



# Discovery Team Final Report

*Christiania Lutheran Church, Lakeville MN*

## *Members*

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## *Purpose*

Help Christiania Lutheran evaluate the current state of its youth and family ministry program and create a strategic vision for its future.

## *Process*

Beginning in April 2023, the Discovery Team (DT) met approximately every other week for 90 minutes at a time. DT members were specifically invited to serve on this team based on their dedication to Christiania's ministry to children and youth, and Christiania's overall mission. Each member was able to offer valuable feedback and a unique individual perspective that helped the DT honor the past, evaluate the present, and envision the future of youth ministry at Christiania.

This group spent 2 sessions strategically thinking through the vision, mission, and values of Christiania in relation to its youth and family ministry program, and 1 session drafting congregational surveys, 1 session analyzing the results of those surveys, and 1 final session reviewing strategic planning options for eventual staff/resource sharing with other congregations in the area. This report is the culmination of that work, intended to be a guide for staffing and programming decisions for the next phase of youth and family ministry.

# Faith Assets at Christiania

*Cultural Strengths of Children and Youth Ministry at Christiania Lutheran Church (CLC)*

from Exemplary Youth Ministry Study ([www.firstthird.org/eym](http://www.firstthird.org/eym))

The Faith Assets are elements that describe congregational culture and make-up a framework for congregations to use in developing the faith of young people. The study points to these 44 elements as ways and means through which congregations have, over time and with great

effort, built their capacities to influence the faith of young people. These elements are descriptive not prescriptive. Rather than being all encompassing, they are part of a growing body of knowledge about what it takes from the congregation, the family and the youth ministry to help young people's faith life grow to maturity.

Discovery Team members reviewed the 44 Faith Assets, and determined that the following Faith Assets were most applicable to the current Congregational and Youth Ministry culture at Christiania. This is based on the personal experiences and perception of our Discovery Team members.

- **Emphasizes Prayer:** The congregation practices the presence of God as individuals and community through prayer. (*Congregational quality*)
  - Spirituality
  - Community
  - Connection
- **Supports Youth Ministry:** Youth and ministry with young people are high priorities for the congregation. (*Congregational quality*)
  - Development
  - Belonging
  - Authenticity
- **Promotes Service:** The congregation sponsors outreach, service projects, and cultural immersions both locally and globally. (*Congregational quality*)
  - Connection
  - Community
  - Service
- **Demonstrates Interpersonal Competence:** The pastor builds a sense of community and relates well with adults and youth. (*Pastoral quality*)
  - Community
  - Authenticity
  - Belonging
- **Models Faith:** The youth director and volunteers are role models reflecting a living faith for youth and adults. (*Youth Leaders/Volunteers quality*)
  - Development
  - Authenticity
  - Spirituality

## Recommendations from the Discovery Team:

- Seek a ministry candidate with giftedness that can uphold and elevate these Faith Assets at CLC.

- Pursue a ministry model that maintains and expands the scope of these assets to reach Christiania families more broadly and more deeply.

# Established Values at CLC

## MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

Discovery Team members discussed the Mission Statement of Christiania and its significance in the life of the congregation:

***“We start with Christ...In our Serving...In our Caring...In our Growing”***

In reviewing each clause of the mission statement, we discussed how directly correlate to Faith Assets and Values from the previous. The Discovery Team believes that these Values are highly relevant, evident, and well-known to congregational members. This impression was further supported later in our process when reviewing results of the congregational survey. Later in our process, we refer to these Values as “Established Values.”

## *Themes of Mission and Belief Statements, with supporting Faith Assets*

- **“We start with Christ...”**
  - Spirituality
  - Belonging
    - **Emphasizes Prayer:** practices the presence of God as individuals and community through prayer.
    - **Models Faith:** acts role models reflecting a living faith for youth and adults.
- **“In our Serving...”**
  - Service
  - Community
  - Connection
    - **Promotes Service:** sponsors outreach, service projects, and cultural immersions both locally and globally.
- **“In our Caring...”**
  - Authenticity
  - Belonging
  - Community
    - **Demonstrates Interpersonal Competence:** builds a sense of community and relates well with adults and youth.
    - **Promotes Service:** sponsors outreach, service projects, and cultural immersions both locally and globally.

- **“In our Growing”**
  - Development
  - Authenticity
    - **Supports Youth Ministry:** prioritizes youth and ministry with young people.

