

November 3, 2023

Dear Bethel Family,

We are sending this letter as an initial communication from your newly formed **Call Committee** charged by Council to begin the call process for our next senior pastor. This team is comprised of 8 members:

- Tanya Clary (Alternate representative; Sat. worship service)
- Mark Heckman (11:11 worship service)
- Tom Hooper (Council representative; 8:45 worship service)
- Steve Horton (Council representative; Sat. worship service)
- Tom McGrail (Sat. worship service)
- Susan Tobison (Secretary; 11:11 worship service)
- Kristen Wells (Chair; 11:11 worship service)
- Jamie Wilkinson (8:45 worship service)

Commissioning of the Committee:

At the weekend services on November 11th and 12th, we will be commissioned during worship. We have prepared a set of bios to introduce ourselves, and let you know which of us worships at the same service as you. We covet your prayers as we begin this task! So far we have met one time for our orientation, with our next meeting scheduled for Nov. 9th, and as frequently thereafter as we need in order to accomplish all the tasks required to calling our next pastor. The timeline is determined by God, and could take as much as a year to complete.

This is a very Spirit-led process. and our main job is to listen for God's voice while He prepares us as a family, along with the pastor He's planning to bring to us. For that reason, we will be studying Scripture and intently praying together.

Beginning the Process:

We have received specific guidance by which all congregations in the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) enter into a call process when they face a pastoral vacancy. We have the Call Process Manual, and a 32-step checklist to direct us. The NALC has assigned Pastor Shelly Schultz as our Call Process Coordinator, and Pastor Douglas Schoelles as our Dean for the call process. You may access the Manual here: [NALC Call Process Manual](#).

Our Congregational Call Process Workshop was conducted by Pastor Douglas Schoelles on October 15th, with 45 people in attendance. This provided a great forum for the congregation to hear all about the call process and provide input for many parts of the Congregational Profile. After the workshop, Pastor Shelly provided an orientation for the call committee and gave us a deeper understanding of what lies ahead of us.

Congregational Profile - A Key Document:

The Congregational Profile is the key document we will submit to the NALC, providing an important description of who Bethel is as a family, along with our desired pastoral qualities and ministry focus. It will be posted on their website under the list of pastoral vacancies, and used by pastors who are

also feeling the call to a new ministry opportunity. It is the document that formally starts our call process with the NALC and declares us “open” for receiving candidate submissions.

Interviewing Candidates:

Once the Congregational Profile is submitted, the committee will begin receiving “Pastoral Profiles” (via our CPC) from those who are interested in being considered for a call. The number of possible candidates is only determined by God. They may come from all over North America (including Canada). We will share more information about the interview process after we submit our profile.

The Holy Spirit is our Leader:

The call process is a spiritual one of discernment led by the Holy Spirit! It is God’s process, not the congregation’s. The goal is to allow God’s will to unfold in such a way that the call committee, council, and congregation recognize and receive the person whom God is calling to be their next pastor. It will take whatever time God intends.

We Pray...As We Wait...Upon the LORD!

Prayer will be as essential a part of our call process as everything the call committee does! It is about “waiting for the Lord”. Rooted in Scripture, we recognize how God controls the placement of a pastor; and the call committee seeks to discern God’s will through prayer, Bible study, interviews, and conversations. We, along with a discerning pastoral candidate, must be yielding to the work of the Holy Spirit.

We, therefore, ask everyone to pray for God’s guidance and support! Please include the pastors, call committee, and congregational leadership. Pray that God will be working in the heart and life of the pastor He wishes to place as our next spiritual leader, and that the pastor be open to the working of the Holy Spirit.

“My heart has heard you say, Come and talk with me.”

And my heart responds, Lord, I am coming.” Psalms 27:8 NLT

We, as your call committee, are humbled to be serving as the initial ears and eyes of the Spirit’s guidance through the next many months! We hold this responsibility to God’s direction. We look forward to the joy of growing in our faith, experiencing more intimacy with the LORD, and maybe even capturing glimmers of His (new) focus as He directs Bethel’s future ministries.

Please remain an active part of this process with us! “Hunker down” in God’s Word and continuously pray for agreement with the Holy Spirit’s clear voice. And reach out to us with any questions, concerns, or “nudges” the Spirit may give you.

At His Feet,

Kristen Wells

On Behalf of the Call Committee