April 4, 2021

To the members of Divine Redeemer Lutheran Church:

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Risen Savior, Jesus Christ! Attached to this letter is the call committee’s assessment of qualifications, and the biographical information of the four finalist candidates in the search for our next Executive Pastor. The voter’s assembly of Divine Redeemer will be meeting at 11:45 on April 18th to extend a divine call to one of these gentlemen.

This will be the next major milestone in a process that started in January 2020 with the announcement from Pastor Jeff Schubert of his intention to retire effective August 31, 2021. Pastor Jeff made this announcement well in advance of his actual retirement date to provide Divine Redeemer with a sufficient time frame to call his successor.

At the January 2020 board of directors meeting, the board formed an executive pastor call committee as required by the constitution and by-laws. The members of this committee are Brian Kramer (chair), Gary Peppel (Board of Directors’ liaison), John Uttech (Elders liaison), Beth Hynes, Chris Irish, and Janet Bahr (Staff representative, and non-voting member).

In March, under the Covid-19 quarantine rules, the committee held a video conference meeting Rev. Dr. John Wille, President of the South Wisconsin District of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. The purpose of this meeting was for President Wille to outline and explain the divine call process to the committee, and the requirements of the Synod and his office in this process.

In May, 2020, the call committee distributed the executive pastor position description developed by the board of directors, and asked the membership to nominate pastors for the call committee to consider. Once received, these nominations were submitted to President Wille, along with information regarding the organization and ministries of our congregation. President Wille then reviewed these nominations for eligibility based on his assessment, and that of the other district presidents within whose districts those candidates currently serve.

President Wille added other candidates from throughout the synod to compile a slate of 18 candidates. His nominations were identified as men capable of fulfilling the responsibilities of the position description, and whose ministry skills and preferences match Divine Redeemer’s needs and worship styles.

In August, the committee met to conduct a preliminary review of each candidate. During this meeting, candidates were assessed by the committee members against the job description and ministry needs of Divine Redeemer. The committee agreed to begin communications with several candidates assessed highly against these criteria.

By mid-November, the call committee completed video conference interviews with seven candidates who indicated their willingness to interview with Divine Redeemer. Thru these discussions, we identified four candidates to invite to a second interview: Pastors Nathan Meador, Greg Hovland, Seth Flick, and Jason Zobel. These second interviews were conducted on-site at Divine Redeemer during the month of December 2020.

After reviewing the biographic and ministry background of each candidate, and the corresponding interview notes, the call committee unanimously recommended Pastor Nathan Meador to the voter’s assembly as the candidate to consider for the divine call as executive pastor. A voter’s meeting was called for February 14th, at which the members voted on whether or not to extend a divine call to Pastor Meador to serve as our next executive pastor. Although Pastor Meador did receive a majority of the votes cast, a 60% majority as required by our by-laws was not reached, therefore no divine call was extended.

Many members provided feedback both during and after the voter’s meeting. The concerns voiced by these members mostly centered around three areas: 1) Communication and transparency – that the call committee did not provide enough transparency regarding the process that was followed during the vetting process. 2) That only one candidate was presented, and that the voter’s wanted more than one choice. And 3) Concerns about whether Pastor Meador was “too conservative” and focused mostly on traditional worship style for Divine Redeemer.

In order to remedy these concerns, the call committee, in agreement with the board of directors and President John Wille, decided to host all four candidates for a “Meet and Greet” day at DR. These visits allowed the four candidates, along with their wives, to meet with the church staff, the associate pastors, the school faculty, the board of directors and elders, and finish their day at DR with a question and answer session for the congregation to hear their answers to key ministry questions posed by the call committee. These visits were completed on the following days: 1) Pastor Nathan and Jill Meador on March 2nd, 2) Pastor Greg and Stephanie Hovland on March 4th, 3) Pastor Seth and Melinda Flick on March 9th, and 4) Pastor Jason and Laurel Zobel on March 11th.

Transcripts of these question and answer sessions with each candidate can be downloaded electronically from www.drlc.org, can be requested by email at call.commitee@drlc.org, or a hard copy of the transcripts can be picked up in the church office during normal business hours.

Now that this process is complete, the board of directors has called another voter’s meeting to extend a divine call to one of these gentlemen to serve as our next Executive Pastor. This meeting again is scheduled for April 18th at 11:45 in the gymnasium. President Wille will be present to guide us as we gather as God’s people to pray for his will to be done though our balloting process that day.

Here is what to expect at this call meeting, including a brief agenda and balloting process as outlined by our by-laws.

1. Opening Prayer
2. Comments by President Wille outlining the divine call process as followed by The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. Our by-laws require a 60% majority to be acquired by one candidate to extend a divine call.
3. Presentation of the candidates – Brian Kramer, chair of the call committee
4. First ballot cast – four candidates.
5. Prayer / praise time while ballots are counted by the Elders. A candidate is considered called if he acquires 60% of the total votes cast. In the event no candidate reaches the 60% threshold, the candidate with the lowest total votes will be eliminated from the next ballot. Two candidates will be eliminated in the event of a tie for the lowest vote total.
6. Second ballot cast
7. Prayer / praise time while the ballots are counted by the elders. In the event no candidate reaches the 60% threshold of votes cast, the candidate with the lowest votes cast will be eliminated from the next ballot.
8. Third ballot cast
9. Prayer / praise time while ballots are counted by the Elders.
10. If no candidate can reach the 60% threshold after narrowing the slate of candidates to two, the election shall be declared null and void, and the Board of Directors will charge the call committee to prepare a new slate of candidates, or form a new call committee.
11. Closing prayer

We encourage all registered voting members to attend the meeting on April 18th. If you are not yet a registered voter, but would like to participate in this process, please arrive 15 minutes early to apply for voting member status. Voting membership is available to communicant members, male and female, who have reached the age of 18, and have been accepted by the Voter’s Assembly, and have been provided with the opportunity to read the Constitution and By-Laws of Divine Redeemer.

Please continue to keep this process in your prayers, so that God, our Father may lead us as His church to call the man He has already chosen to lead us as our next executive pastor. If you have any questions about the candidate’s backgrounds or qualifications, or the call process, please continue to submit these to call.committee@drlc.org.

In our Risen Savior’s Name,

The Board of Directors

Divine Redeemer Lutheran Church