

Proposal Narrative Part A: Program Rationale and Design

1. Summary Statement: With love, support and encouragement, we wish to provide our dear Pastor Jen with the time and resources to pursue her heart song through this opportunity. In this proposal we will share the ideas and passion that Pastor Jen hopes for her own learning and growth and those we have for our congregation as we weave together the details of an opportunity to expand our knowledge, love and faith. Pastor Jen wishes to develop her knowledge and understanding of the Guatemalan culture; a passion which was ignited during a service trip in 2019. This lends a wonderful opportunity for our congregation to learn more and open our arms to welcome our growing Guatemalan community. This opportunity will grant her full opportunity to walk through daily life in Guatemala, learning the rich culture, traditions and beauty and to bring these experiences that we may love (and celebrate) our neighbors. We believe a sabbatical will provide Pastor Jen the ability to grow this passion through these rich experiences which will help her grow as a Christian, an individual, our Pastor and a community leader.

2. Rational: We find ourselves living in a fast paced society with little time for reflection and rest. Keeping up with the demands of a 24/7 world wear us out. For imagination and creativity to be nurtured we need sabbath time; a sabbatical provides the opportunity for it. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Trinity had to rethink how to function in a world where meeting virtually, wearing masks and social distancing are the norm. Even as restrictions are being lifted, we find that this is a good time to do some self-reflection before just trying to return to what was the status quo.

There is a growing Latinx community in our area. Statistics show that in the years 2000 - 2019, Latinx residents in the Mid-Hudson Valley grew 93%, and were the largest minority group

representing 14% of the region's total population (our local counties: Putnam saw an increase of 147% and Dutchess 98%). While we say “All Are Welcome” at Trinity Lutheran Church, and would extend a welcoming hand to our new neighbors, there may be unintended barriers to their feeling comfortable here that Pastor Jen’s sabbatical journey would help us recognize.

The local Roman Catholic Church, certain Mission and Pentecostal Churches in our area hold worship services in Spanish, but there is no mainline Protestant church in the immediate area that conducts a Spanish language service. While holding a complete worship service in Spanish is a long term goal, Pastor Boyd and Trinity recognize the shifting demographics so have placed an emphasis on reaching out to the Latinx community to build understanding and trust.

3. Activities and Timeline: We propose Pastor Jen’s sabbatical be taken June 1st-Aug.30, 2023 as there is a decrease in regularly scheduled congregational activities. Her sabbatical begins at home and visiting family as a time of de-compression from the congregational life and regular pastoral activities. It will also allow for final preparations. The hope is that one of her family members will be able to accompany her for part of this time. The core of Pastor Jen’s time will be spent exploring Guatemala culture (particularly its Mayan roots) and Spanish immersion classes. The classes are offered in one-on-one conversational style rather than classroom settings. The language & weaving schools that she will be attending include lodging with local host families as well as regular outings for cultural experiences. Five weeks will be spent in two different locals to afford a variety of experiences – the schools are located in Xela and Coban. The next four weeks will be a time of traveling to various locations in the country. She will spend about a week at the San Lucas Mission. Other destinations include touring historic, cultural and environmental sites, visiting Lutheran church communities (coordinated through

Iglesia Luterna Augstina of Guatemala), Pop No'J (which works with returning migrant children), and Guatemala City to meet with human rights defenders.

The final two weeks, Pastor Jen will return to the States, visiting extended family in Texas and the ELCA migrant communities and ministries there. She will return home to transition back and prepare for return to congregational life.

4. Pastor's statement: As I began to reflect on the possibility of a Sabbatical, pieces were coming together to form a vision of how God is inviting me and the congregation into this time. The strands that follow are gifts to be woven into a tapestry of faith with their own color and texture. This image was drawn forth from my own love of crafting (crochet, cross-stitch, etc.), and the ways I view not just my own life of faith, but that of the Church and this country.

Strand: The image of the United States as a melting pot does not account for the weaving of the beautiful variety of people, cultures and experiences that enrich our country. While my own family background has roots in Germany and Sweden, there is little from those cultures and immigration experiences that was passed down through the generations. There was more focus on assimilating rather than celebrating our unique heritage.

Fortunately, I have been able to experience and be influenced by a variety of places and cultures. While my extended family lives in Texas, I have lived in many states (IL, OH, PA, NY, NC, TX, CT) and have traveled in all but one of the states and a few countries (Israel, Jordan, Scotland and Guatemala). Each place offered a different perspective on what it means to be a citizen of this country and world as well as a person of faith.

