHORTAGES & SEMINARY CONCERNS

Not enough pastors, concerns about having two seminaries.

"Two seminaries for our size seems unsustainable."

Thematic Summary of Comments Cont'd

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

RELATIONAL & COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Emphasis on empathy, listening, connecting with members.

- Many responses mentioned communication or people skills.

"Ability to connect and communicate with rural people."

"Someone who shares our Lord's love for people."

FLEXIBILITY, ADAPTABILITY & INNOVATION

Ability to serve multiple points, adapt to change, and lead creatively.

"Flexibility, stamina, leadership, direction, vision."

"Willing to sacrifice and work hard."

FAITHFULNESS TO DOCTRINE & PASTORAL INTEGRITY

Commitment to Scripture, Lutheran Confessions, servant leadership.

- Many responses emphasized faithfulness and integrity.

"Faithfulness to the Word and a heart to care for souls."

"Firmly planted in the Word of God."

PREACHING, TEACHING & THEOLOGICAL DEPTH

Strong biblical teaching, clear preaching, and doctrinal knowledge.

- Many comments referenced these competencies.

"Preaching, teaching, a winsome attitude."

"Strong and sound biblical preaching and teaching."

OUTREACH & EVANGELISM FOCUS

Aptitude for reaching the unchurched, evangelism, and mission-mindedness.

"Evangelism and outreach with newcomers."

"A missionary heart and aptitude."

USE OF TECHNOLOGY & MODERN TOOLS

Comfort with digital platforms, streaming, and tech use in ministry.

"Use technology to keep the points connected."