

April 18, 2026

UPDATE: PASTORAL TRANSITION & INTERIM PASTOR SEARCH

Andy Romstad, Sr. Pastor

There are three stages in pastoral transition: “Party, Process & Person.” (You may have heard that shared on March 1.) Most people like to jump to ‘Person.’ (“Have you got a new pastor yet?”) We’ve completed the “party” stage. We’re now in the “process” stage.

Leaders and “red personality” types hate “process.” (Just get somebody.) I’m sympathetic. But, skipping “process” often undermines the future new pastor. So, what’s next in our process?

INTERIM PASTOR SEARCH UNDERWAY

During the interim process, the plan has been to bring in an “interim pastor.” I’ve connected with approximately nine potential interim candidates (women and men, age 20’s to 60’s, Lutheran, non-Lutheran).

They’ve been good candidates. However, distance, closer-to-home offers, salary level, preferred roles, experience-level and/or other commitments have led various candidates to opt out. (You’ve heard me discuss the “pastor shortage.”) Three names came from the Minneapolis synod, the others through networking. We did a second interview with an excellent candidate this week. That candidate is weighing multiple available options.

I get asked, “But aren’t there retired pastors?” Most retired pastors retired to retire. (Anxious people / congregations during covid didn’t exactly make returning to ministry sound appealing.) One area the interim pastor (depending on experience) would be involved in is the process. “Process” includes times of listening – as well as collecting and reviewing data about congregational and community needs, hopes and dreams.

One of those pieces is a basic “Ministry Site Profile.” The church council will be reviewing the first draft of the “Ministry Site Profile” (MSP) this coming week.

INTERIM PASTORS

If we find an interim pastor, how long does an interim pastor stay? Usually until: a) The congregation calls a new pastor; b) The interim pastor accepts a role elsewhere. Members of the Church Council are helping with the “transition” steps that will lead to the formation of a Call Committee.

That is the latest update. Thank you to Arne Everson, Earl Pike for their excellent work as Visitation Ministers, and to Amy Strydom who helped in a number of ways.

So, who and what do we want and need in the next pastor? The process is helping us move from “get another Pastor Emily” to answering the question based on assessments of congregational needs and mission.

Blessings! Pastor Andy