



# OPPORTUNITY SNAPSHOT

## SENIOR PASTOR

Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church

### Overview

Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church ([www.sov.church](http://www.sov.church)) in scenic Afton, Minnesota, is seeking to call a new Senior Pastor. This is an exceptional and rare opportunity for a dynamic and experienced pastor to join with a large, healthy, well-prepared congregation to love, lead and inspire them toward the next season of missional impact in the St. Croix Valley and beyond.

### The Big Idea



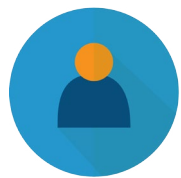
After more than 32 years of faithful service, Pastor Steve Kramer has decided to retire. He was once encouraged by a mentor to “leave on a high note.” He has certainly taken that advice. The congregation is deeply committed to the gospel and would like to see more people touched with the love and redemptive power of Jesus Christ. The intentional focus on excellence in children’s and youth ministries have made Shepherd a destination for many individuals and families. Currently, 600 adults participate in a small group, and children’s and youth programs offer relational small group opportunities, too. Shepherd is not a church with small groups; it is a church of small groups. Shepherd believes we were created by God to do good works, so they intentionally help attenders discover their gifts and the good works for which they were created. The incoming pastor will have an opportunity to view the various ministries of the church with fresh eyes, and work with staff to engage strategies or innovations that will catalyze fresh momentum that delivers Shepherd to the next level of Kingdom influence and impact.

### The Church



**DENOMINATION:** Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ ([www.lcmc.net](http://www.lcmc.net)) **ATTENDANCE:** 1,600  
**ABOUT:** Shepherd is a multi-generational church that is committed to the gospel of Jesus Christ as reflected in its mission *to connect all people to a growing relationship with Jesus Christ through worship, small groups and serving.* Shepherd currently welcomes attenders to four weekend worship services: Saturday evening at 5 p.m., and three on Sunday morning at 8:30, 10 and 11:15 a.m. More than 270 children attend Sunday School (birth through 6th grade). There is also a thriving Wednesday evening student ministry that averages 300 students weekly. During the summer, all ages are invited to a Wednesday night service. This service averages 280 people and is great for youth families and for those who travel “up north” to lake cabins on weekends.

### The Candidate



Following a beloved leader can be intimidating to some, so the right Senior Pastor will be humble, yet bold, self-secure and confident in the unique gifts and talents God has given. Shepherd will benefit from someone who has enough ministry experience in another context to bring new ideas or suggestions to the table. A talented communicator and preacher, the incoming Senior Pastor will effectively preach God’s Word with passion and inspiration, anchoring messages in Scripture, and connecting them to the challenges of everyday life.

### The Location



Beautiful Afton, Minnesota is nestled between St. Paul/Minneapolis, and the scenic St. Croix river that divides Minnesota and Wisconsin. Home to Afton Alps ski area and St. Croix Bluffs regional park, Afton is one of a number of quaint towns and distinctive suburban communities that make up the East Metro area. Great schools, easy access to the conveniences of an urban area, and lots of options for outdoor recreation, make this a highly desirable place to call home.

### The Qualifications



A Master of Divinity degree from an accredited seminary is required; Clear alignment with the Shepherd of the Valley Statement of Faith found on the website <http://sov.church/about/mission-beliefs/>, and Lutheran theology and doctrine as described at the LCMC (Lutheran Congregations on Mission for Christ) website <http://www.lcmc.net/statement-of-faith/231>; Significant pastoral leadership experience that includes quality preaching/teaching and communicating in a larger church context; A minimum of 10 years ministry experience with multiple years of senior leadership in a multi-staff setting; A genuine passion for the gospel, and a passion and ability to share the good news with those who have not heard it.

### Next Steps



For more information contact:

Kara Bubar  
NL Moore & Associates  
[kara@nlmoore.com](mailto:kara@nlmoore.com)  
865.200.7983

Nancy Moore  
NL Moore & Associates  
[nancy@nlmoore.com](mailto:nancy@nlmoore.com)  
651.335.6527

For the full Opportunity Profile  
[CLICK HERE](#)



**Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church**  
Afton, Minnesota  
**Senior Pastor Opportunity Profile**

March 2018

Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church ([www.sov.church](http://www.sov.church)) in scenic Afton, Minnesota, is seeking to call a new Senior Pastor. This is an exceptional and rare opportunity for a dynamic and experienced pastor to join with a large, healthy, well-prepared congregation to love, lead and inspire them toward the next season of missional impact in the St. Croix Valley and beyond.

