

**Salem Lutheran Church & School
Nominee Biographical Information Form
Ministry Leadership Council**

Name: Walt Luchinger

Years as Salem Member: 27

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Occupation: Retired

Employer: N/A

List of educational background (degrees earned, etc.) and relevant employment experience:

University of Southern California, Bachelor of Science, Business Administration/Marketing. Started a Company in 1989 in the Foodservice Industry and sold it to Employees (ESOP) in 2018. I retired in 2025.

List church-related services, boards, or committees in which you have had experience; also note public or church-related community experiences:

Salem:

Current: Leader of Men's Ministries (20+ years), Member of the Worship Team (20+ years), Member of the Board of Worship Arts. Member of the Deacons. Holy Donut Committee (20+ years). Usher/Greeter. Communion Assistant.

Past: MLC Vice President, Member of the Assimilation Committee, Member of the Mission Board, helped lead effort to rebuild our relationship with Orange Park Acres during Salem's Site planning phase for the future.

Orange Lutheran High School:

Current: Member of the Executive Strategic Committee, Member of the Capital Campaign Committee.

Past: President of the Board of Directors, Member of the Board of Directors. Chairman of the recent Search Committee for the next CEO/Executive Director (Dr. Jack Preus), Member of the Governance and Nominating Committee.

Concordia University Irvine:

Past: Served twice as Co-Chair of the Gala Committee with my wife, Leann.

Lutech High School:

Past: Board of directors.

Charities: provided consultative and material support to 4 ministries helping people in need in the Orange County Area. Charity on Wheels, Open Gate International, Caterina's Club.

Identify particular skills and interests you possess which, in your opinion, would be helpful in your service as a member of the Ministry Leadership Council:

- I founded and built a large foodservice equipment sales and consultation company.
- Oversaw Sales and Marketing as well as strategic planning and vision.
- In charge of hiring, onboarding and training of new sales members while assimilating them into our company

culture.

- Led organized efforts to grow our footprint in our market to ensure continued growth.
- In charge of customer and business partner community events.
- Experienced in leading and empowering others toward achieving a mutual goal, including:
 - Goal setting
 - Timeline management
 - Conflict resolution
 - Budgeting
 - Strategic Planning
 - Team collaboration
 - Communication
- Team Builder
- Weekly Church attender
- 3X Weekly Bible Study
- Daily prayer

What do you believe should be Salem's highest ministry priorities?

Salem's highest ministry priorities are to be a family of peace in Christ where real people experience belonging, purpose, and transformation in an environment of grace through active participation in worship, learning, and service.

Everything the Ministry Leadership Council, staff, and teams do must be measured against these priorities and the 2034 long-term outcomes (Congregational Engagement • Intergenerational Connections • Kingdom Expansion).

What challenges do you see facing our church and school in the near future?

- **Orange County's Distracted, Achievement-Driven Culture** The Salem Culture Guide explicitly names this as the core external challenge: a busy, "get more" environment that leaves people empty, with little margin for deep relationships, meaningful purpose, or spiritual formation. In a high-cost area like Orange County, families often prioritize sports, academics, and careers over church/school involvement — directly threatening the vision of "real belonging, purpose, and transformation in an environment of grace."
- **Executing the Vision & Culture Shift (2026–2034 Plan)** The church is in the midst of implementing the new vision ("Salem is a family of peace in Christ..."). Key near-term hurdles include:
 - Becoming a true "Environment of Grace".
 - Developing strong new teams/leaders, communicating the vision congregation-wide, and recreating compelling worship environments (6-month plan).
 - Building intergenerational connections, congregational engagement, and kingdom expansion. Changing an established culture while keeping members unified is a significant leadership challenge for the MLC, pastors, and staff.
- **School Enrollment, Affordability & Sustainability** The school currently shows strength (nearly 500 students, preschool "bursting at the seams," double classes in most grades). However, broader California trends of declining K–12 enrollment (driven by lower birth rates, families moving, charters, and homeschooling) create pressure. High tuition (~\$14,500 for K–8 plus fees) in Orange County could limit access for families, especially amid economic uncertainty, while maintaining academic excellence and Christ-centered formation.
- **Volunteer Team Recruitment & Margin for Ministry** the Culture Guide outlines specific teams (Deacons, Missions, Welcome, Food, Set-up, Discipleship, Kids, Nursery, Sunday School, Altar, Worship, Tech, and Prayer). In a busy OC culture, finding consistent, gifted volunteers who have "margin for grace" will be ongoing. The 6-month plan to "develop new strong teams and leaders" highlights this as an immediate priority.

- **Staff Care, Retention & Well-Being** Per the Bylaws, the MLC must “encourage and empower the Senior Pastor and ministry staff” and provide for their spiritual/physical health. Implementing major vision changes while running a thriving church *and* school adds workload; preventing burnout is critical.
- **Financial Stewardship in a High-Cost Region** Sustaining dual operations (church + school) without the public-school funding safety net requires faithful giving and wise budgeting.

Our next challenges include:

- **Sustaining the Environment of Grace:** Our Salem Culture Guide set a 12-month goal (by October 2026) to become a true environment of grace. The next challenge is to **keep** that culture alive after the initial push. We must prevent it from becoming just another program and make it the permanent heartbeat of everything we do.
- **Moving from Short-Term Wins to Long-Term Outcomes:** The 6-month plan (strong teams, vision communication, compelling worship) has yet to be achieved. This must remain a key focus while we also focus on delivering the three 2034 long-term outcomes: • Congregational Engagement • Intergenerational Connections • Kingdom Expansion
- **Recruiting and Retaining Strong Teams in a Distracted Culture:** Orange County’s busy, achievement-oriented lifestyle still pulls people away from margin for grace. We must continually raise up and keep gifted volunteers for all teams (Deacons, Missions, welcome, Food, Set-up, Discipleship, Kids, Nursery, Sunday School, Altar, Worship, Tech, and Prayer) so that real belonging and joyful service actually happen.
- **Deepening Intergenerational and Family Connections;** Turning “family of peace” from words into reality, especially connecting kids, students, parents, and grandparents in worship, learning, and service while the surrounding culture keeps families fragmented and overscheduled.
- **Expanding the Kingdom While Protecting Our Core;** Reaching new people in Orange County with the peace of Christ without diluting our Lutheran identity, the five solas, or the grace-filled environment we have worked so hard to create.
- **Stewarding the School’s Health and Accessibility:** Maintaining excellence and enrollment in a high-cost region while ensuring the school remains a vibrant part of our “family of peace” mission and does not become financially unsustainable.
- **Staff and Leadership Health:** Continuing to care for the Senior Pastor, School Principal, and all ministry staff so they can lead from a place of peace instead of burnout as we press toward 2034.

Do you see any potential conflicts of interest if serving on the Ministry Leadership Council? No

If so, please explain:

Are you able to support Salem financially as one of your primary personal charities and speak about our ministry positively to others? Yes

Additional comments that you feel should be considered:

I authorize the use of any information on this form by the Nominating Committee of Salem Lutheran Church for the purpose of nominating and electing the officers and MLC members-at-large, including the publication of this information to members of the Voters Assembly.

Signature: _____ Date: _____