

Dear Good Shepherd Family,

When I step into the doors of our church, I can feel the palpable presence of the Holy Spirit and I cannot help but give glory to God for all that is currently happening at Good Shepherd. There's an undeniable sense of hope coursing through our hallways, a spirit of momentum that resonates in every corner of our ministries. Our collective discipleship is flourishing, as we invite everyone to walk together for a life of eternal impact. Reflecting on the past year, I marvel at how God orchestrated the return of Pastor Tara Beth to Good Shepherd. Her abundant ministry gifts have not only re-energized our leadership but have also breathed new life into our congregation. This divine appointment has brought about a season of growth, marked by the addition of several dedicated staff members, including the forthcoming arrival of Associate Pastor Jake Roberts on December 10th.

Throughout the life of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, we have always listened to the direction of the Holy Spirit. The Council has once again been in a period of deep and intentional prayer and discernment regarding our future relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA.) We have always been a unique church and over time, it has become increasingly evident that the ELCA's hierarchical top-down leadership structure limits and adversely impacts the life and ministry of Good Shepherd.

The governance structure of the ELCA has become steadily more hierarchical, out of alignment with our congregation, and difficult to collaborate with. We believe that Good Shepherd should have autonomy in the governance of our church. This is a return to our roots, as Good Shepherd was previously a part of the American Lutheran Church (ALC) which valued self-governance. (The ALC merged with the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lutheran Church in America, and one other, to form the ELCA in 1988.)

One of the benefits of ELCA affiliation should have been a source of ELCA rostered pastors. The ELCA has not been able to provide candidates who met our Call Teams' criteria and the needs of our church.

In July-August of this year, Council established an exploratory committee to research a variety of Lutheran denominations as well as the option of becoming a non-denominational congregation. Ultimately, Council felt the Holy Spirit urging us to remain in our Lutheran tradition. Council unanimously voted to adopt a resolution to initiate the process, outlined in our Constitution, to shift our relationship away from the ELCA and join Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC.)

You may read the resolution [here](#).

The Constitution requires two separate congregational votes at specific intervals. Our first Special Congregational Meeting and vote will be held on January 14, 2024 at 12:30pm in the Sanctuary. The second congregational meeting is currently planned for May 5, 2024, the same day as our Annual Congregational Meeting. Only voting members of the congregation, as

defined in our Constitution, may vote. Absentee and proxy voting are prohibited, also as per our Constitution.

In preparation for these meetings, Council invites you to join us at any of our Town Hall meetings:

- December 3 at 12:30 pm in the Worship Center
- December 7 at 7:00 pm in the Worship Center
- December 10, 17, 31 and January 7 at 10:30 am & 12:30 pm in Room 5.

These meetings will be a time to hear more about the decision, the process, and to have your questions answered. Please know that these Town Hall meetings will not be live streamed or recorded. We ask that you submit your questions ahead of time to:

questions@goodshepherd-naperville.org.

Thank you for being a partner in Christ. We are very excited about what God has in store for the future of Good Shepherd.

“Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God’s people everywhere, I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom, and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God.” Ephesians 1:15-17

Prayerfully,

Duane Tiede, Church Council President