After more than 32 years of faithful service, Pastor Steve Kramer has decided to retire. He was once encouraged by a mentor to “leave on a high note.” He has certainly taken that advice. A congregational health assessment revealed Shepherd of the Valley is in a “transformational” posture meaning the congregation is energized, flexible and generally at peace with the reality and timing of their pastoral succession. While they deeply love Pastor Steve, they are ready to move through this transition with unity and hope, anticipating a continued positive future under the leadership of a new pastor.

**Overview**

Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church (Shepherd) currently welcomes about 1,000 attenders to four weekend worship services: one on Saturday evening at 5 p.m. and three on Sunday morning at 8:30, 10 and 11:15 a.m. More than 270 children attend Sunday School (birth through 6<sup>th</sup> grade). There is also a thriving Wednesday evening middle school and senior high school ministry that averages 300 students weekly. During the summer, all ages are invited to a Wednesday night service. This service averages 280 people and is great for youth families and for those who travel “up north” to lake cabins on weekends.

As a regional church, Shepherd draws attenders from a variety of communities in the east metro area of Minneapolis/St. Paul and from western Wisconsin. The beautiful 60,000 square foot facility was built in 2002, with an addition in 2007. It includes a 550-seat sanctuary, gym/community center, prayer chapel, and excellent educational and flexible spaces for all ministries. Visible from the main freeway, the church is located on 30 acres in the wooded, rolling hills of Afton, Minnesota, in the heart of the scenic St. Croix River Valley.

With a continued commitment to its Lutheran heritage, Shepherd left the ELCA in 2010 and is a member of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ ([www.lcmc.net](http://www.lcmc.net)) and the Willow Creek Association ([www.willowcreek.com](http://www.willowcreek.com)). With an annual budget of \$2.5 million, the staff consists of nine full-time and 12 part-time employees, including three pastors, some who came to Shepherd from different evangelical traditions. The church is blessed with a strong, talented staff team that love what they do and lead with energy and passion. “Excellence with humility” accurately describes the attitude of the Shepherd leadership. The ideal pastor will not only resonate with this attitude, but will value relationships and collaboration, taking an interest in the team in order to see them further developed professionally and personally. A Church Council of nine men and women work with the Senior Pastor to govern Shepherd.

Even though the church is large, Shepherd feels like family to those who have experienced its relational warmth and care. At its core, the church is committed to the gospel of Jesus Christ as reflected in its

*mission to connect all people to a growing relationship with Jesus Christ through worship, small groups and serving.* The Shepherd community feels connected and engaged. Their commitment to a “simple church” focus on worship, small groups and serving has served them well, and each of these areas is solid. Pastor Steve’s pastoral heart and his ability to connect and care for individuals have positively shaped the DNA. Small groups have helped the congregation to feel “small” even while growing large. The intentional focus on excellence in children’s and youth ministries have made Shepherd a destination for many individuals and families.

Pastor Steve intends to officially step down on January 1, 2019 although he may scale back some of his responsibilities as the date of his transition draws near. Ideally, his successor will be identified and called by late summer or early fall 2018. This allows for a short overlap so these two leaders have time to connect with one another. They can then effectively transfer the leadership assets housed exclusively in the life and experience of a Senior Pastor before Pastor Steve and his wife move into retirement.

## **The Opportunity**

So many things about Shepherd are truly wonderful. There is a mature, wise, and relational ethos of this staff and congregation. They are eager to welcome an experienced and gifted pastor who will lead with integrity and care, and who will deliver biblically focused, relevant messages that both challenge and encourage the church to step out in faith. This congregation likes to be challenged and responds to truth, spoken in love. The people are warm, informal and educated, with approximately 70 percent of attenders holding a college or graduate degree.

As a congregation, the people of Shepherd are generous, serving and spiritually mature. They are deeply committed to the gospel and would like to see more people touched with the love and redemptive power of Jesus Christ. Shepherd is a multi-generational congregation that welcomes people from a variety of seasons and life experiences. Whether families with young children, those who have gone through a divorce, single adults, or children with special needs, there is a place for all at Shepherd. While the church is healthy, attendance has been stable with most new members coming as transfers from other churches. The incoming pastor will be called on to work with the staff and Church Council to ensure current ministry offerings are hitting the mark, and to explore ways to better connect people with Christ. In the coming years this leader will work with the staff to engage strategies or innovations that will catalyze fresh momentum in outreach that delivers Shepherd to a new level of Kingdom influence and impact.

