



# **GUIDELINES**

## **FOR THE**

# **EMPLOYMENT**

## **OF MUSICIANS**

## **IN THE**

# **LUTHERAN CHURCH**

This document is intended as a guide for pastors, worship and music committees, call committees and other congregational leaders involved in the employment of musicians in the Lutheran church. It has been prepared by the Professional Concerns Committee of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians.

The enclosures include sample descriptions, hourly allocations, covenant agreements and salary information, along with worksheets designed to educate and assist congregations in preparing equitable employment packages that promote good working relationships and support shared ministry goals.

Sample documents represent actual church musician duties, responsibilities, and relationships drawn from a cross-section of Lutheran congregations and are considered to be typical for Lutheran Church musicians.

Congregations are not limited to the ideas contained in the examples and are encouraged to be creative in developing staff positions. When musical duties do not constitute full-time employment, appropriately qualified musicians can lead Bible studies, administer education programs; assist with office, school or maintenance duties, provide youth leadership, act as pastoral assistants or worship leaders; or assume a variety of other responsibilities to fill out a larger staff position.

For further information, contact:

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When Christ's people, the baptized,  
gather for worship  
they receive God's love  
in word and sacrament,  
and through the gift of music,  
praise, pray, proclaim, and recount  
the story of God's grace in song.

The cantor--  
the historical  
term among  
Lutherans--  
is the leader  
of the  
people's song.

The cantor  
is responsible  
for leading the  
musical expression  
of the  
people--  
the assembly,  
choral  
groups,  
solo singers,  
and  
instrumentalists,  
among whom organists  
have been especially  
important  
for  
Lutherans.

# THE ROLE OF THE CANTOR

The cantor uses  
whatever musical resources  
are available,  
using them  
in a manner appropriate  
to the talents  
of those serving  
and the needs  
of the people who are served.

The cantor leads  
the earthly assembly  
in a foretaste of  
John's vision of the heavenly assembly  
in which all creatures give  
praise, honor, glory, and power  
to the Lamb.

The cantor's work  
is a worthy service to God,  
God's people,  
and the world.

It is a high and holy calling.

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## Determining Salary

Salary guidelines for church musicians are available through many sources such as the American Guild of Organists, The Association of Anglican Musicians, National Pastoral Musicians, and District and Synod offices of the Lutheran Church. A resource guide for these and other publications is included in this packet. Committees and congregations should consult these documents to make comparisons and determine regional differences.

The salary figures in this document are presented as a minimum hourly rate, to be multiplied by the number of hours per week calculated on the Job Description Worksheet. The dollar figures presented represent an average rate of pay \* and should be adjusted up or down commensurate with the education and skill of the musician, the relative complexity of the music program, and the region/location of the Church/.

This should not be taken to suggest that the vocation of church musician is a matter of grinding out hours. (See the "Role of the Cantor" on the inside cover of this document). Hourly rates are simply one way of determining salary levels.

\*based on the Professional Concerns Committee's comparison of available salary resources and updated annually by cost of living index.

### Hourly Rate Chart (in United States dollars) 2016 (updated October 2016)

	<b>Non-degree, musically trained</b>	<b>Bachelor's degree, trained in Church music</b>	<b>Master's degree. Deacon/ess, AIM, MM, M.Div.</b>	<b>Advanced degrees</b>
1-5 years	\$17.07 – 21.31	\$21.31 – 23.74	\$23.74 – 26.35	\$25.53 – 30.61
6-10 years	\$18.66 – 22.11	\$22.11 – 26.76	\$26.76 – 29.78	\$29.78 – 31.50
11-15 years	\$21.12 – 23.74	\$23.74 – 29.78	\$29.78 – 30.61	\$30.61 – 33.13
16+ years	\$23.73 – 28.15	\$28.15 – 31.51	\$31.51 – 35.67	\$35.67 – 39.11

Additionally, congregations are encouraged to provide benefits for employees working over 20 hours per week that include vacation, sick leave or maternity leave, healthcare, retirement, and continuing education.

### Continuing Education Allowance

Congregations should provide Continued Education Allowances in addition to salary for all professional staff members, including musicians. The minimum suggested allowances are provided below:

- Part-time (under 30 hours = \$500 and one week
- Full-time (over 30 hours) = \$800 and two weeks

Church body offices can provide additional information about course options, matching fund programs, and other congregational resources.

