



## Dear Fellow Redeemed,

On Sunday, June 8, we celebrate Pentecost. We see the power promised by our risen Lord Jesus Christ to enable His church to spread to the uttermost parts of the earth. To accomplish this mission and ministry, our Lord granted the gift of the Holy Spirit in special measure. The Spirit has also granted **gifts to the church**. These gifts are evident in many ways among all the members of our congregations. Ephesians, the 4<sup>th</sup> Chapter, states that “He gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some evangelists and some pastors and teachers.” We celebrate the gifts of all our members as well as our professional church workers. We praise God for the newly graduating professional church workers. It is a joy to

report to you that **ten** requests for pastoral candidates were filled and **nine** vicarage requests were granted. The placement process for Ministers of Religion-Commissioned continues at this writing.

The above provides a good transition to our continuing **series on calling a pastor**. Last month we discussed the vacancy period and the congregation at work in a self study, learning about itself and preparing a pastoral profile. In this issue preparation of a **call list** for the congregation is the focus.

During the vacancy the congregation is invited to suggest pastors for the call list. The Circuit Counselor has a form available for congregation members to forward their suggestions to the call committee. Then the names of suggested pastoral candidates, the report of the congregational self study and the pastoral profile are given to me. At this point, a search is undertaken for pastors in Michigan as well as throughout the LCMS.

Information on each pastor consists of a Pastor's Information Form (PIF) and a pastor's own composition regarding his thoughts and views on ministry called the Self Evaluation Tool (SET). The study of this information enables **development of a call list** which is assembled and reviewed in view of the congregational context and their pastoral profile. This is a very special moment in the preparation of a call list. My approach is to begin with prayer that the Lord send His Spirit to grant

leading into His wisdom and insight of all the information. A review of the candidates begins not only with prayer, but also with the understanding that the Lord ultimately has a pastor in mind for this congregation.

The call list may not contain all of the names suggested by the congregation for a variety of reasons. They are shared with the Circuit Counselor and these reasons include such categories as gifts and/or experience do not match the congregational needs or there is personal information that is of a more sensitive or confidential nature which cannot appropriately be shared. Other reasons may be that the pastor has recently accepted a call or there are extenuating circumstances in his current context that do not make it practical to include him on a call list at this time. The call list, consisting of seven to ten names, may also include names of pastors unknown to the congregation. A call list is not simply a list of pastors who have indicated a desire to move.

The call list is then forwarded to the Circuit Counselor who contacts the congregation and arranges to **meet with the call committee** and begin the process toward a congregational voter's assembly issuing a call. In a congregation where a senior pastor is in place, the call list is sent to him with a copy to the Circuit Counselor. The senior pastor leads in the process toward the issuance of a call to the candidate. Anticipation and

excitement grows in the congregation at this stage with the hope that one of the pastors on that call list will

become their new pastor. Next month, I will share with you the process regarding the issuing of the call.

Speaking of looking forward with a sense of anticipation and joy, we approach our **District Convention June 22-25** under the theme “**Celebrating Christ's mission Near ... Far ... Forever ...**” May the Lord bless our fellowship in worship, in learning of the work of the church, in being inspired by the Spirit, and in the commitment to be about His business, which is sharing the Gospel near...far...and forever!

We also pause on June 15 to thank and praise God for the gift of **Christian fathers**. We are thankful for the faith delivered and the wonderful ways in which God has blessed us through our fathers. We also await a joyful reunion in heaven with our Christian fathers who have preceded us. May God bless us all in our mutual ministry in these times of opportunity for service in His name.

In Him with you,  
C. William Hoesman

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