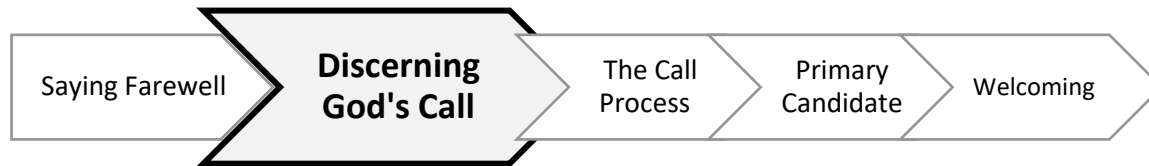


## Transition Update



As we journey through a time of pastoral transition here at Messiah, this is the first of a series of brief, recurring updates from the congregation council which will be included in the monthly Messiah Memos and posted on our website. The graphic above shows the five steps of the call process and highlights where we are currently focusing our efforts. For this first update, you'll find a letter from Pastor Steve Krebill, our interim pastor, who shares some insights about our time of transition.

Dear Friends,

When a Christian congregation enters a time of pastoral transition, the faithful often feel anxious about the present and uncertain about the future. When we feel that way, we are in good company, because Jesus' first disciples were also often fearful, anxious and unsure, even when he was right there with them! When we experience a time of pastoral change, it can also be tempting to try to go through the call process just as fast as we can, so that the anxiety will be relieved. The experience of many, many congregations shows that that approach almost never turns out well, especially when following a long- serving beloved pastor.

So, what to do instead? Well, the time of pastoral transition can be an opportunity to do several other things before we start the call process. One is to look to scripture for comfort and guidance. When we do that, we hear our savior speak to us with words like these: "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:36) Another opportunity we have is to pray and ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance.

One of the unique situations here at Messiah is that, even though we are seeking another pastor, we already have a pastor who has served faithfully here for five years, Pastor Seth Bridger. Because Pastor Seth's future service was not "guaranteed" by his call to Messiah in 2017, now is a time for him to explore his gifts and experiences, and to share his insights for what his vision might be for the office of Senior Pastor, if he were to be called to that position. A "discernment team" has already met with Pastor Seth three times this fall, and they anticipate extending these conversations to other members of our staff, as they seek input from all who faithfully serve here. Those conversations take time and patience as your leadership seeks to find the best way forward.

Finally, another opportunity that we have is to take a step back and look at what it means for us to "be the church." The Augsburg Confession, to which Messiah and every Lutheran congregation subscribes, defines church as the community of believers who gather regularly around Word and Sacrament. So, when we are anxious, we might ask ourselves, "Is the Word of God being proclaimed among us during this time of transition? Are the sacraments being celebrated? Are children being taught and the sick comforted? Are we seeking to do acts of mercy in the name of Jesus?" If we answer "yes" to those things, and we can certainly do that here at Messiah, then perhaps our anxiety can be relieved.

Your leadership has promised to give regular updates about the transition process. I am happy to have been asked to write this first one, and I am honored at the privilege of walking together with you during this time.

Most sincerely,

Steven M. Krebill, Interim Pastor