Strand: I have been marked by grief with the deaths of my twin sister only a few days after our birth, my birth father (@ 4 years) my step-father (15 years ago), my husband, Michael (5 years

ago) and my step-brother, James (4 years ago). This is not even to mention friends, extended family and people in the congregations that I have served. I have come to see death and grief as more than just a part of life. It reveals the depths of the love that we are blessed to share with others. Through the gifts of prayer and community, I have experienced love poured out that has provided strength and hope along the way. I have undertaken a program to be certified as a Christian grief counselor as a way to be able to help others find the companionship of grief – not as something to get over but as a way in which to see how love of God and their loved ones endures in the midst of it.

Strand: I was ordained on November 2, 1992 which is the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed. This was not a purposeful decision but rather a scheduling one. Over the years, the anniversary of this date has become less about my ordination and more about those who walked before and with me in my faith – family and various church communities that I have been a part of and served. With the 50th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women in 2019 (ELCA), all the women who provided this path expanded this day even more so

Strand: After a 2019 service trip to Guatemala, I was drawn to look more closely at this date from the perspective of many Latino populations – Día de Los Muertos. On this day, Latinx people celebrate, remember and give thanks for their ancestors, continuing to include them in their daily lives – not as a morbid presence but rather as a reminder of the love that they shared.

Strand: Through numerous relationships, I have found greater connections to Guatemala. A friend works with human rights defenders, my internship supervisor, Bishop Patricia Lull has a synodical companion relationship with the Lutheran Church, and most significantly, we have many immigrants from Guatemala in the communities around the church that I serve. I have gotten to know this Guatemalan community and have participated in some of their local

traditions such as *Día de Los Muertos*, *Tres Reyes* and a Latino dance group, *Ilusiones de la Terra*. Conversations are underway with a group of local immigrants to find ways to build relationships with one another through food, celebrations, crafts, dance and the other activities.

Strand: The crafting image expands as I marveled at the beautiful bead work, weaving and embroidery that is such a significant part of the Guatemalan culture. Many of the woven pieces reflect the particular area in which the weaver lives. From the hand dying of the threads to the patterns designed on the back strap looms, I see the ways in which these artists bring together their families, culture and experiences to provide shape and color to their lives.

Strand: The final strand and the primary focus of my sabbatical is my desire to learn Spanish. I have taken a couple classes & used online apps. However, I need conversational skills. The schools in Guatemala offer one-on-one instruction as well as the opportunity to live with host families. There are opportunities to explore various aspects of Mayan culture and daily life. Through this experience, all these strands can be woven together to enhance current relationships and create new ones for me and my congregation within our local Latinx community

In putting together this statement, as well as preparing the full proposal, I have felt a renewed sense of enthusiasm for ministry and the possibilities that all these strands offer. The vision of its shape and texture is filled with beauty already. I am prayerfully hopeful that God will reveal ways in which this weaving will renew my own life and ministry as well as the congregation and wider community. Thank you for this opportunity to reflect and to be open to the moving of God's Spirit amongst us.

Congregational Statement: Weaving Together Christ, Congregation and Community: Pastor Boyd has an interest in fostering better relations with the Latinx community. Trinity currently

donates practice space in our building to a Latinx dance troupe. As an expression of thanks they performed at a potluck dinner, inviting us to dance with them. Pastor Boyd has reached out to Norma Pereira (local Guatemalan active organizer) to plan events to bring our communities together to learn Spanish, to share meals and crafts, exchanging ideas and techniques. The goal of our congregational outreach is to forge a relationship between our two communities, and sharing Pastor Boyd's sabbatical experience would be an excellent vehicle to facilitate this.

Trinity Lutheran Church participates in the Brewster Cares Homeless Shelter, a consortium of congregations that provide meals and overnight shelter for homeless in the community during the winter months (Trinity hosts one week each month). We have 6-14 homeless guests per night; approx. 6 of them are Spanish speaking who know very little English. Improving our ability to speak Spanish and a better understanding of Latinx culture would help us to relate to our guests.

Trinity is part of the Metropolitan New York Synod (MNYS, ELCA) participating in the AMMPARO program (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation & Opportunities) which advocates for unaccompanied minors coming to the United States. While congregations in New York City have been involved in it, we are unaware of any currently in the Hudson Valley. Through developing a connection to the Latinx community we could help minors that are settled here adjust to their new environment and would facilitate the participation of the congregation in the AMMPARO program.