## Emerging Values at CLC

### PER DISCOVERY TEAM MEMBERS

Discovery members were asked to consider the perception of Christiania to new members, visitors, and residents of the surrounding community. To someone encountering Christiania for the first time, what makes this congregation different from others? What shared values are most evident in a first impression? Their responses were based a combination of personal experiences when they were new members, direct interactions with members of the community, and reasonable assumptions. Our team refers to these values as Christiania’s “Emerging Values.”

Overall, the DT believes that there is a high level of congruence between Christiania’s “Established Values” and “Emerging Values.” For the most part, Christiania and its members live out the identity they aspire to. And yet, Christiania actively chooses to remain open to how incoming ideas or changes in the community might shape its identity going forward.

- **Worship**
  - Engaging music and sermons; depth of thought but still accessible and relevant to daily life
- **Faith Learning and Development**
  - Offers children and youth faith development programs and an environment for developing meaningful friendships with their peers.
- **Service and Outreach**
  - Supporting and knowing our neighbor and serving the community in a variety of ways.
- **Hospitality**
  - New members often cite “feeling welcome” as their primary reason for joining. Congregation is small in a way that feels approachable and close-knit.

## Recommendations from the Discovery Team:

- Seek a ministry candidate with giftedness that can uphold and elevate both Established and Emerging Values at CLC.

- Pursue a ministry model that maintains Established Values, imagines and implements creative expressions of both Established and Emerging Values, and continually communicates these values to youth and families connected with our ministry.

## Desired Outcome for Youth at CLC

### PER DISCOVERY TEAM MEMBERS

- Safe space to question and share
- Engaging for all learning styles
- Service; value their neighbor
- Love; belonging
- Fun; chance to form and deepen friendships
- Purpose; Meaning; Identity
- Spiritual and emotional support
- Connection to caring adults
- Feel respected and valued
- To know others and be known

### Recommendations from the Discovery Team:

- Seek a ministry candidate who has a passion and a vision for similar goals and outcomes.
- Seek a ministry candidate who can strategically shape the model of ministry at Christiania to achieve these desired outcomes.
- Pursue a ministry model that regularly assesses and reflects on whether these goals are being achieved and makes adjustments accordingly.
- Seek a ministry partnership with a congregation or a faith-based context that can allow for more frequent, more strategic, and more meaningful opportunities for these goals to be achieved.

## Congregational Surveys

### PROCESS OVERVIEW AND RESULTS

DT members designed and implemented congregational surveys, offered to all members of the Christiania. Participants were invited to take either the Adult or Youth (for 6th-12th graders) survey; both surveys asked very similar questions and were both designed to take less than 10 minutes to complete. Links to the complete survey results are below:

Survey Results, ADULT:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-QRZnebDCHCVvtUmaCC7E2A\\_3D\\_3D/](https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-QRZnebDCHCVvtUmaCC7E2A_3D_3D/)

Survey Results, YOUTH:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-74wZyFe99OIYOPkm2848MA\\_3D\\_3D/](https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-74wZyFe99OIYOPkm2848MA_3D_3D/)

## *Survey Scope and Demographic Trends*

- Dates of collection: May 10th – May 27th, 2023
- Adult respondents: 58
- Youth (6th-12th grade) respondents: 16
  - Confirmation-aged (6th-9th grade): 13
  - Post-Confirmation: 3

•44.8% of Adult respondents have served as Volunteers/Inter-Generational Partners in the last 3 years.

•46.5% of Adult respondents are Parents of at least one child currently active in our program.

•63.7% of Adult respondents are “direct stakeholders” in our CYF ministry, meaning only 36.3% of Adult respondents were neither a parent nor a volunteer.

•93.7% of Youth respondents attend worship at Faith two or more times per month.

•81.2% of Youth respondents participate in some level of volunteering or service through Christiania;

•62.3% participate in some kind of Christiania fellowship events outside of Confirmation.

•31.3% of Youth respondents were high school students; 68.7% are middle schoolers.

## Core Competencies

PER SURVEY RESULTS

Top 3 Competencies (Weighted average YOUTH and ADULT)

- **Authentic**—makes sincere personal connections with youth; relates faith to real life issues
- **Organized**—plans events and programs for youth; detail-oriented and efficient
- **Communicator** — effectively communicates the vision of the ministry and specific programming details with families and volunteers

Strong Supporting Competencies (Weighted Average of YOUTH and ADULT)

- **Spiritual**—has a deep personal faith; develops spiritual practices such as prayer in others
- **Visionary**—seeks new, creative ways to make church/faith more meaningful to youth