## **Hourly Requirements for Typical Church Musician Responsibilities**

The typical responsibilities included in a job description for a church musician are listed here and numbers on the right represent the average time expectation. Larger programs will normally involve a larger time commitment because of the greater complexity in the program and the challenges of more difficult music. Planners should remember that a musician's work time is divided between "visible" tasks such as directing the choir or playing the organ and more time consuming "invisible" tasks such as learning new music to present to the choir, practicing the organ and piano, preparing the rehearsal room, or maintaining the music library.

### **Organist or Pianist only**

Preparing and playing for 1 Service per week	6-10 hours
Preparing and playing for 2 Services per week	12-15 hours
Preparing and playing for 3 Services per week	15-19 hours

### **Choir Director only**

Rehearsing 1 choir per week	6-8 hours
Rehearsing 2 choirs per week	10-12 hours
Rehearsing 3 choirs per week	14-16 hours
Rehearsing 4 choirs per week	20-22 hours
Rehearsing 5 choirs per week	24-30 hours

### **Organist/Pianist and Choir Director**

Play 1 Service and rehearse 1 choir per week	12-14 hours
Play 1 or 2 Services and rehearse 2 choirs per week	16-20 hours
Play 2 or 3 Services and rehearse 3 choirs per week	24-28 hours
Play 3 Services and rehearse 4 choirs per week	32-39 hours
Play 3 or more Services and rehearse 5 choirs per week	46-50 hours

Add 5 hours per week for collegial tasks such as worship planning, staff meeting, committee meetings, administrating a music budget, administrating other music staff, or other staff expectations.

## Job Description Worksheet

Using the hourly requirements chart, the sample job descriptions, and your congregation's ideas and goals, complete this worksheet to establish your new musician's job description and hourly commitment.

**Position Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Duties and Responsibilities:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week

2. \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week

3. \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week

4. \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week

5. \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week

6. \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week

7. \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week

**TOTAL NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK** \_\_\_\_\_

*Covenant agreements are intended to state the responsibilities of both the employer and employee and are the principal tool for negotiating the working relationship. In the case of conflict, covenant agreements protect the interests of both parties and help to eliminate the potential for misunderstanding. The content of the Covenant Agreement should be reviewed annually, and the job description, hourly commitment, salary and benefits, and other changeable details contained in the document should be defined and agreeable to both parties.*

## **Covenant Agreement**

*(Sample)*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Effective \_\_\_\_\_ (date) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ (name) \_\_\_\_\_ shall serve as

\_\_\_\_\_ Director of Music Ministries (example) at \_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran Church.

The congregation agrees to an annual salary of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ paid

bi-monthly on the 1st and the 15th. The terms of this agreement will be reviewed

annually, coinciding with the development of the annual church budget.

The Director of Music Ministries shall fulfill the following duties and responsibilities:

*insert Job Description here*

In addition, the Director of Music Ministries shall:

1. Be permitted to use the church organ and piano for private teaching. Scheduling may be arranged through the church office and should not conflict with congregational activities.
2. Participate with other staff in congregational activities and programs, demonstrating a desire to be collegial and share gifts and responsibilities. (Collegial responsibilities could include teaching classes on worship or music, making hospital calls, writing newsletter articles, acting as a resource person to youth or education co-workers, sharing devotions at staff meeting, etc.)

*Insert current year collegial assignments, tasks, or goals here*

*(When congregational expectations include activities not clearly defined in the job description, they should be itemized here and included in the annual performance review.)*

3. Assist the congregation in finding a substitute when necessary.
4. Give \_\_\_\_\_ days and written notice of intent to terminate employment.

*This congregation shall:*

1. Provide \_\_\_\_\_ weeks vacation annually with full salary.
2. Provide \_\_\_\_\_ days of sick leave annually with a paid substitute.
3. Maintain a policy for compensating the Director of Music Ministries  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ for weddings and \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for funerals.
4. Provide \$ \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ weeks annually for Continuing Education,  
accumulative to \_\_\_\_\_ times the dollar amount and \_\_\_\_\_ weeks.
5. Provide \$ \_\_\_\_\_ annually for membership dues to professional organizations, subscriptions to  
professional journals, or other professional fees.
6. Provide and annual performance review and opportunity for mutual dialog, goal setting, and  
conflict resolution.
7. Provide retirement and health care benefits in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Give \_\_\_\_\_ days and written notice of intent to terminate employment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Pastor)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(congregational representative)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(musician)



