1. **Personal Faith Journey and Beliefs**

I cannot remember when ministry was not my life calling. I accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Savior, was baptized and filled with the Holy Spirt at the young age of seven. At the age of seven, I also experienced a call of God on my life for ministry. I preached my first formal sermon at the age of twelve at Beacon Light Missionary Baptist Church in the inner city of Los Angeles California where I lived. This was after much rehearsing as a young boy, in my native homeland of Kingston Jamaica. I attended Loyola Marymount University on an academic and athletic scholarship (tennis), held leading roles in college level theater arts dramatic productions, and discovered that I had quite a bit of business entrepreneurial talent. Through my Pentecostal rearing, and my new college exposure I came to understand that the level of preaching and ministry to which I aspired required additional training, study and education, so while living in Connecticut and serving as the youth director at Horace Bushnell Christ, I enrolled in and graduated from Yale Divinity School.

Ordination, for me is the community of faith bearing witness to the sovereign call of God on the life of an individual. Ordination is the community’s sense that the call of God has come and has been responded to. One who is ordained executes the trust of the community’s testimony that they have been called by God. Living out this call may take several forms but I understand scripture to teach that the primary purpose of ordained ministry is to develop and empower the laity to do the work of ministry for the strengthening and unifying the body of Christ called church. The body of Christ called church is sprinkled throughout the world in a variety of denominations and independent churches and we are all related through Jesus Christ.

I have a great passion for ministry, and a vision of God’s ability, through the Church and the help of the Holy Spirit to redeem persons and humanity. My participation in the life of the church has taken and continues to take different forms. I have served on the pastoral staff as associate, interim and senior pastor of several congregations from which I have gained tremendous insight and experience. I have also personally participated as a mentor, tutor, and counselor in after school programs. With the help of God, I try to model positive leadership skills for youth and adults in the community I work, live, and serve. I continue to use my God given gift of leadership/teaching/preaching to encourage and challenge the people of God to be active vehicles through which the Kingdom of God is brought forth on this earth.

The revolutionary saving and redeeming work of God through Our Lord Jesus Christ has not only changed history, but it has also changed my life. It is the living risen Jesus who I worship, serve, teach and preach. It is the resurrected Jesus who continues to work in and through my life by the presence of the Holy Spirit. As a minister called by God to serve the body of Christ, I have the responsibility to empower and unite the body of Christ in our quest for spiritual wholeness and total freedom in Jesus Christ. I am not only called to serve a local parish but also the community. Thus, I pray for strength and guidance from the Holy Spirit to live and work in a manner which inspires confidence in the community that God’s grace is at work through me as well and people I am called to serve.

I continue to be saddened that the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., over 50 years ago are still true today, ‘11:00am Sunday morning is still the most segregated hour of the week!’ This fact is most disheartening to me when a church is located in a racially, socially and economically diverse community but yet remains ‘homogenies.’ This is an issue which is near and dear to my heart and my awareness of it has been heightened the past 16 years I have served as an ordained Lutheran pastor. In ALL 6 Lutheran congregations I have served, both as an Associate and Senior Pastor, only one of them was intentional about embracing a ‘racially, socially and economically’ diverse membership. In fact, in all six congregations, my family was either the only African American family or one of two.

The events of Pentecost still stand as a mandate for us today. Indeed, we are called, both as individuals and as the body of Christ, to open our doors, our minds, and our hearts to persons whom we see as strangers. This requires us to change ourselves as Christian practitioners, being willing to be transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit and the experience of embracing strangers, and becoming more accepting of other people’s values and behavior, **so long as both are acceptable to God and consistent with Biblical Christian teaching.** This challenge addresses all homogeneous congregations to embark on a multicultural journey of opportunity and discovery, no matter what cultural, racial, or ethnic group they may represent.

At the heart of my beliefs stands what Jesus refers in Matthew 22:34-40 as the greatest commandment; ‘love God and love others!’ I believe a church should be known not only by what it believes, but primarily by what it does. Beliefs become stagnant and void if they are not translated into actions. I want to be a part of a faith community that is known primarily by its love for God and its love for people. I want to be known not ‘only’ for what I stand against but for what I do and how I love for that reason in essential beliefs, I emphasize unity, in nonessential beliefs, I exercise liberty; in all matters, I aim to exhibit grace.

1. **What I am seeking in a congregation:**

I am seeking a congregation committed to foundational Biblical truths, a fellowship of multi-denominational, multi-racial, and multi-cultural believers (or willing to become that) who gather in a spirit of love and inclusion for the sake of spiritual growth and service to the Lord. I seek a congregation that desires to minister to those around them by demonstrating Christ’s compassion for the world and, as a result, their greatest identifier is not denominational orthodoxy but rather it is that of a welcoming Christian community.

I seek a congregation and faith community that is Christ-centered in their doctrine and Bible-based in their teaching. A congregation that believes in the triune nature of God, the Virgin birth, the deity of Jesus and His full humanity. A congregation that believes in the exclusivity of Christ in salvation; that Jesus died and was physically resurrected. A congregation that believes that God’s grace and our salvation is not only unearned but also irrevocable. A congregation that believes in the truth of the Gospel and the authority of God’s Word in our lives and in our faith. A congregation that accept that beyond such foundational elements of our faith there is room for differing interpretations of Biblical truth, such as how much water to be used in baptism or the formula spoke at the baptism (Father Son Holy Spirit or Name of Jesus) and they focus on unity within the fellowship embraces these perspectives even as their emphasis on Spirit-led Bible study leads them into deeper understanding of the nature of God and God’s plan and purpose for each of us.