## Reflections from the Discovery Team:

- The Authenticity competency seems to be overwhelmingly the most desired competency for this position. Authenticity is the cornerstone for the relationship-building aspect of this ministry. When asked what they like most about being a part of Christiania Lutheran, Youth respondents most often cited the importance of building authentic relationships. The desire for the incoming Children, Youth, and Family staff person to have a strong congregational presence, as well as a presence at community events, would also be included in the authenticity competency. Survey comments indicate a widespread desire for this staff person to create personal connections with youth, as well as parents and families. The DT interprets this competency as being related not only to the desired qualities for the incoming individual staff person, but also to desires for the youth ministry culture as a whole—inspiring authenticity and relationship building *in others* is essential.
- Seeking a candidate who is Organized and a good Communicator are together perhaps the most catalyzing competencies for all others on the list—authenticity, vision, and even spirituality are all much less effective without the underpinnings of a well-structured model of the broader ministry. The DT also drew connections between the Organized/Communicator competency and the Visionary competency, and the importance of strategically executing a vision through good collaboration, effective communication, and reliable execution.
- As a note, the many of the staffing responsibilities that might be most often associated with the Communicator competency could possibly be led by (or at least supported by) the potential staffing plan put forward by the Communications Discovery Team led by Sue Megrund. If nothing else, this feedback from the congregation supports the importance of that group's work and process.
- Spiritual as a desired competency, perhaps surprisingly, is not often listed as a top 4 or 5 competency. Often, congregations look to pastors or worship leaders to be the primary pillars of Spirituality, while youth ministry leaders have more of a Relational/Educational/Organizational role in the church. Christiania is a unique congregation at a unique moment in our history, and the importance of a Spiritual leader clearly extends beyond the role of one Senior Pastor. As we'll discuss later in this report, the importance of this Spiritual competency clearly has a strong connection to how Joe Jorgensen fulfilled his responsibilities as the previous CYF director—with Joe being on track to ordination; it was natural for him to step into a pseudo-pastor role at Christiania, and that helped fulfill a need and model a culture at Christiania. The Discovery Team feels that no matter what staffing model is adopted for the CYF vacancy, this continues to be a strong supporting value.
- The Visionary competency indicates a congregational desire for things to be done differently. The Discovery Team talked about how that wouldn't necessarily mean bringing in a person with a pre-established plan for how to update the ministry model at Christiania. Rather, this is a competency that indicates someone who is willing to be open and attentive to the needs of the context, to listen to those needs as they are voiced, and to seek a creative solution accordingly.

- There are opportunities for a person with a (minor) deficiency in one competency to compensate for that through another competency. As an example, leveraging recruitment and volunteer training (Authentic/Organized) in order to establish and lead a volunteer Youth Team dedicated to imagining new youth ministry initiatives (Visionary) could be an effective model, if such a model was well-suited to the ministry candidate's strengths.

## Congregational Surveys

### OVERALL REFLECTIONS

Taking many factors into consideration — the high number of respondents to both surveys relative to the number of worshipping members; the high level of engagement that adult respondents have to the CYF program; the overall congruence of survey results between Youth and Adult surveys; and the overall thematic consistency of the survey results with other work of the DT — the Discovery Team has a **high level of confidence** that the results of the survey accurately reflect the state of Youth Ministry at Christiania currently, and hopes for the program going forward.

### Reflections from the Discovery Team:

- Youth engagement is one concern often mentioned in the survey comments. Relating to the Core Competencies, this highlights the importance of authentic relationship-building with youth and organizing community leaders, while pursuing a larger vision and values of the program.
- Although youth engagement is a prominent concern for many, the DT recognizes that attendance is not always the most reliable metric of a youth ministry's overall health. Especially as this ministry continues to adapt to changing circumstances in this next phase of ministry, it is essential that ministry leaders at Christiania prioritize the values named in this report, with an understanding that our progress may not be easily quantified.
- Although the DT believes that a person who exhibits the Core Competencies would greatly strengthen Children, Youth, and Family ministry at Christiania, the DT recognizes that no one person will be able to, on their own, address all the concerns brought forward in the survey. In the next section, we'll look at potential staffing models to help support the efforts of the incoming Children, Youth, and Family ministry candidates.