*A job description is a specific list of duties and responsibilities assigned to a job title. This document should clearly define the task as it is expected to be performed, and, as stated, will become the basis for annual evaluation. Once developed, the job description serves as an addendum to the covenant agreement that specifies annual review policies, salary and benefits, separation policies, or other agreements between employer and employee.*

## **Sample Job Description**

**Title: Cantor, Director of Music Ministries, Director of Music, or Minister of Music**

*(When a musician is rostered/certified by the Church body for a specific ministry, the job title should reflect the language of the Call to the ministry of music.)*

### **Duties and Responsibilities:**

1. Plan and coordinate the entire music program, providing leadership and resource to the organist and/or other choir directors active in the program.
2. Participate in the planning of worship and other musical activities in the congregation.
3. Schedule all choirs and ensembles participating in worship.
4. Hold weekly rehearsals and direct the following groups: (examples - Adult Choir, Gospel Choir, Folk Choir, Contemporary Choir, Youth Choir, Bell Choir, Men's or Women's Ensemble, Orchestra, Band, or other instrumental ensemble)
5. Educate and train all musicians participating in the program; recruit and facilitate participation from all age groups within the congregation.
6. Make available new resources and ideas to program participants.
7. Attend regular staff meetings and work with the Music Committee or other congregational committees for short and long-term planning.
8. Determine and submit the annual budget requirements for the music program and administrate the expenditures of the approved budget.
9. Maintain the music library and supervise the maintenance of all instruments (organ, piano, keyboards, Orff instruments, hand bells, etc.)
10. Participate with the church staff, Pastors, and other leaders in facilitating congregational goals, assuming responsibility for tasks as mutually agreed with the supervising Pastor.
11. Maintain professional competency by practicing, performing, attending continued education opportunities, teaching workshops or seminars, and reading professional journals.

**Skills and Qualifications:**

1. Bachelor's degree in music, church music, or other related degree.  
(Some congregations will prefer a Master's degree.)
2. Demonstrated knowledge of Lutheran theology, liturgical practice, and use of music in worship.
3. Demonstrated skill and competency at the keyboard, particularly organ and piano, and a working knowledge of other instruments (specify required instruments).
4. Experience and competency directing choirs of all age groups. (List other competencies required, i.e. orchestral conducting, Orff instrument certification.)
5. Ability to work well with others and participate collegially with staff members, Pastors, and congregational leaders.

## **Sample Job Description**

### **Title: Children or Youth Choir Director**

#### **Duties and Responsibilities:**

1. Direct one choir rehearsal per week toward participation in worship on the Sundays and festival days scheduled in consultation with other choir directors, the pastor, or the music committee.
2. Actively recruit new members, providing an atmosphere of musical learning, faith growth and mutual care.
3. Participate with staff members, director of music and/or the music committee to accomplish planning tasks and facilitate program goals.
4. Plan and execute one musical or seasonal concert per year - or - Prepare the choir for an annual music festival and make all arrangements for their participation.  
(Appropriate budget amounts should be determined and made available if the employer wishes to include this type of programmatic expectation in the job description.)
5. Purchase all music and music supplies (may be coordinated through a director of music or other staff person), limiting expenditures to the amount provided in the church budget.

#### **Skills and Qualifications:**

1. Music Education or Education degree.  
List these or other educational qualifications required to fulfill the job description.
2. Demonstrated experience and competence working with the age group designated in the job description.
3. Ability to work well with others.

## Sample Job Description

**Title:     Choir Director and Organist**

**Duties and Responsibilities:**

*Combine the duties and responsibilities for the Adult Choir Director and Organist to formulate an example of this job description.) Other responsibilities might include:*

1. Attend weekly (monthly) staff meeting and participate with staff in the programmatic planning for the congregation.
2. Plan and provide an annual music event (special worship service, hymn festival, choir concert) for congregational involvement and community outreach.
3. Provide music resource to the Sunday school, day school, pre-school, or other congregational organizations.
4. Plan for and develop additional choirs outlined in the congregational long-range plan. (Including developmental responsibilities necessitates an annual review of the position and appropriate accommodations to salary and benefit agreements.)

**Skills and Qualifications:**

*Combine the skills and qualifications for the Adult Choir Director and the Organist to form an example of the necessary skills.) Other qualifications may include:*

1. A higher level of educational background consistent with a higher level of responsibility.
2. Demonstrated competency in planning and administrating a church music program.

## **Sample Job Description**

**Title:      **Adult Choir Director****

**Duties and Responsibilities:**

1. Direct the adult choir in one rehearsal per week toward participation of worship each Sunday, September - May.

In addition, prepare the choir for special services throughout the Church year such as Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, as determined by consultation with musician, Pastor and Worship and Music Committee.

