

Dear Holy Cross Family and friends,

Here's hoping that you found many reasons to give thanks over tables laden with great food and surrounded by the ones you love.

Let's move into this season of Advent with expectation of great things to come. The dictionary defines advent as "The arrival of a notable person or event." For us as Christians this is the season that we prepare for the arrival of the Christ Child. For us at Holy Cross, we are also preparing for calling a new pastor. As we prepare our hearts for the arrival of the Babe there is much work to do. We must prepare our house and hearts. As we move forward with the selection of a new pastor, there is also much work to be done. We must continue our preparation by selecting a call committee and committing ourselves to move to a new level in our partnership with Christ the Good Shepherd.

Some of you were present as the leaders of your congregation met with Synod representatives last Sunday the 20th. They gave us some direction for moving forward with the joint call process. We are to elect 4 members of Holy Cross to serve on a joint 8 member call committee. One of their first tasks will be to compare our ministry site profiles and define the characteristics and skills that we are looking for in a joint pastor.

While our joint call committee is working on defining the call, Synod will begin looking for candidates who have the skills and interest in a "discernment and transformational" call.

In case that's a new phrase for you, the work of a discernment and transformational pastor is to guide us in discernment or defining, refining and making decisions about our relationship with Christ the Good Shepherd. This pastoral assignment is also to assist us in transforming into who we will become, or if we become, a transformed congregation serving Christ in some of the same and/or some new Christian ministry together. I want to emphasize the word "transformation." If our congregation is to survive long term we must become something different than we are today. This is frightening. We don't know where it will lead us but let's face it together with great anticipation and trust the Holy Spirit to lead us in the right direction.

When an appropriate candidate(s) are found, the joint call committee will be the body to conduct the interviews and make a recommendation to you, the congregation. Our task at this point is to solicit nominations for the call committee. We are asking you to nominate people who have the **ability, time and willingness** to serve on this very important committee that will play a big part in determining the future of our congregation.

**Ability:** We are asking for people with the skills to honestly and confidentially discuss the needs of our congregation, work well with people who they may not know, come to consensus with them, and represent the congregation well when conducting interviews.

**Time:** Yes, it will take a fair amount of time. The committee will be meeting before we have candidates to determine the desired characteristic and define the expectations of our new pastor. Once we have a candidate or candidates, the committee will arrange, conduct, and evaluate the interview(s) and at some point make a recommendation to the congregation.

**Willingness:** Please ask if they are willing to serve before nominating someone for the call committee.

The nomination box will be available in the office through Monday, Dec. 5 and in the narthex next Sunday, Dec. 4. On Tuesday, Dec. 6 the leadership team will open nominations box and prepare the ballot.

On Sunday, Dec. 11, we will have a quick congregational meeting right after service to elect 4 members for the call committee.

I know it seems like a slow process, but the pieces are falling into place and I'm encouraged by our progress and excited about the possibilities that lay ahead.

Serving you and Christ as your president,

Loran Sell