**Pastor Greg Hovland- Question and Answer Session with Divine Redeemer.**

**Introduction: Tell us about your prior experiences at previous churches, education, etc. to give us a flavor for your background.**

Way back in 1997 I graduated from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis and with my wife Stephanie and our oldest daughter headed to Minnesota, a Packer fan in exile. I was pastor of 2 congregations just south of Mankato. Those first years were very formative for me as that is where you learn how to be a Pastor. It was a dual parish, I loved it. District President recommended that I begin to contemplate some calls. So, a call came to me from La Crescent MN to Messiah Lutheran which is close to Lacrosse WI as a pastor of a mission congregation. The church started in a Knights of Columbus Hall. We then moved to the band room of a high school so we did tear down and setup every weekend. After that I received a call to Green Bay, WI where I served as Associate Pastor there where I served for a number of years.

At that point our daughters were at the high school age and the school there was a good fit for our family then. Five and a half years ago I received a call to be senior pastor at St. Johns in Portage, WI which also has a day school which services children Infant on through 8th grade. I am married to Stephanie since 1992. We have 2 daughters; one is a Lutheran Grade school teacher in California and one is a recent CUW graduate and is working in the Milwaukee area for a non-profit using her business management degree and working on her masters. So, we have a lot of Lutheran education in our family and love Lutheran schools.

**1.(Call Committee CC) Describe your understanding of the church and its mission especially as it relates to the lost.**

The church’s mission is to receive Christ. We gather together around word and sacrament to receive the life and salvation that he gives. Our job is not to keep Jesus for ourselves, our job is to reflect the loves Jesus to all people. Both believers and non-believers in the hopes that the Holy Spirit will bring more to Jesus.

**2.(CC) How do you keep existing members, possibly lifelong Lutherans engaged while also bringing on new or prospective members?**

Gradual change, no one likes a quick 180-degree turn. The existing people and the new people all need Jesus. So, the big question then becomes, how do we deliver Jesus, word and sacrament to everyone in ways that are fitting for all. That may mean running a parallel track on certain things. Both for those that are existing members this way and those who are new to a faith in Jesus. Now the hard part about that is, is that somehow, we want to bring those 2 groups together because we are one body in Christ. That takes time, that takes listening, but our God can do great things.

**3.(CC) Obviously, any pastors call is to primarily word and sacrament ministry. But this position also requires the executive pastor to be CEO/COO. Describe your administrative leadership capabilities in the areas of budgeting, strategic planning, staff management, and development plans for staff members.**

I currently am involved in many of those although not always directly. I have a great team of people that I work with to get these things done and get done well. In the time I have been at St. John’s, a joy has been watching them grow in those capacities and for me to learn from them as they grow in those positions as well. While it does rest one individual, there are many people who help that person make it a successful team and a successful mission.

**Follow up question- You currently work on a Board model governance policy, but also utilize Policy Based Governance in some areas. Can you explain that for us?**

The day to day is policy-based governance. We know how far we need to go in a certain direction before we bump up against a board who needs to approve a given action. So, in a sense we are protected on each side by the boards. Managing the boards can be a challenge because each board is focused on their one little thing. Sometimes you have to talk to a whole bunch of them and that slows things down and when a in a covid world where decisions often need immediate attention it can be difficult.

**4.(CC) If you were to receive and accept this call, describe how you would go about your work in the first 90 days.**

Wow, a lot of listening and a lot of learning. In the first 90 days, not a lot is likely to change because I need to know who you are, what this community is, who the staff are. In order for us to go in a specific direction, the congregation needs to communicate what direction we feel the Lord is leading us. The first 90 days is a lot of that beneath the ground stuff that a lot of people don’t really see, the foundation stuff which is critically important.

**5.(CC) Janet- DRLC has a thriving ministry with its Lutheran day school. Please describe your beliefs about Christian Education, your experience working with a school and how you would build relationships between the church and the school.**

I was able to tour the school twice, once empty, once during classes. You have a wonderful school with a great staff. My relationship with my current school is that I am involved in the life of the school: giving chapel, visiting classrooms and meeting the kids. This year in particular I am also serving as principal of the school so I am in there every day. The mission of your school is the mission of the church so the Pastor needs to be involved in the school but the pastor does not need to be the principal. There are many things I can be doing but many things I should not be doing.

**6.(Congregation) DR like many churches always seems to be living on the edge of its means. Cash flow is enough to maintain the basics, but surpluses to grow the ministry are rare. As a result, our “thank offerings” to ministry efforts locally, synod-wide and internationally often fall short of desired levels. Briefly describe how you have developed programs with your congregation to exercise biblical stewardship principles in your ministry that delivered tangible outcomes and measurable results.**

Using everything you have been given is stewardship. It then becomes a matter of prioritization of the things that you have. If you have a large surplus, that isn’t necessarily good stewardship either. Therefore, the congregation needs to set priorities. The congregation that only focuses in on itself becomes stagnant. The dead sea, a swamp, everything is coming in, but nothing is going out. One of the ways that I encourage giving to outside sources is by letting people know what those things are. What God is doing in those ministries. It is 3-fold for my current church. How is God doing great things abroad? Great things for the district? Great things locally. Sometimes not Christian organizations like food-pantries, homeless shelters, critical services. Getting information out to people that we are doing mission here is essential, but they also need to know that there is some that goes out.

**7.(Congregation) DR utilizes traditional flexible and contemporary flexible worship styles and both are offered every week. Pre-covid, the services were similar in weekly attendance and offerings; about 50/50. While our worship styles appear to be effective in drawing more people to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, many congregational members have remarked how it feels like two different churches and often we may only rarely see other members despite regular church attendance. Describe how you would address this perception of a divide in the congregation to galvanize DR into one body serving God’s kingdom?**

That divide is not necessarily a traditional versus contemporary. That happens naturally anytime you have more than one worship service. At St. Johns in Portage, we have 2 traditional and 1 contemporary. It is always interesting when you have a single service like Ash Wednesday because 3 people come to church and say this is my spot (pointing to a specific seat in church) and they are right, it is “their spot” on that particular service time. That whole view of us being one, you need to know that having more than one service you are going to have more than one group of people.

Between traditional and contemporary you have different needs and different expectations between different people. For some, the need for one or the other is there. When you try to do kind of both at the same time, all you do is get everybody mad. So, do both and do them very well, but let the people receive Jesus (word and sacrament) in which ever style of worship they choose.

During this covid time, we have people attending a different style of worship because the time slot is the same. They used to do one style but due to reduced services during covid they still attend the one at the time they prefer so it is not always a style preference. There are a variety of variables that we need to factor in our decisions.

**8.(Congregation)- Will the contemporary service have your total support and will you support and expand this area of ministry?**

I trust the Pastors that you have right now. They have the same training that I have, why would I change it? Unless there is a drastic need for a change, why change? So, I trust the brothers here now.

**What is your feeling of wearing your clerical collar at a contemporary service?**

Normally on Sundays I wear my collar but if that causes problems I don’t have to. I primarily wear my collar as a reminder to me, not to remind others of who I am. I think I can remember who I am now but that might change as I get closer to retirement.

**Can you let the principal of the school do her you job or will you micro-manage?**

No, if you are going to be the Senior Pastor in a ministry like this one, you have to trust your team. You have a good team, why would I come in and micro-manage it.

**How visible will your wife be?**

As much visibility as she wants. She is reluctantly up front right now. Stephanie brings gifts and talents to the marriage and the ministry, but she gets to determine how she uses them.

**Do you view members who value the traditional service as divisive?**

No. If they start to say that contemporary worship is of the devil then we need to have a talk but I have not experienced that kind of divisiveness.

**9.(Congregation) Do you have a preference of preaching from the lectionary or sermon series?**

Right now, I preach from the lectionary and the logic has always been that if I gravitate towards a series, I will probably teach things that I think are important and pick the things that I am going to preach well. If I use the lectionary, I am going to have to wrestle with the tough ones. You can do a good topical series from the lectionary as well. I know that every 3 years we cover most of the Bible. But there are also some seasons where we had 3 weeks in a row on John 6. Maybe now is a time for a series. There are times of the year when lectionary is good but there are times of the church year where a series is good.

**10.(Congregation)What level of importance do you place on the role of the man in the church? The man in his house? His family? His neighborhood? What level of importance do you feel that the man is charged with in the Bible to lead? Will you make it a priority to find a leader for our Men’s Ministry?**

Strong men, strong women, strong children make strong churches. So, it is important that we have strong male leadership in our congregation just as much as we have strong women in roles as well. We also need children to be leaders in our day school. Men historically, if given the opportunity to not lead will take that opportunity to not lead. So, it is important for us to not over emphasize but emphasize the role that men have in the church. Now, is that an authoritarian leadership? No, it is the leadership that Christ gave to his church. He gave his life for the church. Our example is Jesus’ example and self-less giving to everyone.

If there is a priority for a men’s ministry leader and there is a need and the church is suffering because there is not one, then yes, men-step up and do it.

**11. How would you utilize to a greater extent the talents of the congregation? (Board of elders many of whom may think they really want to do more. Also thinking about ways to take advantage of the business experience of members of the Congregation.)**

Well, there is no doubt in my mind that there is a lot of talent in this congregation. My first task is to figure out who has which talents. So, figuring out that information and I am guessing that many of the people here already know those things. It is a matter of people getting on the right seat on the bus going in the right direction. We all have certain talents and abilities. WE want to get people where they can serve their best and with a smile on their face and that is usually in the talent wheelhouse.

**12. (Call Committee) What other things about yourself, your family, and your ministry would you like the members of DRLC to know about?**

My passion in ministry lies more in the administrative side, leading a lay person in a way that they can expand and better serve God. When I can organize someone and help them serve, that brings me great joy. Having served a number of congregations, that can be a concern for some. I started in a dual parish, then moved to a mission church, then to an associate position, and now a senior pastor’s role. The Lord has given me quite a broad spectrum of experience and none of them have ended badly.

