



Dear friends in Christ,

One of the most significant times in the life of a congregation is during a change of pastors. It is a period, which produces considerable anxiety, confusion, ambiguity, and uncertainty about the future, as well as excitement about new possibilities, vision and new life in the congregation.

During this transition period, persons grieve for the pastor who is leaving and have a sense of anticipation for developing relationships with an incoming pastor and family. New leadership often emerges in the congregation while at the same time others feel cut off. When managed well, it can become a time for growth in the congregation. We are receiving GREAT support from the Southeast Michigan Synod as we enter into this time. They have pledged their support to help us navigate this time of transition faithfully and healthfully.

In order to help ease anxiety and proceed with full transparency, the following Pastor Transition FAQ will be available to all St. Luke's members and parishioners on a dedicated bulletin board in the side narthex, with regular Tower updates, included with our midweek e-mails, pinned to our Facebook page, and on our website. If you have any trouble accessing this document please reach out to myself, any member of council, or Pastor Robyn. This document will be updated as the process continues and additional information is available. This FAQ will guide understanding of the pastoral transition process, the exit process for the departing pastor, and the call process for an incoming pastor.

I look forward to taking this journey with you all and to serving in this time of transition.

In Him,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie". The script is cursive and elegant.

Julie Sanderson
Council President



Q1 - Why is Pastor Frank leaving St. Luke's?

After a faith-filled and faithful forty years of following his call to ordained ministry, Pastor Frank has decided this is the time he is being called into retirement. Pastor Frank will continue in his co-pastor role with Pastor Robyn until September 30, 2017.

Q2 - What does Pastor Frank's resignation mean for St. Luke's?

Although a change in pastoral leadership can be unsettling, we trust that God has good plans and direction for St. Luke's Lutheran Church. The staff, church council, and the Southeast Michigan Synod staff are working together collaboratively to support the church through the transition period in leadership. We are engaged both in implementing a transition staffing plan and searching for a new pastor.

We continue to affirm our church's mission to worship, learn and grow together in the knowledge of God and his Word. We are then sent into the world to share God's love, teach his Word, and serve those in need. While we anticipate that our new pastoral team will bring new ideas and fresh experiences to our church, our theology remains constant.

Q3 - Can Pastor Frank come back to conduct special services such as weddings, funerals, baptisms?

We all form attachments to our pastors, just as pastors form attachments to us. While it's natural to draw on the strength of those attachments, relying on attachments with a former pastor hinders the chance at forming new attachments with remaining or new pastors. Therefore, Pastor Frank will not be returning to perform weddings, funerals, or baptisms. A separation covenant will be presented in the coming months with more information.

Q4 - How will Pastor Frank's retirement impact the existing staff?

Due to the faithful planning and forward vision of Pastor Frank and the leadership of St. Luke's there will be minimal impact on the existing staff. Pastor Frank and Pastor Robyn have worked together as co-pastors for the past two years and Pastor Robyn will continue on in the role of pastor. Our office staff and music staff will remain the same.

Q5 - When is Pastor Robyn's last day?

Not for a long long time! Pastor Robyn's call to St. Luke's is as a co-pastor, not associate, and therefore is not contingent upon Pastor Frank being at St. Luke's. Pastor Robyn will remain pastor and continue to lead the members and parishioners of this congregation in greater relationship with Christ, our Savior. If you have any further concerns or questions please speak with her directly.

Q6 - Will we call another Pastor / will we be a multi-pastoral staff?

This is not a question that we can answer at this time. The intention when the process began to call Pastor Robyn was that St. Luke's would remain a dual pastor congregation. Yet, in order to make sure that this is the call God has placed on St. Luke's we will enter into a time of intentional transition where we will take a concentrated and prayerful look at ourselves and where we see our ministry heading.



Q7 - Would a new pastor be a senior pastor?

This is not a question that we can answer at this time. Pastor Frank and Pastor Robyn have served as co-pastors for these two years. Part of the discernment of both the transition team and the call committee, along with the entire congregation, will be to listen for the Spirit's movement as to what form our pastoral team should take.