2. Arrange for and schedule appropriate music for worship during June, July and August.
3. Actively recruit new members to the Adult Choir, providing an atmosphere of musical learning, growth and mutual care.
4. Cooperate with the Pastor and Music Committee to accomplish planning tasks and provide leadership to the music program. The Adult Choir Director will be directly responsible to the Pastor and participate with the Music Committee in developing short and long range plans and annual budget requirements.
5. Work with Pastor and Organist to choose hymns.
6. Purchase all music and music supplies for the Adult Choir, limiting the expenditures to the amount provided in the church budget.

**Skills and Qualifications:**

1. Bachelor's degree in music (congregations are encouraged to seek the best qualified musicians in their community).
2. Experience in choral conducting.
3. Knowledge of appropriate church music (classical, contemporary, folk, and gospel) and the role of music in Lutheran worship.
4. Experience as a "team player", and ability to relate to others with good interpersonal skills.

# Sample Job Description

## **Title: Organist**

### **Duties and Responsibilities:**

1. Select and provide organ/piano music for all Sunday morning services and other season services of the church such as Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.
2. Accompany the Adult Choir at one mid-week rehearsal and Sunday morning.
3. Work cooperatively with the Choir Director (or Director of Music) and Pastor to choose hymns.
4. Provide organ music for all weddings and funerals held at the church, consulting with wedding couples or families if requested. For these services the organist will receive an additional fee as specified in the church policy. The services of another organist may be used with the permission of the regular organist.
5. Prepare an annual report detailing the current condition of the organ(s) and/or piano(s) and specifying the necessary maintenance.

### **Skills and Qualifications:**

1. Knowledge of the instrument and keyboard ability sufficient to play hymns, liturgy, and easy anthem accompaniments at sight. List other education requirements preferred, such as Bachelor of Organ Performance, or Bachelor of Music.
2. Knowledge of basic music theory, including simple transpositions or harmonizing a melody.
3. Ability to sing and play with accurate pitch and rhythm.
4. Knowledge of the Lutheran Church, matching appropriate keyboard music with the themes of the Church Year.
5. Ability to work well with others.

## Performance Review Worksheet

Annual Performance Reviews for a church musician are appropriate when all staff members and Pastors are subject to the same annual Performance Review.

The Performance Review for a church musician is based on his/her ability to fulfill the requirements of the job description and the current year's Collegial] Assignments, Tasks and Goals as specified in the Covenant Agreement. Other criteria not specified by mutual agreement are not appropriate.

Performance Review committees should be made up of at least two (2) persons of the musician's choosing. When deficiencies are noted, the musician should be given written notice and a period of time for improvement or correction, making written record of progress. For legal reasons, both the musician and the employer should keep written records including Job Descriptions, Covenant Agreements and Performance Review Worksheets. These documents would prove valuable should termination of employment be necessary.

**Rating:** rate the musician's over-all job performance using the following scale:

1 = poor    2 = need's work    3 = average    4 = very good    5 = excellent

**Position Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Duties and Responsibilities:**

1. (same as the job description)	1	2	3	4	5
2. (same as the job description)	1	2	3	4	5
3. (same as the job description)	1	2	3	4	5
4. (same as the job description)	1	2	3	4	5
5.	1	2	3	4	5

**Collegial Assignments, Tasks, and Goals** (as specified in the Covenant Agreement)

1. (example: develop display for annual Ministry Fair)	1	2	3	4	5
2. (example: prepare musical program for annual Smorgasbord)	1	2	3	4	5
3. (example: attend workshop and improve interpersonal skills)	1	2	3	4	5
4.	1	2	3	4	5

**Over-all rating:**

**Comments:**

**Areas of particular competency:**

**Expectations for growth:**

## **ALCM nurtures and equips musicians to serve and lead the church's song.**

Music is a vital expression of Lutheran worship. The church's song takes many forms and is expressed in many ways. By sharing the knowledge, experience and passion that honor our heritage and inspire our future, ALCM nurtures and equips those who lead music in worship. ALCM offers practical education programs and diverse resources through conferences, publications and fellowship to serve musicians of all types - from paid professionals to volunteers. By connecting servant leaders to one another and by cultivating their musical gifts, ALCM supports worshipping communities in the proclamation of the Gospel.

For more information about ALCM, visit our website at [www.ALCM.org](http://www.ALCM.org) or call us at 800-624-2526.