**13.** **(Congregation) How would you meet the “always on” needs of the Executive Pastor position leading a $1 million dollar+ budgeted church when meetings occur after dinner, travel out of town to conferences or church member calling with urgent issue at 9:00pm that requires your attention? How do you manage this struggle today?**

When down time presents itself, I need to take advantage of it. I have realized over the last few years I have come to understand smart phones are not always the best things to check often. I have gotten better at checking my email only 3-4 times a day. People have come to understand that if it is something urgent- call or text me because that is a good litmus test. Do I need to email pastor or not? Taking advantage of slower times is valuable. Having an empty nest has helped. I get a lot done at 7am. Just being aware that yes, you are needed but there needs to be some boundaries and you need to triage emergencies but there are a lot of staff here. In a congregation this size I will burn out if I try to do it all.

I love camping, well I love burning wood in a fire pit. I am an amateur radio operator. I enjoy storm spotting. I think that is pretty much it because there is not much time for more.

**14.** **(Congregation) Who is your accountability partner? What frequency do you connect and for what topics? Last time?**

First, I need to look to my wife. Stephanie would be one. I have some dear friends I meet with on Thursday nights that hold me accountable and there is a friend at the district I talk to regularly.

**15. (Congregation) Might we expect a dedicated time on Sunday mornings for adult bible class taught by a pastor coinciding with Sunday School? Our Children should be attending worship with their families. A Saturday or weeknight service could alleviate 3 Sunday services and allow people that work Sundays an opportunity to worship.**

3 pastors on staff here, that should be able to happen most Sundays.

**16. (Congregation) Do you have in mind any specific programs for children in the congregation attending public schools?**

I would say, what are you doing now? There may be some ways that we can use the green space, but you need to find people to lead that. If there are people that can lead a weeknight activity that would be something that could be done. The problem is that our youth today from very young ages are programmed out from morning to bedtime. Whatever you plan to do has to be of high quality because they will likely be choosing between you and something else. That is a hard thing to say, it is a first commandment issue but it’s a reality.

**17. Why do you as a Pastor feel you would be a good fit for the congregation here are DR? Where do we as the big C Church often go off track?**

By looking at that church over there, then that church over there and thinking we need to do what everyone else is doing. The best thing that we can be is who we are- excellent doctrine, quality education. The ones that popular now came about quickly and I suggest that they will disappear just as quickly. We have time honored traditions, but we have a great ability in Jesus to do great things, but we don’t need to sell out Jesus to do this.

In my planning process I don’t start with today, I start with down the road. My dad taught to never mow the lawn looking down, instead you pick a point down the road and walk toward it. That is what I need to do in my current role at St. Johns.

**Pastor Jason Zobel- Question and Answer Session with Divine Redeemer.**

**Introduction: Tell us about your history in the churches you have served in, the locations, the style and try to gives a flavor for your ministry experience Pastor Jason.**

Thank you for coming out tonight. A little history for you, I am from Iowa so we can get that out of the way. I met my lovely wife at Concordia University Wisconsin, and we got married after I graduated from college. From there we went to the seminary in St. Louis and did my vicarage in Nebraska during the hay day of Nebraska Football. My first call was to be a mission church planter starting from scratch in Joliet Illinois. That was something because we didn’t know anyone when we got there. We found ourselves a place to gather and move forward. After a few years of working and getting to know people and getting involved in the community which is very important to me, God richly blessed us and it was a joy!

In 2003 we were invited to the synod convention because we were recognized as one of the fastest growing churches in the Synod which was special because that was in a town of about 5000 which was surprising to most and yet God always blows me away with how rich He is and what He brings to the table. Having a wife with a degree in early childhood education I knew that would be a great addition to that community to have a preschool; I just had to convince someone (my wife) to do it. She was willing to, the city worked with us and the preschool went from 17 to 70 in a short time.

We spent 12 years there and in the summer of 2009 in the midst of all the joy we experienced there a Madison congregation called me up. They were dealing with a lot of disfunction and frustration. This church had actually called several pastors and 6 had already declined until my name came up. The congregation said that they had been asking “who do they want to be the pastor?” instead of “who does God want to be the pastor?”. So, as a 37-year-old guy at the time I accepted the call and the church was very open saying they wanted to get back to the work of the church, they had lost membership and need a shepherd for this church. In getting to know those people, praying with them, working with them God has blessed that ministry, grown that ministry. Our staff has expanded, we are starting a school this fall much to surprise of many who said a school in Madison couldn’t every happen, because it’s Madison and it had been tried before but didn’t work. They believed in little God, I believe in a great big God who can do many things and praise be to him that is getting started this coming fall.

We have three children; our oldest Andrew is going to be graduating from the seminary this year in St. Louis. He and his wife just blessed us with our first grandchild. Our middle child is married up in Clintonville, WI and is a nurse while her husband is a Lutheran school teacher. Our youngest daughter is at Concordia Wisconsin studying early childhood education. We are very blessed because out children are all close to the Lord.

**1.(Call Committee CC) Describe your understanding of the church and its mission especially as it relates to the lost?**

To boldly go and proclaim the deeds that Christ has given to us in anyway possible centered of course in worship but it extends on that. A school, the church, the leadership, the ministries of the congregation and especially of note to those who know not what we know about Jesus and what he has given to us. Having started at a mission church and meeting people because we had literally no members, everything was reaching out and getting to know people so that remains close to me and at the center of my life. As a pastor I am called to lead, share, and equip the congregation I called to serve but there is a little part of me that is always looking outside the four walls wondering who is out there? How can we reach those people who are out there? What are some things that might be creative or different that might be ways to get into the community?

When we were in Braidwood, I got to know the mayor, city hall, the chief of police, I got on a school board, I helped out with the track team and the football team. That was to let people know we were there and that we started a church but also that I was invested in the community and in our church. That has continued on in Madison as well. I am thankful that in 24 years of ministry God has only put me in two places and I have been able to know the members of the church and the community so people know that I care and that I wasn’t going anywhere. Of course, the mission of the church is sharing Jesus with others and helping them as best we can to grow in that.

**2.Keeping members engaged while introducing new members.**

In one respect it is a common reminder that it is about all of us. It is not about me; it is always about Jesus. If I were to come in, getting to know the members personally and allow them to see what I am all about and what is it important to me then makes it possible for me to go up to them and say, this is a really good thing and you know where I am at and what I am all about and I wouldn’t be saying this if it wasn’t a great ministry opportunity.

Then likewise with newer members, to bring up ideas and thoughts and things that happen as well. Currently around have of our members in Madison are new since I came 12 years ago. That brings in a lot of new ideas and excitement and enthusiasm. I love bringing together experienced members and connecting them with new families to mentor them and share with the history of our church. We try to do that to bring families together so that there are not just knowing the pastor and finished new membership classes but also get to know other members.

**3.(CC) Obviously, any pastors call is to primarily word and sacrament ministry. But this position also requires the executive pastor to be CEO/COO. Describe your administrative leadership capabilities in the areas of budgeting, strategic planning, staff management, and development plans for staff members.**

**3A. Creating and monitoring a budget.**

In Braidwood with the mission church, I handled it until we reached a certain point but as we grew I taught and trained people to bring them along to assist. I’m a numbers guy, our executive director has his own accounting firm and he has given me junior accountant status now which I thought was pretty special. Usually, I am the guy to ask when doing things because I like the number crunching. When it comes to making the budget, you need to weigh the needs with the wants, sometimes making some tough decisions on things. Overseeing a budget is something I have been tied very close to my entire ministry.

**3B. Developing and implementing strategic plans.**

The first church was all of that in terms of starting the church from scratch, the preschool from scratch which involved a building campaign. So, learning from those things and growing from that, same thing when I got to Madison we needed to know where we were at as a congregation to people may have thought we weren’t much of a congregation anymore because of what had happened. Planning cottage groups, planning meetings, it’s really important getting feedback from the members to learn where we are at. What do you see, envision, where have we as a church been and see where that leads?

When I come into a place like this, there is already things in my mind that I could see happening and what this could become. With the day school and the teachers, I can see there is so much more opportunity out there and to get into the community. Making a strategic plan is measurable things. This is where we want to go, this is how we want to get there. Having been in a multitude of situations and having to start from scratch took a lot of strategic planning, time, and a lot of prayers which is ok and it works because we have a common goal to proclaim Christ.

**3C. Staff management, supporting an environment of empathy for employees and how do you resolve conflict?**

In Braidwood it was hiring the whole staff to start, office help, etc. At Madison when I got there, we had 5 now we have 8. It is listening, learning, expecting the best because excellence in ministry is very important to me. In terms of working with them and supporting them, I told the teachers today that I would be their advocate and support them. If there are conflicts, to coach and to listen to them and remember what the mission is, in hopes we could come to point that we could move past it. As executive pastor I have had to make the tough decision, this isn’t working and we need to go in a different direction. You wish that is never the case but I have had a couple of situations where a called worker had that conflict and did not meet the expectations. The main thing was trying to work through. I am really all about pastors, and staff and teachers to work through it, so when there is conflict how can we work through this because we have a common goal. It is all about us working together for the Lord.

**3D. Creating professional development plans for your staff.**

With my staff it is staying connected to them. I gather a lot of feedback back and forth with the staff in hopes if I see something like reading a book or attending a conference, I am always open to those. Sometimes as a church we get pastors and teachers out there and say, “well you’re there” and forget that development is life-long. It is like the Lord’s prayer; we never fully pray it until out last breath. And to the members here, how can I help develop your passion, your skill, your love, your position and being attune to that.

**3E. How do you make and deliver the news of an unpopular decision?**

With a lot of love and with a lot of care in the hopes that people get to know me and my heart and what I am all about that when these come up, they know I am a person that deeply cares for them and they know that I didn’t come to this decision lightly. It came with a lot of thought, time and prayer and this is where we are at. As a Pastor, you build trust from your members every day by your leading, by your teaching, by your walk, in the hopes that they see you and say, that was a really tough thing to happen; but I know he did his best to make it work. I would hope there would be trust from the congregation where the members would think that Pastor Jason must really think this is important because we know where he is coming from.

