

Pastoral letter 2025

Dear friends,

I write this to you as a joyful update in the name of our Risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

It has been my great pleasure to serve you as pastor since my ordination into the office of the Holy Ministry on Epiphany, January 6, 2013.

I came into the office in a new and specific way.

The Specific Ministry Pastor program (SMP) was approved by our synod in convention to address the needs of congregations seeking a pastor and raising a man from within, whom the church has identified as one who meets the qualifications and has the aptitude to serve.

The Lord, working through the Board of Elders, Church Council, and the Voter's assembly approved this and I began the application process in 2009, beginning my seminary education at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne in September of 2010 and service here as Vicar at Peace under Pastor Merrell's supervision.

My vicarage continued here for two years as I served at all services, took online classes, and made my annual visit to the seminary for my on-campus class intensives. Pastor Merrell through it all monitored my progress, attended the on-campus classes with me, and gave me his wisdom and guidance as I prepared for ordination and service in the Lord's church.

On the day of my ordination, Pastor Merrell retired and I was installed as the 6th pastor of Peace Lutheran Church, of Waterford, which began in 1963 and continues by the Lord's grace.

What a joy and blessing it is and has been.

But what about the future?

Well, that is in the Lord's hands and in his care. But it appears that he has a plan for us moving forward!

In much the same manor, fellow member Matthew Rich has been identified by the church, supported by the Board of Elders, Church Council, and approved by the Voter's assembly, and we together have begun the application process for him to enter the SMP program.

Over the last number of years, the calling of pastors from the seminary and through member congregations in our synod has become difficult for smaller congregations like ours, and for many larger congregations as well. It can take two to three years to go through the process of reviewing candidates that may or may not result in a pastor accepting a call and being installed.

Most pastors are called from the seminary or through the field, however, the SMP program is a third option, if a congregation is blessed with a candidate who is qualified and willing to serve. I am thankful that the Lord has raised up such a man, in Matt.

I spoke with President Davis at the All-Pastor's Conference in Boyne on October 6th about our situation and he told me "You have my complete support!" Dr. Rob Kasper who oversees the deacon and SMP training programs also gave his support and encouraged us to get the paperwork started and into the district offices. We have done that and Matt and Tricia have a district interview scheduled for February 9th. If all goes well, Matt will begin the program in September of 2026 with an on-campus intensive that we will attend together, and he will be installed here as Vicar Matt Rich, serving alongside me in that capacity for two years!

Once he completes his classes and is approved for ordination Matt will be ordained and installed as the 7th pastor of Peace Lutheran Church and I will retire and serve as Pastor Emeritus here at Peace.

This is the path that I believe the Lord has put us on and I pray your support for Matt and Tricia as they go through this change in their lives preparing to serve here. Pray also for Monica and I as we work to make this a smooth path for our own transition, and may it be a blessing for our wonderful Peace family as the Lord leads us in his way and in his time to our future here together.

In Christ's service,

Pastor Tkac