



PEACE
NORTH AMERICAN
LUTHERAN CHURCH

3590 Lincoln Avenue, St. Joseph Michigan 49085
Office: 269-556-7000 Web: PeaceLutheranStJoe.org
Email: PeaceLutheranStJoe@sbcglobal.net
FB: Peace Lutheran Church NALC

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
P. O. Box 151
Manistee MI 49660
December 6, 2021

To the Members of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church:

This letter comes to wish you a blessed Advent Season!

I am writing since it has been almost one year since you've had a called pastor. During this time you have been blessed with an intentional Interim Pastor, The Rev. Dr. Jeffary Greene. I have received reports of the good work that the congregation has been engaged in to prepare for a new long-term pastor. There have been signs that God is actively working within the congregation.

I realize that with the passing of time anxiety can increase; doubts can arise as to whether or not there will be a new called pastor in your congregation's future. It is especially appropriate to pay attention to the Advent lessons and the themes of these weeks as the Lectionary focuses on waiting and preparation. God has a pastor in mind for your congregation, who it is and when he or she will become available is beyond my ability to discern. The delay does not necessarily mean that you are forgotten, it does mean the right person has not yet come forth.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also hindered the NALC Candidacy Process. The number of pastors currently seeking calls is below pre-pandemic norms. Every time COVID infections decline hope rises that mobility among clergy will increase. Unfortunately a new spike in infections keeps our mobility numbers low.

I remain thankful for your ongoing ministry through this difficult year as each congregation has had to learn how to worship together and celebrate the Sacraments while implementing safety precautions to minimize transmission of the virus.

May the celebration of Christ's birth provide new energy and a new sense of hope as you continue to wait for a new pastor in 2022.

In Christ,

Steven J Hartten
Dean, Michigan Mission District