**4.(Call Committee) If you were to receive and accept this call, can you identify any experience gaps that you would have to address in the first 3-6 months between your current position and what this position requires and what specific actions would you take to close those gaps?**

I would be quick to listen. I am not afraid to ask directions if I don’t know the way. DR is certainly different from where I have been and I would not pretend to know it all. I would lean on the leadership of the church and school. I love a challenge, no question there but I would be looking at you, tell me your experiences, I am not as well versed in this? What do you see as my role in the school Janet? Elders, what are the problems you see in this place that we need to address? In terms of getting to know people and sharing and caring for them. I and looking to learn from folks and talk about where we’ve been and maybe even talk a little bit about where we want to go.

**5.(Call Committee) If you were to receive and accept this call, describe how you would go about your work in the first 90 days?**

Listen and learn. I am a gen-Xer so I am all about relationships, it would be really about getting to know the people. How is God involved in your life? What is your story? I certainly wouldn’t start changing things right away that’s for sure, I’d be looking to absorb as much as I could and learn from you and understand where you are at and what it is you are looking for.

**6. CC) - DRLC has a thriving ministry with its Lutheran day school. Please describe your beliefs about Christian Education, your experience working with a school and how you would build relationships between the church and the school.**

I love it, I’m married to a Christian educator and a daughter going into it. At the previous church starting a pre-school and saw the need for that. At our current church in Madison, we are starting a pre-school so Christian education is extremely important to me, especially in Madison where I am at, I chuckled a few times earlier; you know I’m in Dane County. I live there and see opportunity after opportunity for Christian education and this is coming from a guy who’s schooling experience was public school.

Again, getting connected with the teachers and support them, how can I be a resource to them? Is there any chance for me to bring light, and encouragement and inspiration, I ‘m all in.

**7. Dane county tends to be a little more left leaning politically. How would you deal with those political viewpoints here in Lake Country compared to Madison?**

It probably wouldn’t be as dicey as it is in Madison and yet that is one of the joys of being there. I am always looking for the conversation, we live in a very diverse culture and community. Now even though lake country may be less like Dane county politically, there are still plenty of people out there with questions about who Jesus is and what he has done and the politics of the joy. One of the true joys of being in Madison, is even though I am up against a pretty big wall, I talk to these folks and listen to them. The hope is they will think, “this is an ok guy, even though he’s a Lutheran pastor in Madison, he is probably this, this, and this.” I’ve likely been stereotyped because of the conservative church in the land that we live in.

My hope is as they get to know me, they begin think, it is kind of tough to not like this guy because he is nice and he really does care about me. He isn’t like I think he should be; he isn’t this ultra-right-wing church guy who still has his church open in Madison. So, I would welcome the opportunity.

**8. (Congregation) How would you meet the “always on” needs of the Executive Pastor position leading a $1 million dollar+ budgeted church when meetings occur after dinner, travel out of town to conferences or church member calling with urgent issue at 9:00pm that requires your attention? How do you manage this struggle today?**

I am thankful that I have an incredible wife who was raised with a knowledge of the church world and understands what it is like. That is an incredible blessing to me because she knows where I am and that is part of the call. In terms of navigating the call it is something I am really thankful for. We plan dates and make sure we get away even if it is in the fast-food parking lot.

It is nice she works in the same building so I can stop by and talk to her. I have had congregation that were wonderful as well, with 24 years of ministry I never felt like we lived in a glass house, granted we’re pretty boring so not much to worry about because I’m either home or at church. I have grown really close relationship with members. I’m ok letting myself down a little bit with members and I’m ok with that. I know what it is like to be “on” I’m feeling it right now, but thankfully there is a pretty good balance.

**9.** **(Congregation) What level of importance do you place on the role of the man in the church? The man in his house? His family? His neighborhood? What level of importance do you feel that the man is charged with in the Bible to lead?**

Yes, yes, yes to all those things. When I came to Madison, we had very few ministries so men’s ministry is one that I started and it was a valuable thing. The man’s role in the home, vital. The man’s role in the church also important. God has created men and women and we have so many gifts to offer and sometimes to be blunt, I’ve seen guys say, “well my wife will do it so I’m just going to back out of it”. No, we need you men to step forward and be leaders as well. We can’t use the history of up until 50 years ago, guys kind of did everything so now I’m going to take the next 50 years off. No, we need that balance so men involved in all of those levels is great to have in the form of a vibrant men’s ministry.

**10. (Congregation)How would you facilitate the confirmation program or what are your preferences on how that would be operated?**

I don’t know the current situation so I would want to know that first. In terms of my own history, having kids in the church but not in the school I like to try and bring those together. I’m old school a little bit, I like to teach confirmation and be connected to the kids. I’m in person with them every week currently. I like that because it builds relationship as they approach high school. It is important that they have someone they can lean on and talk to maybe even their pastor. We still have memory work, walking through the catechism. I learned that at my current church when I got there, they weren’t doing any of that and we started reimplementing the values of going through the catechism and its parts. I’ve had parents whose kids had gone through confirmation before that and they say how they wish their kids would have had that, those foundational things of being a Christian and Lutheran. I would like to find out it works now, and talk to parents and find out, what they see that could be better? All of the kids are valuable and how can we put that together. Ours program starts in first grade because we don’t have the day school so we start that young. We do chapel school on Wednesday afternoon with programming to fill that need.

**11. (Congregation) DR like many churches always seems to be living on the edge of its means. Cash flow is enough to maintain the basics, but surpluses to grow the ministry are rare. As a result, our “thank offerings” to ministry efforts locally, Synod-wide and internationally often fall short of desired levels. Briefly describe how you have developed programs with your congregation to exercise biblical stewardship principles in your ministry that delivered tangible outcomes and measurable results**.

We have used a few synodical lead ones, stewardship month and things like that. For me stewardship is a continual teaching thing. Reminding people that we aren’t giving offerings for a budget we are giving for the mission and then as a Pastor inspiring people to believe in that mission and helping them to realize that God has a great thing going on here. It is worth what I am putting in the plate. Part of me is sharing and being excited about that mission and letting the congregation know that this is how we move the mission. For me it is a lifestyle, it is something that I bring up in sermons from time to time and to bring it up when a mission is coming up or a certain time of year and talk about it. Why do we do what we do? Its not a means to get the electricity although that is a part of it but for me it is more than one month of the year stewardship drive.

**12. (Congregation.) DR utilizes traditional flexible and contemporary flexible worship styles and both are offered every week. Pre-covid, the services were similar in weekly attendance and offerings; about 50/50. While our worship styles appear to be effective in drawing more people to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, many congregational members have remarked how it feels like two different churches and often we may only rarely see other members despite regular church attendance. Describe how you would address this perception of a divide in the congregation to galvanize DR into one body serving God’s kingdom?**

That is a natural effect of having multiple services especially if you go to the same one all the time to feel like you have two congregations or three depending on how many members you have. You have to be creative and intentional about bringing everyone together. I told a couple groups doing some more fun stuff, fellowship time is difficult here, the gym. How can we bring worshipping folks together so that there is a time coming together and less divide? Small groups, men’s ministry, women’s ministry all do that at least in part. Members by me do this too and don’t know who someone else is because they go to different service times. For us we have some intentional fellowship time in between because we are in the same space, they cross paths as some leave and some enter, they coexist for a while.

**13.(Congregation) Do you have a preference of preaching from the lectionary or sermon series?**

Don’t necessarily have a preference. I use the lectionary the most, 3-year lectionary is kind of a staple. Do thematic services as well with readings tied to a theme and bible studies that go along with it. I see the value in both and I’m not it’s this or that kind of guy at all.

**14.(Congregation)- What is your feeling of wearing your Alb/clerical collar at a contemporary service, shut in visit, hospital etc.? What is your feeling of wearing your casual clothes at a traditional service?**

I do all of that. Sometimes I wear my collar, our 8 o’clock is traditional so I wear my Alb for that. 10:30 is our contemporary so I don’t for that. I play the drums for our contemporary and wearing my Alb for that is difficult, believe me I’ve tried. In terms of Sunday sometimes I have my collar sometimes not. Midweek services I tend not to. Shut in call no, hospital calls normally not and funerals it depends on the person. Families that worship at different services have their own preferences. I sometimes wear it; I see the value in it but I ‘m not tied to it by any means. I know who I am, I don’t need one to remember what God has called me to do.

**15.(Congregation) What would you anticipate your wife’s role to be should you receive and accept this call?**

You would get a fantastic pastor’s wife. To those who are looking to someone to mentor, she is a great mentor. She has been involved in women’s ministry in each of our congregations. Come over to our house, she can through a spread together, she learned wonderfully from her family. I don’t mind talking about my wife, to me she is the quint essential pastor’s wife. Doesn’t hide from the people, loves the people. Knows she is married to a flawed cracked pot of a person who stays out way later to talk to people longer than I should. I have never dictated to her what she should or shouldn’t do but knowing her she is going to involve herself as well because this would be her church home as well and she would want to care about others. I would hope you’d be getting a great pastor, but I know you’d be getting a great pastor’s wife.

**16. (Congregation) How do you utilize to a greater extent the talents of the congregation for instance the business experience from members?**

Getting to know your people first and foremost, learning their gifts and talents and then asking them. Hey you are really good at this you should lead this or help with this. Gathering together those people who have the skill set to do just that. I have never been a lone ranger even though I am the only pastor. We are in this together and we are stronger together. In knowing their joys, giving them the task and letting them run with it then so in short getting to know your people and then ask them to get involved and connect them to the ministry and the mission.

**17.(Call Committee) What other things about yourself, your family, and your ministry would you like the members of DRLC to know about?**

I am not a pastor who is just here on Sunday. If God were to call me and move me to accept, I’m all in. Where do you want to go? We have a big God and there are so many things that are possible. I’ve stayed sitting this whole time which for me is abnormal because when I preach, I move around. I’m very passionate about the ministry God has given to us. I’m a simple guy whom had put into some places and said go. He has given me some unique experiences to do that and he has never let me down, in times people said no you can’t, God has said yes you can. I believe that 100% Something you need to know about me if you don’t already is that I’ll roll up the sleeves and we will work together.

