

January 7, 2021

Congregation of Trinity Lutheran Church:

As you know, Pastor Jim Rogers retired on December 31, 2020 after many years of service—three of those years with us. If you would like to see his farewell words to the congregation, and the video of his receiving his gifts from the congregation, please watch the video from December 27th that can be found on our Facebook page or our YouTube channel (found by searching Trinity Lutheran Church of Porterville while in YouTube).

Working in coordination with Foothill Presbyterian's session (like our council) a committee of four members was appointed to choose between the interims assigned to us by the Sierra Pacific Synod of the ELCA and the Presbytery of the San Joaquin (normally, we don't get to choose an interim, but because we are two yoked congregations, we got to choose between the two). After the committee looked at profiles, heard sermons and interviewed the candidates, they made a choice that was validated by both churches' governing councils. The contract was voted on by both governing groups as well (interim choices and contracts are not voted on by the congregations at large—however, regular pastors are).

Jodi Golden-Lund was the unanimous choice of the committee for several reasons. Some of those are: she had direct answers, she has a clear vision of how she can assist us to become ready to call a pastor, she has a lot of experience as an intentional interim pastor, she has a lot of energy, she was willing to work a 70% (35% for each congregation—us and Foothill) contract to fit within the synod guidelines, and she is available to serve us until a permanent pastor is found.

Many or perhaps most of you know Pastor Jodi from when she served our congregation in the past. However, as everything is different with COVID, so will be our interactions with Jodi. We will be experiencing everything new again. You are invited to meet her for the first time, or once again, as we welcome Pastor Jodi to our congregation in the online service on January 17th.

Attached to this letter are a set of guidelines that are provided by the synod to guide our interactions with both Pastor Jim Rogers and Pastor Jodi Golden-Lund. Please give these guidelines your careful consideration.

Love in Christ,

Julie McIntosh,
TLC Council President

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONGREGATION AND DEPARTING PASTOR

Because we want everyone to be aware of some important issues related to the transition between pastors, we ask you to read this carefully.

The Church Council and former Pastor have agreed to the following, and seek your cooperation, regarding the positive future relationships among us:

We will do everything possible to uphold the mission of the Church and the positive quality of life in this congregation.

We will recognize the need for time to adjust to the new relationships, and will reach out in care and compassion to one another.

We will honor the departure of the former pastor so duties may be relinquished; and will honor the arrival of the new pastor by seeking their counsel and ministry. We are aware that conducting pastoral acts (such as baptism, weddings, funerals, confirmations, communions) and defining ministry programs and leadership styles are no longer the prerogative of the departing pastor, but belong to the arriving pastor with the Council and congregation.

While we recognize that we will continue to care about the departing pastor and family, we will not expect nor invite the pastor to participate in congregational life, with the possible exception of special congregational anniversaries or observations.

The nature of the relationship between pastor and people often gets translated as the pastor being a friend. While there is certainly friendship involved, the pastor's primary role is that of congregational leader. He is retiring from that role and transitioning to a role as a private citizen separate from our congregation.

Experience across the Church has shown that continuing relationships with former pastors is very positive when the above things are kept in mind.