

September 10, 2020

Dear OFLC Family,

Since May, the Call Committee has been prayerfully considering seven pastoral candidates, taking into account the needs and wants our congregation expressed through the Ministry Site Profile. Faithfully seeking God's will and under guidance from the synod, they spent months getting to know potential pastors by exploring their gifts, strengths and experience. This months-long, spirit-led process is now complete, and the Call Team has concluded that God is calling Pastor Aaron Fuller to serve as our solo, full-time pastor.

On Tuesday evening, September 8, the Call Committee presented their recommendation to Council, including a full account of the discernment process, how they arrived at the decision to adopt this pastoral model, and a thorough presentation of the strengths, skills and experience Pastor Aaron could bring to Our Father's. After much discussion and reflection, the Council voted to affirm the Call Team's recommendation, thus formally beginning the call transition process.

What the Call Team needs you to know

We all love Pastor Cathy! She was a participating candidate in this process, and her strengths, relational excellence and experiences were all deeply and carefully considered. There's no question she is immensely gifted and brings joy and creativity to OFLC. The recognition that another individual provided closer alignment to the needs of the congregation was a painful one, and the reality that Pastor Cathy will be sent out to do God's work in another branch of Christ's Body is bittersweet. At the Annual Meeting, our congregation tasked the Call Team with finding the best fit between the candidates provided and what the congregation requested in a pastor. They executed their duties faithfully, honestly, and with the best interest of our church at heart, and for that, we give them thanks.

What happens now?

We acknowledge that without thorough explanation of this decision, pain and anger have resulted among members of our church family grieving for and with Pastor Cathy, understandably so. Now that Council has formally voted to affirm Pastor Aaron's call, we can move forward together through a number of important steps:

- **We will continue to love, support and pray for Pastor Cathy.** For years we have walked closely with her through seminary to ordainment, and it is more important now than ever to surround her with encouragement and caring as she seeks to discover God's will for her in the next chapter of her ministry.
- **We learn, together, what God has in store for Our Fathers' future.** The first opportunity to do this will be Sunday, September 13 at 10:30 a.m. where members of the Call Committee and Council will host a Zoom meeting to share the story of the call process, share the same details Council received about Pastor Aaron before their vote, and answer your questions. Be on the lookout for the Zoom invitation arriving via email. Additional meetings will be held in the coming weeks for those unable to attend on Sunday.
- **Equipped with understanding, we will search our hearts and minds for confirmation of God's will.** Throughout this period of prayer and discernment, leadership will provide helpful resources such as letters, emails, FAQs and more to help you better imagine a future of ministry with Pastor Aaron's partnership.
- **We will vote with confidence at a congregational meeting set for Sunday, October 4.** In order for Pastor Aaron's call to become reality, a congregational vote must be held. Arrangements are being made for a voting process that will preserve the safety and health of our members. For now, please earmark this important date on your calendar and watch for details coming soon.

Friends in Christ, in times of change, it's critical that we live close to God in prayer and scripture. When we do, no decision will divide us, no earthly plans will disrupt God's progress, and no transition will steer us away from living Christ's love. Trust God and seek comfort in the words of Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. Plans for welfare and not for evil, plans to give you a future and hope."

September 10, 2020

In Love and Unity,

Our Father's Lutheran Church Council and Call Committee