**18.** **(Congregation) Who is your accountability partner? What frequency do you connect and for what topics? Last time? Weekly? Monthly?**

I have a couple brother pastors that I have conversations with, one of them probably twice a month at least so that is a real treat, and we know each other so well that we can be blunt and hold each other accountable. I have an incredible wife who listens to me go on an on about anything because as she will tell you there is probably a million things going on in my brain until I fall asleep. I have those wonderful things. In terms of our structure, I have been blessed with an incredible group of elders. They are spiritual right hand guys and have been a part of the structure that I have been in. I am not afraid to be honest with them and that has been a joy for me because they realize we are in this together, so elders have been sounding boards and incredible resources to me as well.

**19. (Congregation) What are your thoughts on children leaving the service during the message instead of staying with their families and worshipping together? Would you prefer to have children’s Sunday school at another time?**

To me it is family worship. I don’t think I’ve been to a service here at 9:15 but I love the cries of the kids. I know parents sometimes feel like oh good the kids are gone so now I can enjoy worship. To me worship is family time so how do we augment that? Not knowing the whole picture, it is something I would need to evaluate after talking with leadership to see if any changes could be or need to be made just thinking off the top of my head. I don’t know if the praise bands would do two in a row, there are all kinds of things to consider.

**20.** **(Congregation) What are your thoughts on establishing a Sunday morning adult bible class taught by the pastors coinciding with Sunday School?**

I’m all in, currently I teach bible class right now in between services. DR would be three pastors coming into play so that would be very workable so I’d be working with the other pastors on a schedule and working through it, I love teaching so I’m all for it.

**21.** **(Congregation) Would you be in support of a Saturday or weeknight service which could alleviate 3 Sunday services and allow people that work Sundays an opportunity to worship to extend the reach of the church?**

Open to the conversation, currently where I am, we are doing Thursday evening services in the summer middle of May through September for that very purpose. Prior to covid we were working on a Wednesday evening service right after the school chapel program was completed. It was going to be a little shorter, maybe stripped down a little, just a piano not a full band but I’m all about, how can we reach more people?

**22.** **(Congregation) Do you have in mind any specific programs for children in the congregation attending public schools?**

All of the kids in our congregation in Madison almost all are in public school. We have our Wednesdays and our Sunday mornings. Sundays are CPH material, Wednesday nights are a variety of topical and confirmation is a little more tied to the catechism with more structure. Since we don’t have a whole lot, I guess that is what we do.

**23. (Congregation) Why do you as a pastor feel as though you would be a good fit for Divine Redeemer?**

If the Lord were to so move, Love the Lord, Love His people. My experiences, my care for people, I go through the wall for members. I see the conversations I have had today and it is extremely encouraging in that respect. Meeting with the staff there is definitely cohesion and excitement. God has great things. My first thought is, I don’t know. I am a poor miserable sinner and I have a lot to learn yet even though I’m almost 50. What I can say is, what I got I give. It would be exciting to be involved with a great congregation and great school and for a pastor to be put in this midst would be very special.

**Pastor Nathan Meador- Question and Answer Session with Divine Redeemer.**

**1.(Call Committee CC) Describe your understanding of the church and its mission especially as it relates to the lost.**

We get it backwards sometimes. We think that the church is a destination, that we come to church. It is important that we do that because we need to hear time and again that Jesus Christ has reconciled the world to himself. This (the church building) is not simply a destination it is also an origination. It’s the place where the Gospel is proclaimed. If we were to treat the Gospel the way we gossip, we would be sharing it with more people. The church is an originating point of sending people out with the Gospel message. The church is a sending place, not a destination place. The blessing we receive at the end of the service is a blessing for our going out. It is a simple message but not a simplistic one.

**2.(CC) How do you keep existing members, possibly lifelong Lutherans engaged while also bringing on new members?**

In the same week I served a member of our congregation who is 103 years old and also baptized a new infant. There is fundamentally no difference between the two because they are both in dire need of the gospel. Now what we do is use the communion of saints here on earth to share with them and come alongside them and share the Gospel with them. For the new infant we do that in ways like the Lutheran day school like we have at St. John’s in Plymouth or here are Divine Redeemer. We come alongside them like Jesus came along side of us. Now whether that person is a member or walks in off the street we come alongside them. Our familiarity level is different between the two people but their need is not. Part of this is to cast a vision where everyone of us looks at the person next to them and doesn’t a man or woman, old or young, skin color, the first thing you see is a person for whom Christ died. There is no difference, we are all together in Christ.

**3.(CC) Obviously, any pastors call is to primarily word and sacrament ministry. But this position also requires the executive pastor to be CEO/COO. Describe your administrative leadership capabilities in the areas of budgeting, strategic planning, staff management, and development plans for staff members.**

There is no book for this, if anyone says there is, they are a lying. Everything brought up in the question relates to the stewardship of the Gospel because that is all we have. The only thing people need is Jesus. Now managing all the things that God has entrusted to us is part of that, all the things Luther outlines in the catechism, house and home, wife and children, land etc. we use all of that individually is also what we do corporately. How we those gifts corporately has a tremendous effect on how people do that individually.

12 years ago, when I got to Plymouth, we were 1.4 million dollars in debt, we had a 1.6-million-dollar budget that was upside down. The first board of directors meeting I was told “the check book balance was zero, here is that stack of bills, and here is the letter from the bank that says ‘no more money’, what are you going to do?” The chairman of the board looked and me and said, “you are going to have to preach more stewardship sermons.” And I said NO! I am not going to start asking members to give more when we haven’t been faithfully utilizing what they have already entrusted to us. So as chief steward it is my responsibility to make sure that what the people of the congregation have entrusted to us is managed properly. That comes before I can come to you and challenge you to question your own stewardship.

As I observed today, you have a really passionate and committed staff, you really do. It would be an honor to lead them. The challenge of that is the passion for the ministry and the means to support that ministry don’t always add up. In churches we tend to run out of money before we run out of month. It requires us to be responsible.

I am a recovering control freak. I say recovering because in 2015 I almost died. I tried to do it all and worked myself nearly to death. I came to understand the problem I had and came to repentance about it. It taught me to strengthen my strengths and staff my weaknesses. It sounds ridiculous because we think we should improve what we aren’t good at. It takes a lot of effort to strengthen our weaknesses. But God has given us the body of Christ at St. Johns and at Divine Redeemer with so many gifts and talents. It is a matter of finding the right people to step in and serve.

Most pastor’s method of budgeting is seeing the budget, immediately looking at the bottom and seeing if it is black (its good) or if its red (its bad). By finding the right people at St. John who were able to use their giftedness we hired a business manager and were able to get things in better shape. Today we have a budget of 2.6 million and we are cash positive because we got our house in order so we could talk to the individual houses. During Covid we were up in giving percent and that is because we were prepared to talk about it ahead of time.

**4.(CC) If you were to receive and accept this call, describe how you would go about your work in the first 90 days.**

100 conversation in 100 days. There are so many individuals that currently on staff here, people who are in elected positions here, people who are in the congregation who are in positions of “unofficial leadership”. There is a gentleman in our congregation who is always upset about something including things like “why do we have to have this Jesus stuff all over the place”, he is a special child of God. I would bring a topic to him and he would just beat me up about it but by the end of the conversation he understood. We would bring it up at voters meeting and he wouldn’t say a word about it and everybody would vote yes.

See all of you have been here longer than me, some of you a lot longer than me. There have been incredible days of faithful gospel ministry and there have also been days of incredible heartache. Those 100 conversations take those experiences and form who you are today and who you will be in the future. It is important that whoever takes this position listens first and speaks second.

**5.(CC) Janet- DRLC has a thriving ministry with its Lutheran day school. Please describe your beliefs about Christian Education, your experience working with a school and how you would build relationships between the church and the school.**

Lutheran schools have a historic place in the LCMS, it used to be that you couldn’t have a church without a school. I am married to a better teacher than I am a Pastor. In the dark world we live and getting darker is that Lutheran education remains a bright beacon. You have a phenomenal staff whom I got to meet today and they are in the classroom 5 days a week with these kids. They are teaching these students but also hearing from them and your teaching staff become your front line for the ripest pastoral opportunities. So, the teachers listen to little Johnny, teacher says something to Janet (principal Bahr), Janet tells the pastor, “hey you need to go see the Schmidt’s”.

With the early childhood program, you have a tremendous opportunity because one of the things we are learning is that as the parents come in, more often than not as much as your teaching their children ABC and colors and Jesus loves me this I know, you are also teaching parents how to parent because there is not book for that. There is no book on how to survive 3am feeding. So, not only do they often not know how to be a parent, they don’t know how to be a Christian parent so when they need support, they come alongside a school like DR and not just give them generic parenting advice but that their children are made uniquely by God, loved by Jesus, by their teacher, by their pastor.

I was asked this question before; how do you keep the kids that are ages 18-34? Whoever wrote that book I’m buying it. Let me tell you when it starts, it starts when they make the connection when they are in school not just with their parents and grandparents but with people in the congregation. So, if you haven’t had a kid at DR in a while and you’re a member here, ask yourself how you are making it a point to get involved in the lives of one of the students. Keep the contact with them. If you have a kid who is heading off to college from your congregation, make it a point to tell them you are going to pray for them and that you can’t wait to see them back at DR when they are home for break. Those are wonderful opportunities that start when the student has a relationship that started in the school. It is too late when they are 18. It starts when they are 18months.

If you are not praying daily for the teachers and the staff, start now. It’s hard, schools are expensive, but you are giving them daily something that not only improves their life in this world, you are feeding them for eternity and that is critical, own the opportunity. That is low hanging fruit, we don’t have to knock on their door, they are coming to us. If you see a parent bringing their little one into church and you don’t know them, say hello! It is those relationships that can have a big impact and those are especially valuable in the school.

