

# Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, ELCA Roseville, Minnesota



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Thank you for placing your trust in me to help guide Prince of Peace forward in these challenging times. Accepting your nomination as president was not an easy choice. As my predecessor Asitha Sandanayake said at our semiannual meeting, we are facing uncharted terrain, “canoeing the mountains” of unprecedented challenges: a pandemic, civil unrest due to racial and ethnic injustice, erosion of trust in our institutions, and declining relevance of mainline protestant churches, to name some. I spent a lot of time in my personal process of discernment before I was persuaded that with God’s help, I could serve you effectively.

One of my first experiences at Prince of Peace was getting involved in a “listening group”, which began just after the shooting of Philando Castile in 2016. In those meetings, we sought to collectively discern God’s will through an intentional process using scripture, prayer, and reflection. I felt God’s presence. I believe that we came to a shared understanding of major issues and opportunities, and a sense of God’s will for our congregation.

As I assume the presidency of our congregation, I pledge to continue my personal process of discernment and to help us engage in collective discernment throughout our decision-making process. Our listening continues - listening to each other and to God, who is, as our brothers and sisters of the United Church of Christ point out, “still speaking”.

Among the top issues that we face is whether we are called to help ease the shortage of affordable housing in our community. The Affordable Housing team has provided information and solicited feedback from you over the past year. The team came to the Congregational Council in February to request that a special meeting of the congregation be called to consider the action needed to move forward with an affordable housing project. The Congregational Council passed a motion to call a special meeting of the congregation on March 21, 2021, to address this issue. Formal notice of this meeting is attached.

The main purpose of this meeting will be to listen to God and each other. The agenda for this special meeting will reflect my pledge to engage in an intentional process of discernment as we consider this issue. I have asked our pastors to prepare a liturgy of discernment to guide us as we seek God’s will on this important question. This process will include intervals of

prayer, music, and reading of scripture to help us gather our thoughts and listen for God's guidance in all we hear.

The Congregational Council, at the March 9 meeting, will develop recommendations for the agenda and any specific action to be voted on. Prior to that date, the Affordable Housing Team will conduct two online focus group meetings to help you prepare for the congregational meeting. I encourage you to join one or both of these meetings.

All of us would prefer to conduct our meetings in person. Despite the limitations of Zoom, however, we have successfully conducted two congregational meetings this past year. But neither of those meetings involved a big issue like affordable housing, and many of you have expressed concern about tackling this issue without being able to meet in person. For that reason, my expectation is that the actions recommended by the Congregational Council for your consideration on March 21 will not include final decisions on allocating funds or other resources. The congregation will have the opportunity to finalize any such obligations at a later time.

As we consider this major decision, I ask all of you to join me in praying for direction for our congregation and its leadership. I trust that God will guide us.

Yours in faith and hope,



Michael Stetzler

## **Notice of Special Meeting**

By Action of the Congregational Council on February 9, 2021, a special meeting of the Congregation of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church ELCA, Roseville Minnesota is called.

Date: March 21, 2021

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Place: Via digital video (Zoom) with voice-only option

Purpose: The meeting is called for the purpose of considering action needed to move forward with an affordable housing project.