

Church Planter Residency Program

Redeemer Lutheran Church
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The Idea in Brief

As part of a plan to encourage a pipeline of church planters in the ELCA, Redeemer Church is initiating a three-year pilot residency program for church planters. Each residency will last 11 months. The residency provides a well-rounded experience with the resident working primarily with Redeemer's newest site (in the Portage Park/Jefferson Park area of Chicago) but also experiencing multisite ministry at Redeemer's other locations (on the NW side of Chicago and in the suburb of Park Ridge). Redeemer's staff and congregation will support and invest in the resident to help them prepare to plant churches in the wider church.

Potential Candidates

This is a specialized church planting residency. The resident must be passionate about and committed to church-planting and have an appropriate gift mix to help plant a new campus of a multisite congregation in Chicago. Qualifications include: high energy, highly relational, evangelistic, ability to be a self-starter, ability to work in a team environment. Preference will be given to candidates who are actively seeking to go on to plant new churches. Also, since prospective church planters must learn to be resourceful in raising funds, the resident will be expected to raise \$5000 in program support *before* beginning the residency. These funds will be used during the residency to cover ministry costs.

Potential residents will be drawn from ordained clergy, seminarians, youth ministers, and non-ordained evangelists. Ideally, the resident will participate in Lutheran Church Planters Training Intensive (see below) before beginning at Redeemer.

About Redeemer Church and Its Context

This church planting residency will probably be a blessing and a blast for the right person and a headache for the wrong person. Chemistry, passion, and giftedness are key.

Since 2000, God has blessed Redeemer with a remarkable turnaround and with the successful launching of a second location (with a third in the works). We've grown five-fold in worship participation and giving, and lives continue to be blessed in ways we never dreamed about 15 years ago. Redeemer is a church on a mission, with a bold vision both to continue to grow as a congregation and to help other churches start new churches.

Our congregational culture and chemistry is somewhat atypical. We are probably on the more evangelical wing of the ELCA. We are strongly Christ-centered (we talk about Jesus a lot!). We are a multisite, multigenerational community with a heart for reaching and empowering a generation that is often missing in church, adults in their 20s and 30s. We are serious about significant life change. Contemporary worship is a strength of ours. As we've grown, we're growing in racial and cultural diversity. We have a core value of embracing the "messy middle," where people from various church backgrounds and with various theological perspectives engage in real relationships and respectful conversation.

The resident will work primarily at our emerging third site, in the Portage Park/Jefferson Park neighborhoods of Chicago. This area is very close to the junction of two interstate highways and a major "L" commuter rail line. The racial mix is fairly heavily white (including an 18% Polish-descent presence) but with a quickly growing Hispanic and Latino presence. People in this area tend to be slightly older and have smaller families than the national norms, but there are still significant numbers of people in their 20s and 30s (our primary target group). Education and income statistics are fairly close to national norms. Psychographic studies of this area show the following seven "household segments" comprising 80-90% of the population: American Dreams, Cosmopolitans, Close-in Couples, Money and Brains, Urban Achievers, Multicultural Mosaic, and Bohemian Mix.

About the Resident's Role

As a multisite church, we can offer a tremendous learning lab for a resident. Residents will not only learn how a multisite functions, they will have opportunities to do ministry in three very different contexts that, nevertheless, share core values and a common mission. With three locations, there is a breadth of ministry to experience: pastoral care with people of all ages, preaching, teaching, social ministry, prison and reentry ministry, youth ministry, leadership development, etc.

However, in addition to the breadth of opportunities, there is also a concentrated focus on mission development. This residency is specially designed so that the resident will be spending most of their time developing the new mission in Portage Park under the direction of Peter Schwich, our mission developer. We anticipate that the resident will spend considerable time in the following activities: creating contacts with unchurched people, following up with "next step conversations," helping build and lead a Core Team of people committed to the new church, starting and leading small groups, and helping plan preview worship services and "comeback events."

Planting a new church is difficult, challenging, and sometimes draining work. But, for the right person, it's also extraordinarily rewarding and life-giving. Here are the kinds of things you'll find yourself doing...

- Frequent personal engagement in relational evangelism
- Advertising and promotion via website, social media, and direct mail
- Preaching/teaching responsibilities
- Small group development
- New member assimilation, including creating a stewardship culture
- Training in leadership development, apprenticing, and coaching
- Pastoral care
- Practical administration
- Other tasks as mutually agreed upon

Coaching/Supervision

Although the lead pastor (Fred Nelson) would formally supervise the overall residency, the resident would be apprenticed by the Jefferson Park mission developer (Peter Schwich) and work cooperatively with the other pastors on Redeemer's staff on a day-to-day basis.

Compensation

This is a full-time (45-50 hours per week) stipended position, and will run for 11 months. The resident will receive a stipend of \$1,400/month, plus a housing allowance of \$1,000/month. The church will pay the employer's portion of FICA based on the total value of the stipend plus housing allowance. Two weeks of paid vacation will be given. Unfortunately, moving costs and health insurance are not provided.

Timing

In collaboration with the ELCA, the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, and the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Redeemer is also spearheading a new Lutheran Church Planters Network. The network will be holding a 5-day church planter training intensive at the Lutheran School of Theology from July 18-22, 2016. Ideally, the resident would participate in the training intensive and then begin work soon afterward.

Next Steps

For more information about the residency program or the Lutheran Church Planters Training Intensive, or to receive a copy of the residency application, please go to www.lutheranchurchplanters.net or email Pastor Fred Nelson (fred@redeemerparkridge.com)

For more information about Redeemer Church, go to www.redeemer-changinglives.com