**6.(Congregation) DR like many churches always seems to be living on the edge of its means. Cash flow is enough to maintain the basics, but surpluses to grow the ministry are rare. As a result, our “thank offerings” to ministry efforts locally, synod-wide and internationally often fall short of desired levels. Briefly describe how you have developed programs with your congregation to exercise biblical stewardship principles in your ministry that delivered tangible outcomes and measurable results.**

Here is the first thing, you have to talk about. You stand up and preach about Jesus, sin, forgiveness but talking about money is part of it as well. The congregation that doesn’t formally talk about money at least once a year will gripe about it all year long. Stewardship is not what we do, it is who we are. Stewardship is a baptism thing; it is not a balance sheet thing. When we understand that we have been created for the purpose of being a steward, that God in Christ redeemed us to be a steward, this is our purpose. Poor stewardship individually and corporately is not being miserly, its idolatry, it’s a first commandment sin.

What if I told you that I could prove to you that your most prized possession doesn’t belong to you? Read *Psalm 24:1- The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness there of.* You own nothing, we are simply stewards of, he doesn’t even give it to you, it’s a trust. You trust your bank to keep your money and then to give it back to you. What happens when they don’t give it back? Anyone live through the 30’s?

See this is what happens, poor steward not only means we can’t do ministry here, it threatens your soul. Stewardship starts with who has God called us to be as a congregation and who has he called to be a steward? Stewardship is not about paying the bills. It is about carrying for, proclaiming, and delivering the Gospel. I also don’t like to do programs because programs create bad habits. I ask you to be who God asked us to be. Now we will do sermon series, we will study God’s word and see what it has to say, an then it’s up to you to determine if you want to listen to God or not.

One time I had a new member say how much do I give? I said a pick a number and start there. Then pick a number you can add to it every week and when you miss it you can stop. 18 months later that member came up to me and said “you know pastor I’m not missing it yet”. Being a faithful steward is liberating not just for the Gospel but for you. Trust me, no better yet trust Jesus.

**7.(Congregation) DR utilizes traditional flexible and contemporary flexible worship styles and both are offered every week. Pre-covid, the services were similar in weekly attendance and offerings; about 50/50. While our worship styles appear to be effective in drawing more people to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, many congregational members have remarked how it feels like two different churches and often we may only rarely see other members despite regular church attendance. Describe how you would address this perception of a divide in the congregation to galvanize DR into one body serving God’s kingdom?**

Raise your hand if you like broccoli, raise your hand if you can’t stand broccoli. I don’t want to be flippant with this but we do have personal tastes. I need you to understand there really are only two criteria for worship. First, it needs to be about Jesus whether it is in the church or the gym you need to have the unwavering confidence that when you come to worship baring the burden of your sin you are going to receive the confession and absolution. Whether you like the sermon hymn or not, if the band is great or loud, or if pastor’s sermon is a snoozer or great. You need to know that when you come in here, you are going to get that announcement “in the stead and by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I announce to you the forgiveness of all of your sins”. Not an assurance of the pronouncement, the actual thing!

If we get hung up in the how, we lose the why! Come to DR because you need the Gospel. And now you get a choice, you can do traditional or contemporary. Traditional crust or thin crust? It is our job to make sure we are delivering the same message. The second is this, the forgiven sinners in worship need to be unified in the service opportunities.

The reality is at St. John, we have 3 traditional and 1 contemporary. We have people who only go to one of those 4 services. But the deal is they get the Gospel and they know that their brothers and sisters are getting the Gospel. When we leave here, we are all stewards of the Gospel. People ask me, if it were up to me, what is my personal choice? If it were up to me, we would be as high church as you can get except for the incense, it gives me a headache. I like vestments, pomp and circumstance and chanting but it’s not about me! It’s about Jesus. It is your need to know that your sins are forgiven, that’s what it’s about. What unifies us then is the forgiveness of sins in the Gospel. We are already unified we just need to admit it. You are not as divided as you think you are, we just have to understand what is really happening here.

**8.(Congregation)- Will the contemporary service have your total support and will you support and expand this area of ministry? What is your feeling of wearing your Alb/clerical collar at a contemporary service?**

Let me tell you why I wear a collar. What do know about a dog who has a collar? He has a master. I wear the collar so that you know that I am not speaking what I think. It is a reminder to me that it is not about me. Years ago, I would go out and do field work and my field supervisor would not let me wear my collar, “its divisive, it gets in the way” he would tell me. I said ok if you say so. What I observed though when I went out, if I went to nursing homes, they had no idea who I was. They couldn’t tell if I was the doctor or the bill collector. Weeks later I was on break and I had free time and I went to my field supervisor and volunteered because I had a break. He happily put me to work and said, “can you visit some of my homebound members? And do a me a favor, wear your collar. They won’t recognize you from Adam so where your collar.” Every one of the people who I visited didn’t know who I was but they knew why I was there. It’s not ego, it’s a reminder to you and to me that I work for somebody else. Am I going to make other pastors on staff wear collars? No. This is who I am, it is a humbling reminder.

**Do you view members who value the traditional service as divisive?**

Only if they think that is the only way you can worship. In the same contemporary worshipers would be if they thought that was the only way you can worship. Again, if worship becomes how, not why, then we are toast, we are done. If we forget that Jesus is what we are all about, then we become a country club without a golf course or a swimming pool and we might as well forget it.

**Can you let the principal of the school do her you job or will you micro-manage**?

NO! Janet can do her job because I don’t know the first thing about how to be a principal. With the staff, it comes down to this. What do you need from me to do your job? I don’t micromanage, like I said I am a recovering control freak. Let people use the gifts they have, my job is to ask the question- Is what you are doing, faithfully serving Jesus? Pastor Adam and I were talking about this, how do I evaluate the staff? I ask, “what is your why and how are you putting that into practice? 3 months from now we will get back together and revisit the why.

**How visible will your wife be?**

My wife will be as visible as she needs to be. We are not going to fire anyone so she has a job. She sings, she has played handbells in the past, she will be as visible as any member of the congregation. She is not first lady. She is not different from you except she has to go home with me.

**9.(Congregation) Do you have a preference of preaching from the lectionary or sermon series?**

I have always, always used the lectionary because it is easier to plan. If you look at the Bible, I have either these 3-4 lessons from a lectionary or the entire Bible. But there is something else about it. The lectionary lends itself to walking the congregation through the story of the Gospel, the life of Jesus every year. That becomes a big deal because what percentage of your worshipping members are in Bible study? The vast majority of your members, the service is the only Bible they are getting. Now, does that mean if I only did the lectionary that we would never do sermon series? No, that doesn’t mean that at all! You have wonderful opportunities there, thematically during lent, advent, easter. We can walk through a book each year.

There is a fundamental difference between preaching and teaching. What happens in worship is proclamation. It’s the announcing of the good news, the Gospel. I know I am beating on that because it is all I’ve got. It’s not because I’ve got nothin,’ it is because that’s what you need. At the same time there is the need to dig into the scriptures, and as you do that you begin to see that there is a plan. There is a repetitive cycle of exile and restoration and the ultimate exile started in Genesis 3, and the restoration is in Revelation 20. Lastly, if your planning team does it right, we can switch from a free form system to lectionary system and the only people who know it, are the ones planning it. The key thought is that you are getting God’s word which convicts you, kills you, and makes you alive.

**10.(Congregation)What level of importance do you place on the role of the man in the church? The man in his house? His family? His neighborhood? What level of importance do you feel that the man is charged with in the Bible to lead? Will you make it a priority to find a leader for our Men’s Ministry?**

Let me tell you something ladies, please do not be offended by this. Men, you determine the way your children practice their faith is how your children will practice their mother’s faith. Almost without fail I can tell you on confirmation Sunday which kids will be in the pews their senior year of high school and those are the ones where dad is present and leading. Now that is not an ironclad thing, I know some moms that really kill it and do a tremendous job but men need to step in and be spiritual leaders. They need to be prepared to confess sins to their, to their children, and to their pastors and receive forgiveness. Model it!

Men's ministry is important, it is premium. Especially in this world where we are bombarded with toxic masculinity. What we really need is authentic Christian men. It means you are going to be here in the pews you're going to be praying with your children, don't make that moms job. By the way I was not always good at this because that is back when I was a control freak and I was rarely home. There are a few things I would go back and do over but being a spiritual leader in my own household is one of them, don't be like me. Again, strengthen strengths and staff weaknesses.

There has to be some men involved, it could be you. At Plymouth we started a ministry for men that deals with sexual integrity that we teach the men to teach their children. It deals with things that guys are facing every day like on the Internet, click, click, click. Yes, men's ministry is essential, just as essential as women's ministry just as essential as the school ministry.

**11.** **(Congregation) How would you meet the “always on” needs of the Executive Pastor position leading a $1 million dollar+ budgeted church when meetings occur after dinner, travel out of town to conferences or church member calling with urgent issue at 9:00pm that requires your attention? How do you manage this struggle today?**

With a lot of failure. Actually, this is where my wife has helped immensely. Up until November I was much better with my day off. You may ask why November? My executive pastor's wife gave birth to triplets so I have functionally been solo since the second week of November. He preached for the first time since their birth on Ash Wednesday and he's been back in the office for a week. A whole lot of boundaries are important because church members do some crazy stuff like go into hospitals and die on my day off. But there are ways to manage all of it. If I know there is something pressing on Friday morning, then Thursday afternoon will be some decompression time for me to get some mental space and that's where there's accountability.

If a congregant is having heart surgery on Monday, then I will be able to plan. But if someone is in hospice then yes, I have to go and I need to be there. The title of executive pastor, executive is an adjective, pastor is the noun. That is who I am, if you call me, never say “I'm sorry to bother you but…” no that's my job. Now I may not do it today because it may be a one on your list it might be a three on mine. And sometimes I have to be honest and say “yeah that's not going to happen today but it will be done”. Or I tap a fellow pastor on the shoulder and say, “hey can you go see this congregant?” because I can’t. Hey Pastor Adam, there's a young couple that wants to get married this specific weekend and I know my kids are going to be home with us that weekend, I need you to do that.