The 30th anniversary of Pastor Boyd's ordination is November 2, 2022, which is El Día de los Muertos. There is a powerful connection for Pastor Boyd between her ministry, represented by her ordination anniversary and El Día de los Muertos. Her family has had a significant influence on her ministry, and the death of loved ones remain constantly in her life. The confluence of her

ordination anniversary and El Día de los Muertos on the same date provides a meaningful theme to guide her sabbatical journey.

We as a congregation laud Pastor Boyd's efforts to foster relationships with the local Latinx community and plan for her sabbatical leave. We are confident that this experience will allow her to take the strands of yarn that are Christ, our Congregation, and Latinx community, weaving them together to create wonderful tapestry. We fully support her pursuit of this sabbatical leave and ask that you make it possible.

6. Plan for Coverage: The plan is to have retired pastor, Rev. Martha Cruz and Assistant to the Bishop, Mother Gladys Diaz to lead worship and Pastor Cruz to work part time, attending church council meetings, and other pastoral needs.

7. Sharing Insights: While there will be no direct contact between Pastor Jen and Trinity, we will be keeping each other in prayer (a prayer calendar will have Pastor Boyd's itinerary, areas of focus, the planned activities for the congregation and daily prompts to learn the Lord's prayer and words of faith in Spanish). Pastor Jen will post on social media photos and reflections during and after her sabbatical (as able & not everyday) as will the congregation. Following the Sabbatical, fellowship events with the sharing of experiences and learnings will provide the opportunities to see where God is leading us with these new perspectives.

8. The Process that Led Us Here: While a Sabbatical is encouraged, Pastor Jen had not felt compelled to pursue one until 2019. Initial conversations took place with the church council and at our Annual meeting. A task force was established. Plans were underway before Covid which halted them. 2022 saw renewed efforts and encouragement to pursue this 2023 grant.

Part B: Congregational Information

1. Trinity Lutheran Church began humbly on September 11, 1938, as the first and still only Lutheran Church in Putnam County. After many smaller locations (and living rooms) ground was broken on May 30, 1963, on Route 6 in Brewster N.Y. for the construction of a permanent sit; an addition was begun on February 1, 1987 which includes our current sanctuary.

2. Membership: Current baptized membership is 368 people and average worship attendance is 65 (which includes one mid-week, two Sunday and online attendance).

3. Four Most Recent Pastors: 2010- present Rev. Jennifer Boyd ; 2002-2009 Rev. Kathleen Koran ; 1973-2001 Rev. H Henry Maertens (Associate pastors: 1980-1981 Rev. Ann Larsen & 1983-1991 Rev. Michael Plekon); 1970- 1973 Pastor J. Brooks Moore

4. Internal and Outreach Ministries: Trinity's ministries aim at fulfilling our mission: "As a people of God, we desire to experience the presence of God in our lives, so that we might be the presence of God in the lives of others." As we adapt following the worst of Covid, we are reevaluating our past, current and potential ministries of Trinity. These currently

include: **Education** (Sunday School, Affirmation (Confirmation), Bible study for adults.

Worship & Music ministry (Vocal and Handbell choirs), **Fellowship** (monthly potlucks to promote social bonding), **WELCA** (Women of the ELCA participate in spiritual development activities and social outreach), **Social Ministry** (Brewster Cares Emergency Shelter Partnership providing nighttime shelter and meals; Putnam Community Action Program donations of non-perishable food for the local pantry, hosting Blood drives with other churches; Lutheran World Relief kits - health, baby or personal care kits for victims of disasters or other life circumstances; Midnight and Breakfast Run - distributing sandwiches, toiletries and clothing to the homeless in NYC; Seafarer's International House: baking home-made cookies offering prayers for both their

physical and spiritual wellbeing and Christmas-At-Sea - preparing satchels with gifts for seafarers for Christmas)

Part C: Pastoral Information

1. Education: 1983-85 Hudson Valley Community College (Associate degree in Liberal Arts). 1985-88 Lenoir-Rhyne College (Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Arts) 1988-1992 Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (Master of Divinity). Summer of 1989 Clinical Pastoral Education (Texas State Hospital, Austin, TX) Summer of 1990 FOCUS churches (Albany, NY) outreach and social ministries with 5 non-Lutheran faith communities (Albany, NY) including a community garden, food pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelter. 1990-91: Internship at Christ Lutheran Church (Athens, Ohio), a town & gown setting, working with parish and campus ministry. Summer of 1992 Rensselaer County Lutheran churches “internship”, coordinated VBS and worship services at two yoked congregations. 2021-present: Pursuing Christian Grief Counseling Certificate (American Institute of Health Care Professionals)