Weekend worship services at Shepherd can be described as gospel-centered, spirit-filled, inspirational, upbeat, and creative. The congregation is accustomed to excellent, clear, biblical and gospel-centered sermons that focus on Jesus and his impact in this world. As the church looks to the future, the congregation will welcome biblically based preaching that ‘applies to real life’ and that is tailored to the challenges people face in our current culture. The incoming pastor must love and preach the Bible, but there is an opportunity to expand the way in which biblical messages are delivered.

Sermon messages are the same in all services, but the Sunday 8:30 a.m. service offers a blend of hymns and praise songs while other services offer modern praise and worship. As a gifted musician, Pastor Steve led worship as the church was growing, but in recent years has stepped back from that focus.

The Saturday evening service is an opportunity waiting to be explored. In spite of consistently drawing a small number of worshippers since its inception, this service has not gained momentum and may benefit from some retooling or a specific focus (i.e., young adult service, family service, millennial, etc.). The incoming pastor will have an opportunity to work with staff to explore potential ways to maximize all services for greater missional impact.

Even with multiple building projects over the years, Shepherd remains financially strong, with solid leadership from the business and administrative side of the ministry. The people of Shepherd are generous and eagerly support missional endeavors with time, talents and resources. The potential for “what’s next” becomes even more exciting when empowered by the financial wherewithal to make it happen. This reality is a definite high point of the leadership opportunity at Shepherd.

As stated earlier, small groups have helped this large congregation feel small. Currently, 600 adults participate in a small group, and children’s and youth programs offer relational small group opportunities too. So, it is fair to say that Shepherd is not a church with small groups, it is a church *of* small groups. This is the place where attenders know and care for one another, connect in community, and grow in faith and friendship. The ministry is not actively segmented by gender, age, or life stage; however, there are men’s, mixed, and women’s groups. Events and promotions are regularly offered to reach new attendees to help them get connected. Leaders receive ongoing support through training, resources, and coaching. In general, this ministry is going well, but there is an opportunity for the next pastor to look at the small groups’ ministry with fresh eyes, to suggest innovations, and to work with the staff to ensure this strategy continues to deliver a relevant, transformative experience for all participants.

Additionally, there is a clear opportunity to see post high school and young adult ministries developed. A number of young adults, and those who care about them, are asking for ministry support for the college (ages 19 to 21) and post-college (ages 22 to 35) groups. The YAMS, as they are affectionately called at Shepherd, are looking for meaningful ways to connect. Some have grown up in the church, while others have recently “found” the church and wish for a place to connect in a way that feels appropriate to their age and season of life. These young adults love Shepherd and long for embedded support from leadership. There is an opportunity for the incoming pastor to acknowledge this ministry gap and to direct its development. Young adults look forward to a pastor who appreciates the unique opportunities of engaging their demographic, and who understands that the friends they invite to Shepherd need to feel seen, loved and challenged.

Shepherd believes we were created by God to do good works. They intentionally help attenders discover their gifts and the good works for which they were created. Attenders of all ages can be involved in serving, either on a serving team in one of the church ministries (such as small groups, Circuit leader, VBS, or prayer ministry), or on a mission team that brings the love of Jesus to those outside the church. Shepherd has solid, long-term partnerships with local organizations including Union Gospel Mission, Loaves and Fishes, food shelves, and shelters. Shepherd also has strong partnerships with international ministries in Haiti and Honduras. These partnerships allow members to put their faith into action. As people discover their God-given talents and skills, there seems to be a growing passion to become even more engaged and impactful in this arena. There is a tremendous opportunity for the incoming pastor to continue the exploration of potential ways to increase engagement in serving, whether within Shepherd ministries, locally or internationally.

Overall, Shepherd represents an amazing opportunity for the right Senior Pastor. It is an opportunity to come into something really good and help it become something great – for God’s glory!