And by the way I still do check out times, I still ref football, basketball, and volleyball because those are the days that people get to yell at me. That is also the time where I don't have to be gospel, a foul is a foul, a penalty is a penalty and if you say the wrong words you're gone. I can't do that to my congregants. And I also enjoy going golfing. I've become much better at saying no Tuesday night is golf night we will schedule around it.

**12.** **(Congregation) Who is your accountability partner? What frequency do you connect and for what topics? Last time?**

I have two very important men in my life. One of them is my father confessor who lives in two Rivers. I see him when I need to converse electronically and get together in person when I need to. And then I also have a spiritual mentor his name is Hal Senkbeil. He is the only person in my phone who has the same level of importance as my wife. When my wife calls, I answer it. So, if I'm at your house serving communion and my wife calls before I have started the words of institution, I'm going to take that call and Hal is in that same category. He has the complete authority to ask me “how is my prayer life and what am I reading?”. That's my accountability partner because every pastor needs a pastor and frankly if you call me as your executive pastor, Pastor Seth and Adam need a pastor who is not their boss because structurally, day-to-day operation there is accountability here for Seth and Adam the way you have drawn it up. Both of them need pastors who are not their boss. Which is why I absolutely love to work with an organization called doxology. If you call me and I accept, I will drag as many of you that would willingly go along to the program for a thing, they do called On-board.

What you learn at On-board is a daily glimpse into what my life is like, it is one of the best things I have ever done in parish ministry. It never fails that I take a new group of people and they go through this thing and give them a microcosm of what our life is really like and without fail one of the people as me, “are you okay!?? Because here's the deal, most of what you think my life is as a pastor is the part of the iceberg that is above the water; all the jagged stuff is underneath. The more that I can help you understand what's underneath the better you can pray for and support your pastors. It's not only mutual accountability, it's a mutual understanding.

When you and I understand each other's vocations, it is easier for us to extend grace to the other person. When I have been up all night sitting in a hospice waiting for someone to die and all of a sudden Janet comes into my office and says the toilet in the bathroom is not working, I have to say, call somebody I can't do this right now. She doesn't know what I did for the last five hours other than sleeping. Sometimes pastors get short and people fail to recognize that there are pressures to this job just like there are pressures at your job.

**13. (Congregation) Might we expect a dedicated time on Sunday mornings for adult bible class taught by a pastor coinciding with Sunday School? Our Children should be attending worship with their families. A Saturday or weeknight service could alleviate 3 Sunday services and allow people that work Sundays an opportunity to worship.**

In two congregations, I have started Monday night services. We have also done Saturday night services the challenges if you are working Sunday morning you probably have something going on Saturday a midweek option of some sort might be a great blessing. Do you have a teaching Bible study where we get together and study the word together, I hate to get too specific on it?

Because here is my promise, I'm not going to go changing anything on day one unless you're sacrificing goats up here or something like that. Because it gets really messy and you don't want to get the altar Guild mad you never want to upset the altar Guild people. One of the things you need to give to your executive pastor is the lay of the land. And the elders in the board can expect a lot of questions of why. Why do you do it that way why do you do it that time it's not because it's bad I just need to know wife. And usually, I think along the lines of, “well I am 20 years ago someone suggested that so that's the way we've been doing it ever since”. Then they usually follow up with “well what do you think?” I suggest we study together that's how at Saint John’s we started implementing the Lord supper at all of our weekend services, I did not mandate that. We have implemented first communion, I did not decide that we studied it together, the families studied it, I don't rule by fiat. We proclaim the clear word of God we discuss the pure word of God. So, if there is a need for an additional service, if there is a call for a Bible study then let's look at it together and study it together. It's never a yes or no. Does it make sense and is it better than what we are currently doing now?

You know it's a little bit like professional sports. A team loses a stretch of games and they want to fire the head coach. Which is all well and good until you have to find a replacement, who is next? It is not always as easy as A. What if we do this? What if we implement that? The important question is what are the laws of unintended consequences? Snap decisions are never good. Oh, you're so wishy-washy you're so political, no I'm not, I'm in charge of a group of people. There is a reason the Bible says we are to be slow to speak and quick to listen.

**14. (Congregation) Do you have in mind any specific programs for children in the congregation attending public schools?**

Programs for people who send their kids to the public school not DR LS- Janet We tend to any congregation in school the size of DR forget or be sensitive to the needs of the family that for whatever reason don't or are unable to send their kids to the Christian day school. We can't just say well that's on you. This is historically where Sunday schools come in, I see historically because I don't know too many senior pastors who are happy with her Sunday school programs right now. Not that it's bad, we just sit there and go “where is everybody?” Now that being said we need to engage.

One of the best things we did in Plymouth was we went through a vision planning process where we answered our why. From there we went out into the community and we had four listening sessions where are we said, what is great about Plymouth? What is missing? And after we listened to those things, we came back and said how can we answer that? How has God gifted Saint johns to be an answer to that? A model like that can be, let's engage in those who are not at the school and not say, “what's wrong with you because you are not at our school?” But say, “OK what is good about your kid’s education? What is missing? Spiritually that is.” Then ask ourselves the question, how can we answer them? Is it some kind of midweek activity for the kids? The problem with that is often times, kids are already too busy. So how can we equip families to do it because faith is taught in the home so how do I equip parents whose kids are not enrolled in DR to teach the faith at home since we can't support them here? By providing resources, by providing training, those kinds of things.

**15- (Call Committee) What other things about yourself, your family, and your ministry would you like the members of DRLC to know about? (Congregation) And should you receive and accept this call, why do you feel as though you would be a good fit for DR?**

There is a computer term, does anyone know what “WYSIWYG” means in computer speak? What you see is what you get! You have just spent an hour with me, what you see is what you get. I take my call very seriously. I can't take myself seriously I shave with this face every morning. I have always been the fat kid. One of the things I do is use self-deprecating humor to protect myself. I've had times where I have lost weight, and like the demons the pounds come back with six of their friends. Doritos, Pringles, Dr. Pepper- don't bring those around me unless you're trying to trap me.

I am not perfect, I have my flaws, but if the Lord leads me here then HE has led me here and you will get all I got. Do I think I could be an effective executive pastor? Absolutely. If I didn't think so then I wouldn't be here. DR is on Hill Road and Saint John’s is at the intersection of Stafford and Main, both churches need to be audaciously bold and giving Jesus away. And the best part about that is the more you give Jesus away, you never run out. I think any of your four candidates would faithfully serve you, it's up to you to decide. I would win a sumo wrestling match with all of them. I've seen them play golf; I am a better golfer than they are. But they are good men, faithful men. Understand, there are no mistakes we may say what were you thinking God? But there are no mistakes if you call me, and the Lord leads me to accept I will do everything in my power so that you never say what were you thinking God? I can't guarantee I'm going to make you happy. In fact, if I am making you happy always, then I'm not really doing my job. But I will give you Jesus.

**Pastor Seth Flick- Question and Answer Session with Divine Redeemer.**

**Introduction: Tell us about your history in the churches you have served in, the locations, the style and try to gives a flavor for your ministry experience.**

When I was young, I grew up in a very traditional Lutheran experience. In worship we had the old red hymnal and blue hymnal growing up. Prince of peace, Christ the King, and now Trinity in Racine where my parents still attend were my formative experiences in the church. When I went to the seminary, we as a couple were able to experience a breadth of ministry experiences. When we got there, we were tasked with planting a church inside the shell of a former LCMS church. We had to fund the ministry in a way that served a college campus because it was literally across the street from St. Louis University. So, we came up with a business plan to run a coffee shop during the day which was very successful and monetarily sound. Even today it runs in the black and has every year since including 2008.

While at that church we were exposed to a very different style of contemporary worship. It was still a church building except that the brick was exposed on the walls but we would hold worship service in the coffee shop at the coffee tables. We still had an altar and pulpit but during the week everybody was studying here, doing life here so it was really natural then to invite them to worship on Saturday night. We would have seminary professors come and observe worship to make sure that everything was still Lutheran in its content but different in the methodology of what it looked like. It was a blessing to be involved with that for 7 years.

On vicarage it was very different. We had a Saturday night contemporary service and a Sunday morning traditional. At contemporary we had a drummer and a pianist. If you have ever seen Will Ferrell skits with the piano, it was a little like that. We held our services for traditional right out of the maroon Lutheran service book right out of the different settings of divine services.

In our parish in southern California we used some elements of creative worship which is very similar to what our traditional services look like here. Being able to work here with so many great staff members to develop the services we have here it has allowed me to continue to grow. I just pray that whatever role I serve here at DR I hope that I am able to continue to provide excellence in worship opportunities.

**1.(Call Committee CC) Describe your understanding of the church and its mission especially as it relates to the lost.**

The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost, that is why the church exists. We do a good job of discipleship and caring for folks while they are here to varying degrees of success and we can continue to grow in those areas for the people here at DR. But, one of the brightest opportunities we have is in the explosive potential with the staff that we have.

**2.(CC) How do you keep existing members, possibly lifelong Lutherans engaged while also bringing on new members?**

As the pastor of discipleship, one of my responsibilities is teaching new member classes. That class is open to every member new or existing. We have baptism classes every month. We have instruction on the Lord’s supper regularly and these are opportunities for members to be involved. Getting reinvigorated as an existing member is easy to do when you see new members serving the church in different capacities. The Lord has gifted us in so many ways and there are many ways to be involved. Whether it is greeting before a service or mowing the lawn on our campus we can all contribute to the Lord’s work here at DR. We set the bar really high for new members at the new member class and try to communicate to them that we are a 10 talent church.(taken from the parable of the talents) We want to be using God’s gifts to their highest potential. We are a ten talent church, not a 4 or 1 talent church. Communicating that members new and existing, there is a high expectation that we serve God.