I promise to be a pastor who seeks to lead the congregation in spiritual growth, to teach from the Bible not simply about the Bible. I promise to be someone with the help and guidance of the holy spirit who will inspire others in their faith and to challenge you in your faith walk. I promise to be a pastor who can encourage and energize your congregation in your spiritual lives. A pastor who is dynamic in the pulpit and present in our lives, someone who can embrace the diversity of faith backgrounds and shape worship in a way that glorifies God, builds up the believers and encourages newcomers to join us in fellowship. Most importantly, I promise to be a pastor who has a great burden for those not yet in a relationship with God through Jesus Christ and for those who are out of fellowship with our Lord, and is a champion for missions and service in our community and in our world.

The reality of churches is that most of them are intimate congregation in a specific geographic area. The consistency and energy of the pastor and members is therefore essential to maintaining a focus and momentum, and the qualities of pastoral leadership are critical in achieving God’s purpose for the church. I consider myself to be a person of great passion and compassion, someone who is disciplined in my faith and prayer life while being unconditional in love. I am someone who understands the importance of servant-hood in leadership and who can demonstrate in my own life and work the qualities Christ would have each of us show to the world – and by such an example inspire others to engage in faith and church in a meaningful way.

Finally, I am a pastor who is capable of genuine love for a congregation, someone with a heart’s desire for fellowship, friendship and sharing. I am someone who can lead you in worship, teach you in faith and join with you as family – for that is what the church should be: a family of believers who gather together to celebrate Christ and cherish each other.

1. **Personal Faith Beliefs**

* **The Bible** (the Holy Scripture) of the Old and New Testament to be the verbally inspired Word of God written by Holy men of old as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost. I believe the Bible is also the authority for Christian faith and the Christian life. (2Timothy 3:16-17, 2Peter 1:20-21, Matthew 5:18)
* **God** was revealed to humanity as **Father** in creation, **Son** in Redemption and **Holy Spirit** in His comforting grace that never leaves those who trust him. (Deuteronomy 6:4, 2Corinthians 13:14, John 1:12, 3:16,)
* That humanity was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in **Adam’s sin**, the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God; and that humanity is totally depraved, and of ourselves, utterly unable to remedy our lost condition without the grace of God. (Genesis 1:26-27, Romans 3:22-23)
* **Satan** is a the author of all sin and the cause of the fall of humankind. I understand scripture to teach that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God, all those who desire to live for God and humankind. I believe that scripture also reveals that satan shall be eternally punished in the second advent of Jesus Christ. (Job 1:6-7, Isaiah 14:12-17, Matthew 4:2-11)
* **Salvation is the gif**t of God brought to humanity by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace has been defined as: Gods\*Redemption\*At Christ\*Expense. (Ephesians 2:8-10, John 1:12)
* **All baptized believers** of Jesus Christ are called to live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ the body of Christ or ourselves; and that separation from sinful practices, association and beliefs is commanded by God. (2Timothy 3:1-5, Romans 12:1-2)
* **The mission** of all baptized believers (Christians) is to witness by life, word and deed to the truths of Holy Scripture and to seek to proclaim the Gospel to ‘all’ whom we come in contact with. (Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8)
* **The Church** which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ is a spiritual organism made up of all baptized born-again believers. (Ephesians 1:22-23, 5:25-27)That good
* **Stewardship** and proportionate giving of our time, talent and material treasures to the work of God is the inevitable result of a heart which is thankful for the grace God has imparted to us. The matter of financial giving should be in accordance with scriptural principles and precepts and a personal expression of gratitude.( John 1:17, 1Corinthians 4:1,2; 2Corinthians 8:1-12; 9:6-11)
* **The Lord Jesus Christ shall come again** to receive to Himself into heaven both Christian who are alive and remain and also all those Christians who have died. That is affirmed in the Apostles Creed which says, I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life to come. (John 14:1-3; 1Corinthians 15:51-51; Philippians 3:20;
* **Worship:** Spirit-directed **worship** honor God. This calls us to devote our lives in worship to God and to gather together regularly for worship.(Revelations 4:11)
* **Prayer** builds our relationship with God and each other and opens us to healing. This calls us too complete dependence on God through adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication.(Luke 11:1)
* **God in Christ** has broken down ‘all’ barriers between people. This calls all of us in the church, regardless to race, gender, status or education, to actively pursue unity while appreciating our diversity. (2Corinthians 5:18)
* God created us to be in **community.** This calls each of us to a life of caring for each other, speaking the truth in love, forgiveness, mutual accountability, and stewardship of the resources that God has entrusted to us. (Romans 12:5)
* **Preaching and anointed teaching** inspired by the Holy Spirit is ‘a’ catalyst for transformation in individual’s lives, the world and in the church. This calls us to faithfully teach the word of God and obey the leading of God. (2Timothy 3:16-17)