



BETHEL

LUTHERAN CHURCH

CUPERTINO

What Comes Next

An Update on Worship, Pastoral Care, and the Call Process

Dear Bethel Family,

Many of you have questions about what comes next for Bethel after Pastor Ben's departure. In a recent communication, we promised to share what we know about the transition and call process. We wanted to provide an update on where things stand today, what you can expect in the coming months, and how you can participate in the process.

The most important thing to know is this: Bethel is entering a season of transition, but not a season of uncertainty about our mission. Together, we will continue worshiping God, serving our neighbors, growing in faith, caring for one another, and **“Doing Life Together.”**

What You Can Expect

Worship and ministry at Bethel will continue.

We will continue offering both traditional and contemporary worship services every week. During this transition, we will welcome a variety of guest preachers from our community.

We are also committed to continuing the practice of offering Holy Communion at every service. This tradition, begun under Pastor Ben's leadership, has become an important part of our worship life. On Sundays when an ordained pastor is not available to preside, the bread and wine will be pre-consecrated so that communion can continue to be shared as part of our worship.

If you have a need for pastoral care, please contact the church office at (408) 252-8500 or [Robyn Winegardner](#). We have established a network of pastors in the area who are available to provide visits, prayer, counseling, hospital support, and other pastoral care as needed.

We expect this interim period to last several months while we work with the Synod to call our next pastor.

Just as importantly, all of the ministries, programs, Bible studies, fellowship groups, service opportunities, and community outreach efforts that make Bethel such a vibrant congregation will continue.

The Pastoral Call Process

Some of you may be familiar with previous call processes at Bethel. This one will be different. It is an expedited call process designed specifically for healthy churches like ours. Council has been working closely with Synod leadership, and we are encouraged by both the process being recommended and the progress already being made.

One difference from a traditional call process is that candidates are presented one at a time rather than as a group.

This does **not** mean that we are expected to call the first candidate presented to us. Rather, it means that each candidate receives our full attention and careful discernment. If a candidate is not the right fit for Bethel, the Synod will continue the process and present another candidate.

Another difference is that the initial call is for a three-year term. The expectation is that a successful ministry partnership would transition to a permanent call at the end of that period. The fixed term also provides clarity and flexibility for both the congregation and the pastor should circumstances change. At the end of the three years, the congregation would also have the option of moving to a more traditional call arrangement.

The process itself is straightforward:

1. Council updates the profile that explains who we are and what we are seeking.
2. The Synod identifies and presents a candidate based on the profile.
3. Council reviews the candidate and determines whether to proceed.
4. The candidate and Council meet for interviews and discernment.
5. If both the candidate and Council believe it is the right fit, a call is extended.

Naturally, some members have asked whether there will be enough candidates available, given that other congregations are also seeking pastors. While no one can predict exactly how long the process will take, Bethel is in a strong position. A hallmark of our church is that we have a faithful, vibrant, caring and inclusive congregation. We are financially healthy, we have recently purchased a parsonage, we are blessed with outstanding staff and lay leadership, and we are located in a community that many pastors would be excited to serve.

For these reasons, we are optimistic about the road ahead and look forward to seeing whom God may be calling to serve alongside us.

We Want to Hear From You

While this process moves more quickly than traditional call processes, listening remains an important part of discerning Bethel's future.

Your Church Council wants to hear your thoughts, hopes, questions, and concerns.

Share Your Input

- Complete the [congregational feedback form](#) to tell us what you would like to see in Bethel's next pastor
- Speak with any member of the Church Council
- Drop a note in the offering plate

Upcoming In-Person Opportunities

Sunday, July 5

Informal Congregational Forum

Fireside Room, between services

Join members of Council for an informal conversation. This will be an opportunity to ask questions, share ideas, and discuss the future of Bethel together.

Sunday, July 12

Synod Q&A Session

Our Synod representative, Charlane Lines, who is guiding us through this process, will join us to answer questions and explain the call process in greater detail.

Ministry Group Conversations

If your Bible study, ministry team, fellowship group, or other ministry would like a Council member to visit and hear your thoughts, please contact [Lisa Laxson](#) and we will be happy to arrange it.

Your Church Council

[Ellen Aist](#), President

[Angela Brown](#), President-elect

[Janice Martinson](#), Secretary

[Dave Tribby](#), Treasurer

[Lisa Laxson](#), Ministry Liason

[Greg Steinke](#), Member at large Veronica

[Veronica Lentfer](#), Member at large Tony

[Tony Stieber](#), Human Resources Advisor

[AJ Aist](#), Youth Member at Large

Join Us This Sunday, June 21

Before we begin this next chapter together, we hope you will join us this Sunday as we celebrate Pastor Ben's ministry among us.

Following the second service, we will gather on the church grounds to share Mexican food and fellowship as we thank him for his years of service and wish him God's blessings in the next chapter of his ministry.

Thank you for your prayers, your trust, and your participation during this transition. We are grateful for this congregation and excited to see how God continues to lead Bethel in the months ahead.

In Christ,

The Bethel Church Council