**3.(CC) Obviously, any pastors call is to primarily word and sacrament ministry. But this position also requires the executive pastor to be CEO/COO. Describe your administrative leadership capabilities in the areas of budgeting, strategic planning, staff management, and development plans for staff members.**

**Budget**- Managing the mission church that I spoke of earlier, Melinda and I were in charge of keeping the books. There were revenue streams based off things we sold in the shop. We had to keep track of inventory, monitor inventory, wages, and everything like that. We did that in partnership with others so we weren’t solely responsible, but we were highly involved.

I had an even greater experience when I worked at the seminary. After a year I was there, I was hired as a staff member to administrate three programs as an arm of ministry for the synod. The 3 offices I held was the DELTA program, the EIAT, and the SMP program. These programs were made by the synod to help prepare the man who was already leading congregations in word and sacrament ministry if that person wasn’t a pastor. When a pastor that lead a church retired and the man left behind was able to be compensated at the district salary scale. The synod has the practice that a man cannot administer word and sacrament ministry unless he is rightly called. So rather than pull that man out of the church and go to seminary and accrue financial debt, they decided to offer training and mentorship programs to these men to take classes online.

Each one of these programs had a its own budget. I worked with the registrar and a professor for the entire year and pay them, I had to serve as the course editor to make sure that everything got completed on time. I had to pay out any bills supporting the infrastructure of each of those programs being administered simultaneously. Communication was very important in that process to maintain transparency, which I believe are critical in budget management. That was about a quarter of a million dollar budget. That is not the same as the budget here but it had a lot of moving parts much like this one, we had to manage unforeseen costs being that they were brand new programs. So between the books at the mission church and the 3 program management at the seminary, those gave me some formative learning experiences. It is still a pretty steep learning curve. Starting recently, Pastor Jeff, Renee Kandler, and Janet have allowed me to sit on the budget team and give me the opportunity to be a part of that and grow more in the area.

**Strategic Plans**- As part of starting that mission church, we had to determine where we were going, how we were going to get there, what resources we would have to do so and break it down into manageable steps. Part of what made that work was we were a bunch of seminary students who were willing to do whatever it took to see that the Gospel was proclaimed. It didn’t take much to convince those people to pursue that goal even though we had never even worked at a coffee shop before. That was a great way to learn mission, vision, values, and make sure it was done in a way that we could accomplish it, celebrate it, and move forward.

Recently here at DR we sat down as a staff to start identifying critical targets, further examine our mission, vision, and values. That is a very creative and collaborative process and we are all on different teams to make sure we hit those targets. My responsibility currently is on the servant team. So we have targets for the next 6 months and 12 months so that we can achieve our goals.

**Development plans for staff**- In my previous congregation, my head pastor was very gifted in this area so I had the opportunity to experience what that was like on the receiving end. Now coming here I was able to take some of those practices and resources and utilize them. Every year since I got here, a group of us go to the leadership summit to be equipped for leadership the whole year. We began implementing purposeful goals as a result of that program.

**Unpopular decisions**- The pandemic is a good example of that situation. Not having all of the information you need to make some of those decisions made for tension at certain times. The process for that is kind of laborious but I tried to talk to every staff member that I could about those decisions because with that open dialogue, they felt as though they were heard, it opened the opportunity for an open feedback loop and they were invited into that process which made them feel more respected and provided a personal touch for them. If this pandemic has taught us anything, it is how important intentional communication can be. The more we communicated on the front end, the more the congregation was able to accept changes we had to make. The less we communicated on the front end, the more WE HAD TO communicate on the back end out of necessity. The more communication we can do, illustrates more respect, the more respect the more we trust each other. So, with communication, respect and trust, there is so much we can accomplish for the Lord.

**If you were to receive and accept this call, what are the experience gaps you would look to close in the first 3-6 months and how would you go about doing that?**

That is a very wise question. For me, there is a pastor I knew out in California and he now actually back in WI so I would be picking his brain a lot. He is local, he has 20 years’ experience being a pastor in the LCMS, his church is a little smaller than our but large enough where I could shave some wisdom off of his beard pretty effectively and he would provide some wise counsel for me. I would set up a more regular meeting with him. I couldn’t anticipate right now and get a hold of him.

The other thing I would like to work with is our staff and invest in our church staff. Continue to see us grow but also sit in a room one on one think about what growth looks like in 3 months, 6 months and so forth. So I want to invest immediately into our church. I would continue to find impact moments in the school. We are most effective when the church and school work closely together. So, personal growth, growth in our staff and growth in our ministry.

**4. (CC) If you were to receive and accept this call, describe how you would go about your work in the first 90 days. (general ministry speaking)**

I would love to sit down with every faculty and staff member and listen to what their struggles and goals are, how can this church help? Maintain those personal connections, that to me has a ripple effect for them. I know they already serve so faithfully the families they work with but hopefully that encourage them to serve even greater. In our church our size we could easily drift apart so working on those little connections is important.

**5.(CC) Janet- DRLC has a thriving ministry with its Lutheran day school. Please describe your beliefs about Christian Education, your experience working with a school and how you would build relationships between the church and the school.**

I am a product of Lutheran Schools. 1-4th grade was in a public school but 5-8 was Lutheran school. I attended Racine Lutheran High School, Concordia University Wisconsin and of course the seminary so personally I know the benefit it has been to me. However, as a dad I see the impact it has at an even greater level in each of my kids. We can hear our boys playing praise songs in their room at night that they heard in church or the bible story they heard in school. So, as a dad it so amazing to see how my own kids are affected. I believe the teachers here are doing that for all the kids that attend not just mine so I can only imagine how that is also playing itself out in other homes. I know that if this church didn’t have a school, we would not have accepted a call here because Lutheran education is core to who we are as a family.

There are many ways a pastor can build a relationship with the school. As a ministry of presence, being able to take temperatures daily as they come in each day has been great. We know each of the kids by name and the names of the kid’s siblings by name that don’t even go here yet. Those parents realize that ministry to all of them is important. That is a just an example of how Pastors are involved each day. I have the chance to eat lunch with every boy, 4 times a year from 5th grade to 8th grade just to check in with them and hear what is going on in their lives. In the 3rd-5th grade we do what is called, “ask the pastor” where the kids ask me anything they want and you would be amazed the level of questions these guys ask. As a pastor to have the chance to work a long side of a school and to be able to baptize one of the students which I had the privilege of doing. I have the opportunity to visit the classrooms and the kids ask me questions on a regular basis. This past year I also had the amazing privilege of baptizing one of the students here which without question was one of the highlights of my career so to see the school having that kind of impact on students’ lives is incredible. 36:17

**6.** **(Congregation) How would you meet the “always on” needs of the Executive Pastor position leading a $1 million dollar+ budgeted church when meetings occur after dinner, travel out of town to conferences or church member calling with urgent issue at 9:00pm that requires your attention? How do you manage this struggle today?**

This is something that Melinda and I talk about often because our family is so important to us and I’m not willing to sacrifice my children’s future for much. I have learned to be very clear with my own boundaries aIready, and Melinda and I have good communication about checks and balances. The other part is being very disciplined in my time in the office which really mitigates the amount of meetings that have to happen. By organizing my day I am able to get all of the important things done that I need to. In ministry to people that is not always possible of course so there will be those instances where I can’t stick to that script all the time. I continue to grow in that discipline in my weekly goal setting and daily goal setting. One of the ways I mitigate the frequency of having those off hours meetings is by scheduling them to be on the same evenings so when I am away from the family it’s for one longer stretch of time instead of multiple shorter times more often on consecutive days. Not everything is able to be moved and scheduled like seasons of the church year. There will be times that it is busier but that is when you have to leverage less busy times in the church year so you are not always doing an 80 hour work week.

**7A. (Congregation) What level of importance do you place on the role of the man in the church? The man in his house? His family? His neighborhood? What level of importance do you feel that the man is charged with in the Bible to lead?**

It is all answered very easily in the small catechism. It is crucial, in a book I read about this it is one of the key reasons that people fall away from the church. I am grateful for the men’s ministry that we have here. Every year I bring my boys to the men’s ministry kickoff packer game event. Men’s ministry is very important, what that looks like over the next 5-10 years I don’t know. Some churches are moving towards a more family-oriented ministry some are going towards mentorship programs.

**7B. (Congregation) As you look at the Men’s Ministry today, do you think it is important to find a leader for it?**

That is a good question. Do we need representation for the Men’s Ministry at our staff meetings? Absolutely. Pastor Adam has helped in leaps and bounds as a liaison between the staff and Men’s Ministry to help alleviate calendar conflicts. Do they need one singular leader? I think they have some great leadership in place now and I appreciate the prayer lists that are facilitated by those men. Do we need to hire someone for that position? It is a conversation that could be had, we have some excellent leaders.

**8. (Congregation) How would you facilitate the confirmation program?**

Our confirmation program is unique to Divine Redeemer and it somewhat goes along with the man’s role in the household. Right now we have a 3 year confirmation program: 6th grade the students learn the breadth of the Old Testament with one Sunday school teacher, 7th grade the breadth of the New Testament and one of the pastors with Mrs. Hahn our director of youth in rotation so they start to get know the confirmands. There is then face to face instruction within the confirmation program between the pastors and our director of youth. By the time the students learn about doctrine from the story in the Bible, they know the stories having studies them for the first 2 years. When you don’t see one of the pastors at the 9:15, they are likely down in the 7th grade classroom.

The 8th grade year is where we are very different. I read a book by Ken Hamm about the drop off of our youth from church and 60% of youth don’t return. Another book I ready entitled Sticky Faith which found almost the exact some result. At the end of Hamm’s book he says, “are you okay with that, if so then keep doing exactly what you are doing.” As a pastoral staff we talked about that and we aren’t okay with that so we had to do something.

Research says there are three things that help to retain youth. Effective preaching, involvement in the life of the church, but first and most effective is the modeling of faith in the home on a daily basis. That is one of the reasons our 8th grade program pushes things back to being at home like it says in the small catechism. It is going back to what was affective in the church for thousands of years before approximately the 1900s. That is what this program is in 8th grade, it is on the 6 chief parts of the small catechism.

