

## Coming soon: Interviews with pastoral candidates

Thanks to your willingness to generously share your hopes and dreams for Immanuel's future with your Call Committee, the call process continues to move forward successfully.

Throughout February, your Call Committee studied and discussed the many thoughtful responses and comments you offered during group and individual conversations about whether you would welcome a highly qualified pastor who also happens to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. The committee members then met with Pastor Kerr and Pastor Keith Hohly from the synod office to review and discuss that input.

As Pastor Hohly put it, the congregation has given the call committee a significant mandate to consider all highly qualified pastoral candidates — sexual orientation will not automatically eliminate a candidate from consideration, nor will it provide any advantage.

The committee now is prepared to consider candidates and, according to Pastor Hohly, could receive candidate names from the synod as early as this month.

With confidence from the congregation's strong support, and with the Holy Spirit's guidance, the committee will focus on identifying a pastor who is a good fit for Immanuel, highly qualified, emotionally mature, has no other agenda than to share the gospel — both its challenges and its comforts — and, to the best of his or her ability, possesses the top five talents or strengths identified by the congregation during surveys and conversations. Namely, you told us that Immanuel seeks a pastor who is:

- o **An effective communicator.** Preaching that clearly communicates the challenges of the gospel is crucial, as is clarity and leadership in writing, and in group and one-on-one conversations.
- o **An effective administrator.** Immanuel's staff and members need a leader who can effectively, efficiently keep us focused on God's work.
- o **Caring, nurturing, and active in visitation of members and non-members.** Although other Immanuel members and staff also must be involved, it's important to hear from and feel cared for by the pastor.
- o **A guide who can help people develop their spiritual lives.** Preaching, teaching and a focus on how scripture defines our mission will help us deepen our shared faith.
- o **Able to share leadership and work in a team.** We need a collaborative pastor who listens first and then leads with conviction.

To prepare to evaluate candidates, the committee completed an early-February mock interview with Pastor Nate Haaland of Advent Lutheran Church in Olathe, who pretended to be a candidate for Immanuel's pastoral position while also evaluating the committee's interviewing skills. Pastor Nate gave the committee members high marks and, during the process, they learned more about splitting time between asking and answering questions, which questions likely will be most instructive and revealing, and what may be more important to ask during a first interview versus a second interview.

In accordance with call process guidelines, the committee will keep all information about and interaction with pastoral candidates in the strictest confidence. But the committee will continue to share all other information openly, transparently and truthfully. As always, that's a two-way street, so please feel free to approach any call committee member with questions, thoughts or comments at any time, and please continue to pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance as the process continues.

Linda Fewell  
Call Committee Chair