Q8 - What is next for St. Luke's?

We begin a period of intentional interim ministry under the guidance of a synod recommended intentional interim consultant. We are in a unique situation as Pastor Robyn will remain on as our pastor so we will not be without pastoral guidance during this time of transitional ministry.

Q9 - What is Intentional Interim Ministry?

Intentional interim ministry is normally distinguished from interim ministry. Interim ministry involves providing pastoral coverage for congregations that are temporarily without a pastor. The purpose is to fill a gap and provide pastoral coverage.

Intentional interim ministry has a different goal. Intentional interim ministry sees the interim period as a positive opportunity for the congregation to determine who it is and what its mission is. Typical questions to be addressed are: What is the Holy Spirit calling this congregation to be or to do? What problems need to be addressed? What opportunities challenge us to reach out with Good News? What changes need to be made to prepare the way for the next pastor to join us? The trained intentional interim consultant is well-qualified to guide a congregation through this period and to assist the congregation in determining its mission and making any necessary changes.

Q10 - What is a Transition Team?

A transition team is a group with six to eight members that reflect the wide diversity of the congregation and community. The committee needs to be balanced, that is, women and men, newer and long time members, with various ages and ethnic/language backgrounds. Our transition team will be guided by an intentional transition consultant recommended by the synod. This team will look at the past, present a vision for the future of St. Luke's through various methods of interaction with members of the congregation. This team and this time of discernment together is important in the life of a congregation especially following a long-tenured pastor's retirement. This team helps the congregation prayerfully discern the mission to which we are being called following Pastor Frank's retirement and under Pastor Robyn's continued leadership.

Q11 - So then what is call committee?

The call committee is usually a group with six to fifteen members that reflect the wide diversity of the congregation and community. The committee needs to be balanced, that is, women and men, newer and long-time members, with various ages and ethnic/language backgrounds.

This committee differs from the transition team in that they use the information gathered by the transition team to prayerfully assemble our Ministry Site Profile (MSP), review potential candidates, and



eventually make a recommendation to St. Luke's Council for the next member of our pastoral care team at St. Luke's. The Council recommendation will be voted on by the congregation.

Q12 - What is the process for bringing a new pastor to the church?

Step 1: Pastor Frank announces his retirement.

Step 2: Leadership meets with synod staff to discuss the future.

Step 3: A transition team is appointed.

Step 4: Pastor Frank retires. Pastor Robyn continues on.

Step 5: The transition team begins their work through the intentional interim ministry process. The congregation will be kept informed as to the progress of their findings.

Step 6: The transition team completes their work and presents to the congregation.

Step 7: The congregation elects a call committee.

Step 8: The transition team presents their final document to the call committee

Step 9: The call committee begins their work. They will post a timeline once their work has begun.

Q13 - What is the anticipated timeline for the process?

While every pastoral search process is unique and dependent on God's timing, we can expect the entire process to take anywhere from 18 months to 3 years with the transition study taking about 18 months of that time. Due to our unique situation with Pastor Robyn remaining on staff it will be important to discern that God is calling both Pastor Robyn and the candidate we will interview to work together in this part of God's vineyard. Due to this discernment, the anticipated time line could be longer to ensure a solid, faithful connection between St. Luke's, Pastor Robyn and any pastor we call to join our ministry team.

Q14 - Where does a synod find intentional interim pastors?

The wisest course for a synod is to develop its own intentional interim pastors. Then the synod has intentional interim pastors it knows and trusts. There are other sources for obtaining intentional interim pastors. The most common sources are from other ELCA synods or from full-communion partners. There are several interim ministry organizations that provide intensive training for this ministry specialization.

Q15 - How can the congregation stay involved?

Most importantly, we covet your prayers throughout this process and welcome any insights that come from your time spent with God.

Participate in the work of the transition team (i.e. welcome them during cottage meetings, attend whole-congregation events, provide feedback when requested, etc.).

Prayerfully discern whether you are called to put forth your name for consideration to be a part of the transition team or the call committee.

Celebrate Pastor Frank's many years of service to Christ and the Church!

Respect Pastor Frank's covenant of separation.