



January 20, 2021

Dear Friends in Christ,

Augustana has been unusually blessed to have Pastor Aune guide us in our faith journey for *more than three decades!* While the news of his upcoming retirement will undoubtedly be met with sadness, we are excited for him and Janis as they enter this next phase of life and a well-deserved retirement. We are also grateful that his leadership has prepared us to move into the next stage of our journey as a community of Christ followers.

The purpose of this letter is to introduce you to the team who will be leading that effort and to share some general information on what to expect as we move forward, including ways that you can participate in the process.

Over the past year, we have become all too familiar with the challenges of change and uncertainty. Through it all our faith has sustained us and we've come to understand that change also brings opportunity. In this case, Pastor Aune's departure gives us a rare opportunity to reflect on where we are headed as a faith community and to re-energize our commitment to mission. This will begin with the search for new leadership.

At the Church Council meeting on January 19, a Call Committee was appointed to lead the process of calling a new Senior Pastor to Augustana. These Augustana members have answered the call to serve:

Laurie Tostrud, Committee Chair  
Scott Thorson, Council President  
Matt Rundquist

Karen Larson  
Heidi Satre  
Chad Schmidt

This group will work with Bishop Patricia Lull and the St. Paul Area Synod to find a new Senior Pastor. The congregation will be kept informed of their progress via the Augustana newsletter, website, and various meetings.

The call process typically takes months – and can even take a year. Working together, we will invest whatever time is necessary to reflect thoroughly on the needs of our community and find a leader who is well suited to meet those needs. In the meantime, Pastor Deb Kielsmeier has agreed to stay with Augustana throughout the call process. In addition, Bishop Lull will work with the Call Committee to identify an experienced Interim Senior Pastor to help us during the transition.

To help guide the search and identify suitable candidates, the Call Committee will provide the Synod with detailed background on our congregation, history, program priorities, and mission. This material will be compiled in a formal document known as a Ministry Site Profile. Fortunately, we will be able to draw much of this material from the strategic planning and visioning work that has been underway at Augustana over the past three years. Those works will be put into action through this process.

There will be opportunities for all of you to express your hopes and preferences for a future leader both in writing and orally, in both individual and group settings. We encourage you to share your ideas, ask questions, and join us in providing the ministries we all value. Our first listening session will be scheduled in February—more details to come.

In June, Augustana will gather to celebrate Pastor Aune's work, thank him for his years of service, and wish him and his family well on life's next adventure. Watch Augustana communications for more details. Although it is always difficult to say goodbye, we do so knowing that we will all be blessed to carry with us a piece of his teachings, sense of humor, and kindness in our hearts forever. We will all work together to ensure a smooth transition to find the right leader to continue to guide, teach, and lead us in the path of Jesus Christ.

Peace and blessings,

*Laurie Tostrud*



*Heather Johnston*

Laurie Tostrud  
Chair, Call Committee

Scott Thorson  
President, Church Council

Heather A. Johnston  
Chair, Personnel Committee

*We trust that God will bring peace to our anxious hearts. We choose hope knowing that God is greater than any danger. We watch for God's continuing work in our lives.*