Monday-Parents watch a video put together by our pastors so they know how they are to teach for instance the first petition of the Lord’s Prayer.

Tuesday-Parents have a pre-written prayer given to them that has to do with the theme of that week.

Wednesday- They read a piece of scripture and watch a video together.

Thursday- There is some kind of activity and that varies from week to week so there is an affective aspect to the catechesis that goes on.

Friday- is a review.

To apply the participation in the life of the church students have a number of electives they can pick from. They can read the bible text for the day, run the sound, be a greeter, be an acolyte, be in the choir, join and adult Bible study, all of which is meant to get them involved in the life of the church. Furthermore, the pastors have a monthly meeting with the parents of the program to have another touch point during which we will usually review the parts they just covered as well as teach about the components that are upcoming. We are also having conversations now about a confirmation retreat which would be another opportunity for Pastors to be involved. The final point is that confirmation is still ongoing and it less like a program that they complete and are done but rather is a part of their daily faith walk.

**9. (Congregation) DR like many churches always seems to be living on the edge of its means. Cash flow is enough to maintain the basics, but surpluses to grow the ministry are rare. As a result, our “thank offerings” to ministry efforts locally, Synod-wide and internationally often fall short of desired levels. Briefly describe how you have developed programs with your congregation to exercise biblical stewardship principles in your ministry that delivered tangible outcomes and measurable results.**

First, there is always a stewardship series as a part of the worship planning process. First fruits and Game of Life were both sermon series that were forma public methods of approaching stewardship. We have also utilized the offering time as you have seen to highlight the ways that Jesus mission is being accomplished instead of the passing of the plates like we did in the past pre-covid. By highlighting what the stewardship is accomplishing is a way to celebrate Jesus’ work but also invite people to join in the mission as opposed to focusing solely on the giving portion. Giving thanks to God is also a stewardship principle.

Stewardship also shows up on our values as it is one of the core values we point to at Divine Redeemer. Technology is another means of improving stewardship which we looked at closely. We were not stewarding our data management software well because it was antiquated and not many people knew how to use it. So if we wanted to get a hold of a member to steward that relationship it was difficult. So, we have introduced CCB as means of connecting better with our members in effort to better steward our relationships, learn about their spiritual gifts, as well as volunteerism. If a member has a spiritual gift that aligns with a need, we can try to utilize them to serve the body of Christ.

Another technological move to go to Pushpay, when we did that, not only did giving go up but the amount we spent on that kind of technology went down making the giving that much more impactful. This was very critical especially during the Covid shutdown. Whether it is formal teaching, study of the word, utilization of technology, those are big strides we have made toward better stewardship.

**10.(Congregation.) DR utilizes traditional flexible and contemporary flexible worship styles and both are offered every week. Pre-covid, the services were similar in weekly attendance and offerings; about 50/50. While our worship styles appear to be effective in drawing more people to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, many congregational members have remarked how it feels like two different churches and often we may only rarely see other members despite regular church attendance. Describe how you would address this perception of a divide in the congregation to galvanize DR into one body serving God’s kingdom?**

I suppose there are some assumptions made in a question like that. Compared with other congregations that I have served in, the level of harmony at DR is much better than previous churches I have seen. That is something to be thankful for so DR if better off than many places. Are there steps we could make to improve? Sure. The different worship styles are really personal preference. Pastor Jeff and Heidi Graff do a wonderful job designing the worship services here in the church while Karen Lippert, Ruth Koepke, Pastor Adam and myself design he worship for the contemporary services.

The steps we have made with these services are that we meet together before each sermon series creating content that will be utilized in both services so the congregation is getting the many of the same components. Sermon series are also the same for each setting. In the history of DR there were times when that was not always the case. For as long as I have been here, we have always had shared initiatives whether that was funds for shoes or another mission project, those have been supported and encouraged in both services.

**11.(Congregation) Do you have a preference of preaching from the lectionary or sermon series?**

At DR you will find an interesting combination of both of those, we still celebrate the church year and retain that historical tradition of a synod like ours. Lectionaries typically attempt to cover the breadth of the scriptures in a 1 or 3 year cycle but the problem with them is that none of them take you through the entirety of the Bible. How many times do we hear a sermon series on Revelation when the lectionary was being used? Or Habbakuk? Or Jonah? Not very often.

We have the ability to hear from the congregation about what you would like to hear and the church wanted to know about Revelation and so we are doing a sermon series at the end of the year on the seven churches in the book of Revelation. The lectionary does have value but it does have its short comings. The criticism of sermon series is that you only get to hear what the pastor wants to soap box on so you get the same thing every year. However, when you have to plan these series with a team of people that is not able to happen with that system of checks and balances.

**12a. (Congregation) - What is your feeling of wearing your alb/clerical collar at a contemporary service? What is your feeling of wearing your casual clothes at a traditional service?**

I have had some difficulties with my clerical collar which is why I don’t tend to wear one. Early on in ministry I was often confused for a Catholic priest, and at that time there were some negative things connected with that. In my experience it became an impediment to reaching other people. A uniform can be helpful when you need the help of a police officer and the same could be said of a pastor unless the uniform doesn’t bring the sense of safety you are hoping it would.

For me, I would rather allow my ministry I provide speak for who I am rather than my clothes. I’m comfortable in tan loafers or Chuck Taylors, I want you to see the same person I am up here as the same guy wrestling with his kids on Tuesday night.

**12b. Do you foresee any changes in your wife’s role should you go from being an associate to executive pastor?**

No, I don’t expect any change for Melinda. We have had a great relationship in that area so far and I don’t see that changing. We have always worked with the concept of I am the called worker and the so the expectations then would fall on the called worker and Melinda in her own Christian freedom is able to participate in any way that God leads her to do. For me to move from associate pastor to executive I would expect the same relationship to happen. He has gifted her in many amazing ways as a mom, as a social worker, I would want her to use those gifts as he given them rather than pigeon-hole her into something that she is expected to do. I would want the same thing for all of you, I wouldn’t want to force you into an area of ministry that would tire you out because my position is different.

**13. (Congregation) How do you utilize to a greater extent the talents of the congregation for instance the business experience from members?**

This congregation wants to help so how do we find opportunities for people to do that. People with business acumen come to me and say, how can I help? So I find it is less about having opportunities and then farming them out to people I find, instead it is find opportunities for the people that are interested.

**14. (Call Committee) What other things about yourself, your family, and your ministry would you like the members of DRLC to know about?**

First, I am very thankful to be able to serve the members here at Divine Redeemer, whether it is traditional or contemporary. I want you to know that you are appreciated and our family has been blessed to be a part of this family. The ministry that the church and school has had towards us is incredible. My kids love it here, they are doing well, they are thriving and love being here and laying the gym floor sometimes when I’m preaching. So those are some of the things I want you to know. Some people have asked if I am out of here if the senior pastor position isn’t extended to me. The answer to that is no. We like it here, we want stability for our family. If I am not the head pastor here, that doesn’t mean we are just going to pick up stakes and leave. Who knows what God has in store for us for our future but I know some people have had that question.

**15.** **(Congregation) Who is your accountability partner? What frequency do you connect and for what topics? Last time? Weekly? Monthly?**

There is a small group through the global leadership summit, leadership equipping, there is a small group that is always available and is a very healthy accountability group. It doesn’t meet formally every single month but there are objectives for us to do and there is accountability to each other to make sure those things are happening. I also participate in a monthly circuit meeting with other LCMS pastors where we can share struggles and pray together.

**16. (Congregation) What are your thoughts on children leaving the service during the message instead of staying with their families and worshipping together? Would you prefer to have children’s Sunday school at another time?**

One of the reasons we incorporated kid’s connection into the service in that time frame was to address one of the problems we were seeing at that time. We had an abundance of parents dropping their kids off at 9:15 and then leaving, meaning they weren’t worshipping together or at all. We tried to make our schedule invitational to those parents instead of just dropping their kids and then leaving. That change did 2 really good things, 1-every kid gets a children’s message which wasn’t happening before and 2- the parents have to come in with their kiddos for the dismissal time and we have a really high retention rate of the parents coming into worship instead of leaving when they dropped their kid off.

Now it is also invitational in that you don’t have to send your kids to Kids Connection if you wish for them to be with your family in worship because you can shepherd your children in church or in kid’s connection.

**17. (Congregation) What are your thoughts on establishing a Sunday morning adult bible class taught by the pastors coinciding with Sunday School?**

I love that idea. The hard part is, how do we as pastors avail ourselves that between, preaching, readings, shaking everyone’s hand at the end of worship? We would need to do some significant work with what congregation expects. I fully support the idea of a Pastor lead Bible study but it takes some work to make it all possible. We are teaching 7th grade confirmation, we are doing 8th grade pastoral forums, and new member classes, and worship.

**18. (Congregation) Would you be in support of a Saturday or weeknight service which could alleviate 3 Sunday services and allow people that work Sundays an opportunity to worship to extend the reach of the church?**

I love that idea but it has to be supported by the congregation. It has been done in the past but very well, it hasn’t generated the support of the congregation so it starts to drop off and it is really hard to stop a ministry like that. I am in full support of it but we need to staff that service with adequate volunteers as well.

**19. (Congregation) Do you have in mind any specific programs for children in the congregation attending public schools?**

At this point I don’t, I work closely enough without director of youth. I don’t want to make any assumptions that we aren’t reaching or engaging those students, we have great opportunities for those students be it kids connection or the youth events.

**20. (Congregation) Why do you as a pastor feel as though you would be a good fit for Divine Redeemer?**

I think that I have some opportunities and experiences that are different from other pastors. One is that I have working relationships with the staff here already which means I would be able to hit the ground running right away. Having trust with many of the members already and having an understanding of some of the dynamics and conflicts already and being able to start working those right away is a huge blessings that I would be able to hopefully be able to start in on very quickly. Actually having worked with a staff this large is a very unique experience for a pastor in the LCMS. As the associate pastor here, I know what that takes. Is it to the same level as a senior pastor? No but the learning curve would not be as steep for me as it might be for other candidates.