# Potential Staffing Model for Children, Youth, and Family

PER DT SURVEY REFLECTION

## Reflections and Recommendations from the Discovery Team:

- There is a trend in Children, Youth, and Family everywhere: congregations are generally suffering from lower attendance and engagement among youth and young families than we saw years ago. This is also true at Christiania, though only somewhat. Reviewing survey results indicates that the congregation generally would agree. Christiania does have slightly decreased Confirmation/VBS/Sunday School enrollment from 5-10 years ago, but this still an active, vibrant, and meaningful context for youth ministry. Taking this into consideration, and the fact that Christiania's financial resources are limited, traditional models of staffing—hiring a full-time person dedicated solely to Children, Youth, and Family Ministry—may be impractical to pursue.
- As we considered alternative staffing options, we took into account the Value Priorities put forward by our Discovery Team, and those supported by our survey data. We also considered some alternative job functions that might align with these Value Priorities, and where there were needs in the congregation that needed dedicated staff support. This was a primary point of discussion for the Discovery Team, especially at our later sessions. ***It is the recommendation of the Discovery Team that Christiania begins to immediately begin the call process for a Deacon to serve as the lead staff person for Children, Youth and Family Ministry at Christiania.***
- Diagonal Ministry is adjacent to Pastoral Ministry in many ways—both are ordained through a Seminary and would be called through the Synod. While a Pastor is called to serve a congregation through “Word and Sacrament,” a deacon serves through “Word and Service.” This person would be specifically called to serve 2 primary functions at Christiania: to lead CYF ministry, and to support the Senior Pastor in their role as worship leader.
- When surveyed on potentially pursuing this ministry model for Children, Youth, and Family at Christiania, 71.6% of respondents already expressed the expectation for this role to have a focus on “leading or assisting with worship planning”, with only 9.1% of respondents being potential detractors. The remaining 11.4% would be interested in learning more about this kind of model, which emphasizes the importance of clear communication and educating the congregation as this process unfolds. To the Discovery Team, this resoundingly supported the idea for potentially looking at a called/ordained role for this opening. Again, the work that Joe Jorgensen as an informal support-pastor was a healthy and sensible move, not only because he felt called to that kind of ministry, but because there was a universally understood need at Christiania. If we want to intentionality incorporate worship leadership in this role, calling a Deacon is a natural fit.

- When surveyed on potentially pursuing this ministry model for Children, Youth, and Family at Christiania, 84.1% of respondents already expressed the expectation for this role to have a focus on “service and volunteering”, with only 9.1% of respondents being potential detractors. The remaining 6.8% would be interested in learning more about this kind of model, which emphasizes the importance of clear communication and educating the congregation as this process unfolds. Again, this resoundingly supported the Discovery Team’s idea to consider a Deacon—called to “Word and Service”—to fill this role.
- From a practical standpoint, the exact details of this ministry model have not been determined by the Discovery Team. In order to best meet the needs of this context, the specific position requirements, qualifications, scope of the role, etc. ought to be determined as conversations unfold with the Synod, rather than beforehand. To some extent, this can even be determined as potential candidates come forward, in order to suit the strengths and competencies they are able to offer. In any case, the Core Competencies and Value Priorities in this report ought to be pursued and upheld by the final staffing model.
- When imagining the broad ideas for the needs of the Diaconal-led program model, the Discovery Team referred to the comparative charts below and included some reflections. This may be a potential starting point for determining the specifics of the Deacon role, when Christiania and the Synod reach this stage of development.

<b>Innovative</b>	<b>Administrative</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present, with Futuristic view: “How does this shape where we’re going?”               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Big-Picture oriented; imagines</li> <li>• Strong communication: articulates vision</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present, with Historic view: “How does this reflect where we’ve come from?”               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detail oriented; executes</li> <li>• Strong communication: provides information</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Values</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Exploration/Curiosity</li> <li>o Vision/Relevance</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Values</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Stability/Consistency</li> <li>o Efficiency/Implementation</li> </ul>

### Recommendations from the Discovery Team:

- Seek a ministry candidate whose strengths and priorities in ministry align more with the Innovative Leader model above.
- Pursue a ministry staffing and/or volunteer model that can provide essential support for Administrative functions of the role, shown in the model above.

<b>Relational</b>	<b>Educational</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Seeks to know more about others<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Asks thoughtful questions</li></ul></li><li>● “What’s going on with you now?”</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Seeks for others to know more<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Provides thoughtful answers</li></ul></li><li>● “What will you need to know later?”</li></ul>
<p data-bbox="446 588 535 619"><i>Values</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Community/Connection</li><li>○ Belonging/Hospitality</li></ul>	<p data-bbox="1063 588 1153 619"><i>Values</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Learning/Knowledge</li><li>○ Development/Growth</li></ul>

### Recommendations from the Discovery Team:

- Seek a ministry candidate whose strengths and priorities in ministry align more with the Relational Model of leadership above.
- Pursue a ministry staffing and/or volunteer model that can provide essential support for the Educational Model functions of the role, shown above.