2. Ordination: Ordained: November 2, 1992, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Oct. 1992-December 2001 St. John’s Lutheran Church (Elma, NY). January 2002- August 2009 Zion Lutheran Church (Cobleskill, NY) (on leave from call – 9/2009-8/2010). September 2010-present Trinity Lutheran Church (Brewster, NY)

3. Other Activities: 1995-99 Convener of Lutheran ministerium in Western NY: organized monthly gatherings and yearly retreat with Lutheran rostered leaders in Erie and Niagara counties (NY). 1997-99 Co-organizer of small WNY Lutheran theatre group– directing, acting, producing skits . 1998-2001, 2003-06 Upstate NY Synod Council (ELCA). 2001-03 Chaplain for First Call Theological retreats (Region 7, ELCA): Planned and co-lead worship services during

the retreat and pastoral care with first call pastors. 2013 Co-chair of Brewster Emergency Shelter Partnership: Worked with interfaith communities to coordinate shelter and meals during the winter months. 2018-present Participant in Putnam County Suicide Awareness Task Force: working with a variety of County agencies, school districts and non-profit organizations in suicide prevention, awareness, and education. 2019-present participant in Putnam Co. Community Resource group: Local non-profits that meet bi-monthly to discuss needs and resources that are currently available within our communities. 2020-present Co-dean of Tappen Zee Conference. Metro NY Synod, ELCA: Serve as liaison between our Synodical Bishop and staff for care, communication and assistance for Lutheran churches and rostered leaders in Westchester and Putnam counties (NY).

Pastoral Budget Narrative

The costs associated with visiting Guatemala are much less expensive than visiting other countries as the exchange rate is \$0.13 to one (1) Quetzal (as of 4/9/2022)

Travel

Airfares can vary but average about \$250 from Hartford, Connecticut to Guatemala City. Returning via Houston, Texas (where I have family) is \$500 and then from there to home is another \$400.

Transportation between each of the locations is approx. \$30 for each trip. I will be traveling between Guatemala City, Xela, Coban,,Lake Attilan and to some of the Lutheran congregations in different parts of the country. Any other transportation costs will be included in the designated tours.

While in Texas, I will need to rent a car for the week, average rate of \$65/day (7 days)

Meals/lodging.

I will be staying with host families while in Spanish immersion classes (4 weeks total). Meals are included with board for a total of \$50/week. In Xela, I will stay with a family while taking weaving lessons which is \$20/day. (One week) While it Lake Attilian, I will be staying at the San Lucas Mision which is \$60/week (one week). In other locations, I will stay in hotel, hostels and hosted by members of the Lutheran ministries and human rights defenders which are about

\$30/day. An additional \$30/day is designated for meals when I am not staying with host families. (3 weeks). Back in the states, I will be blessed by the hospitality of family

Tuition and fees

I am planning on going to two different Spanish immersion schools while in Guatemala. The cost, apart from the host families, is \$150/week. The weaving school will be \$100. As a part of my learning and culture awareness, I will be attend tours of Mayan culture (\$200), natural environment (\$200) and city tours (\$200). An additional \$300 will be needed when working with the Lutheran congregations and human rights defenders.

Books

There are no required text books for the immersion classes.

Equipment and supplies

Supplies for weaving and other crafts are included in the tuition price

Post-leave

Plan to continue Spanish classes online with the schools that I attended. They are \$10 per session. I would ask for an additional six months of classes, meeting at least once a week.

Other

I am hoping that a family member (possibly my niece, Serena or nephew Tate) will be able to accompany me for part of this trip (Was not able to get her to commit in time for this application). Additional costs of \$800 (airline), \$600 (meals); \$200 (lodging as we will share space) and tour costs (\$300) that I would ask to be covered (approx. 3 weeks).

I will also need to hire someone to housesit and take care of my three cats. This cost will be approx., \$300.

Tax liability: According to my accountant, it is estimated that up to \$2000 will be the increased liability to cover self employment, federal and state taxes.

Congregational budget

Pulpit supply: The current honoraria in the Metro NY Synod is \$175 per service (12 Sundays) and for additional part time pastoral coverage is \$175 per week. Travel is \$0.585 per mile. The two people would be traveling approx. 80 miles roundtrip.

Congregational events related to pastor's leaving: Additional supply honoraria for either the designated coverage pastor or assistant to the Bishop to lead a Godspeed and equipping service for Pastor Jen and congregation.

Congregational renewal activities: Funds to cover weaving and other crafting supplies as well as honoraria for instructors (part of the costs will be covered by individual participants to help with commitment to the activities)

Other