## **The Candidate**

Not every leader is wired to come into an existing organization to help it move to the next level. Following a beloved leader can be intimidating to some, so the right Senior Pastor will be humble, yet bold, self-secure and confident in the unique gifts and talents God has given. Shepherd will benefit from someone who has enough ministry experience in another context to bring new ideas or suggestions to the table. These may spark the dialogue about solutions or strategies that could benefit Shepherd as the church seeks to effectively move into its future. The ideal candidate will appreciate the blessing of following a faithful, long-term leader and take time on the front end to understand Shepherd’s history and traditions to build relational trust.

This congregation will not respond to someone who is seeking to make a name for him or herself. The right leadership “fit” is someone who is so passionate and confident in the power of the gospel that a similar flame will ignite in those he or she encounters. A talented communicator and preacher, the incoming Senior Pastor will effectively preach God’s Word with passion and inspiration, anchoring messages in Scripture, and connecting them to the challenges of everyday life. As the messiness of life and culture continue to become more challenging, this pastor will respond with messages that are authentic, relatable and transparent. This pastor will teach truth with an attitude of grace and hope, lovingly challenging and encouraging people to apply what they know and to trust God as they spiritually stretch and grow.

The church desires to call a pastor who will join with the staff and congregation to pray, dream and develop a fresh, compelling vision for the next chapter in the Shepherd story, and then to lead the journey as vision becomes reality. As a refreshed vision is formed, the incoming pastor will further develop and release the talents of the staff. Ideally, this individual will have experience and expertise in developing and coaching a staff, recognizing talent and optimizing potential. As someone who enjoys collaboration, the selected candidate will prefer to work with others to creatively employ a planning process: clarifying priorities, aligning ministry goals, setting objectives, defining measures, and celebrating the “wins.”

As the pastor of a multi-generational church, people of all ages and seasons of life will enjoy interacting with their new pastor. They will find an approachable, friendly individual who is comfortable engaging people in a variety of ministry and community life settings. The next pastor for Shepherd is the one who has a pastor’s heart, genuinely caring for people. This individual will be as effective communicating with someone who is 7, as one who is 70, finding joy in the little moments of day-to-day church life. With this kind of leader in place, the future of Shepherd looks bright, indeed!

### **Preferred Candidate Qualifications**

- A Master of Divinity degree from an accredited seminary is required.
- Clear alignment with the Shepherd of the Valley Statement of Faith found on the website <http://sov.church/about/mission-beliefs/>, and Lutheran theology and doctrine as described at the LCMC (Lutheran Congregations on Mission for Christ) website <http://www.lcmc.net/statement-of-faith/231>
- Significant pastoral leadership experience that includes quality preaching/teaching and communicating in a larger church context.
- A minimum of 10 years ministry experience with multiple years of senior leadership in a multi-staff setting, showing demonstrated capacity of growth. This will include oversight and development of paid staff and unpaid volunteers. This could take the form of a senior pastor, a campus pastor, or senior associate on a large staff with significant leadership, management and decision-making responsibility.
- A genuine passion for the gospel, and a passion and ability to share the good news with those who have not heard it.

### **Inquiry Process**

If after reading this description you have interest in the Senior Pastor position at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church and you feel you meet the qualifications for the role, you are invited to submit the following information for consideration:

1. Your resume or CV (**in Word doc format only**)
2. Results of any personality or strengths assessments you have taken in the past three years (StrengthsFinder, DiSC, etc.).
3. Electronic links to at least three video or audio sermon messages (video preferred)
4. Five references, including: one supervisor or overseer (could be a board member), two or three staff associates, with at least one from someone you have supervised, and one or two personal. *These references will be contacted later in the process and only with your prior approval.*
5. Written responses to the following questions (**in Word doc format only**). We believe that one can learn only so much from a resume. Your responses will help us to gain a more complete picture of you and your leadership.
  1. Describe your faith in Jesus Christ. Tell us how you came to personal faith and something about your journey into ministry. What aspects of ministry are most personally satisfying to you?
  2. What is it about the opportunity at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church that attracts you to this position?
  3. What are two or three of your core strengths? Please share two or three examples of situations where you utilized your core strengths to develop or mobilize the team you were leading.
  4. Share a ministry experience that refined you through failure and a ministry experience that refined you through success.
  5. What are the key factors that you believe should be present in your next church and ministry in order for you to be optimized?

Please submit your information to:

Nancy Moore  
NL Moore & Associates  
[nancy@nlmoore.com](mailto:nancy@nlmoore.com)  
651-335-6527