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June 8, 2019

TO: Our Brothers and Sisters in Christ
FROM: RLCA Congregational Council
RE: Open Session for Congregation to Talk with Pastor Fruhling

Thank you all for coming this morning. I appreciate the love you have for our church, your willingness to share your thoughts, and your wish to seek the truth.

My main job this morning is to introduce Pastor Perry Fruhling, Coordinator for Pastoral Ministries for LCMC. But before I do that I wanted to briefly address two questions that I have heard in the last week.

The first question: now that we have two resignations, what is Council doing?

Council met on Friday, May 31 to discuss the issue and decided to ask Pastor Fruhling to come to Alpena to provide his incredibly valuable services. His visit over the last two days has been eye-opening for the Council, and we feel we have a much better understanding of what happened. I encourage you to listen to Pastor Perry's summary.

We also feel we have a good plan for moving the congregation forward. We will meet again on June 11 to discuss Pastor Perry's recommendation on an intentional interim pastor. We have confidence that this step will help our congregation prepare for a new call process and ensure that a new pastor will be successful here.

We will keep you, the congregation, informed on our progress.

The second question that I've heard numerous times is: Is there any way to bring Pastor Phifer back?

The short answer is: no. Here's why:

Pastor Phifer has taken a new position as vacancy pastor at St. John Lutheran Church in Rogers City and Immanuel of Moltke. He met with both church councils on Wednesday, May 29, and motions were approved to offer Pastor Phifer a compensation package including a salary and a pension plan. The position, subject to final approval by the congregations on June 9, could start June 15-16.

Please note that St. John Lutheran Church of Rogers City is a Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) congregation. Over the past few months Pastor Phifer had completed the process to re-

roster with the LCMS citing reasons including his family's affiliation with LCMS and a pension with LCMS that he had accumulated during his work with previous LCMS congregations.

Pastor Fruhling has directly asked Pastor Phifer if he is interested in returning to RLCA; Pastor Phifer said no.

Please keep Pastor Phifer and his family in your prayers as they move back to the LCMS.

One final note about how we've gotten to this point: The Council takes Pastor Phifer's feedback seriously. We will continue to examine the systemic issues involved in this situation and will propose changes, if/where deemed appropriate, in the coming months.

Finally, Council would like to express appreciation for the many contributions given to our congregation by Pastor Phifer and John Diamond.

I and other Council members will stay after today's session to talk with you. Please feel free to approach any one of us with questions, feedback, etc.

Now, to introduce Pastor Perry Fruhling:

Pastor Perry administers the certification process for pastors and seminarians who desire to be rostered with LCMC. Along with developing call committee coaching, he leads workshops for call committees across the country. Perry relates to the Ministry Board which develops leadership events, relates to seminaries, and oversees our list of pastors serving in many different capacities. He hopes to use his training in conflict resolution to assist congregations and pastors in creating healthy relationships in leadership and congregational life.

Sincerely

Jay Walterreit
2018-19 RLCA Council Chair