May 3, 2010

Dear Christ Church Members,

According to our Christ Church Constitution and By-Laws, a "Special Congregational Meeting" has been called by the Christ Church Council for Sunday, May 16, beginning at 11:45 a.m. in the Worship Center. The purpose and the only agenda item will be to vote on the following resolution:

"The congregation of Christ Lutheran Church in Otsego, MN, hereby ratifies its vote of January 31, 2010, to terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America."

This ratifying vote is necessary to finalize our decision to separate from the E.L.C.A. and affiliate with another Lutheran body. The first vote was passed on January 31, 2010 by a margin of 160 "yes" and 8 "no."

Voting Members for this meeting are Confirmed Members. This includes any adult member received by affirmation of faith in Jesus Christ included on our official Membership Roles. A list of Voting Members will be used to certify an official quorum, which constitutes 10% of the Voting Members. If you have any question regarding your voting status, please call the church office and speak to Donna Lohse at 763-441-5097 prior to the meeting.

The meeting will be conducted according to Roberts Rules of Order, latest edition. The resolution must pass by a 2/3 majority of the Voting Members present at the meeting. The vote will be by written ballot. The Christ Church Constitution does not provide for absentee ballots. A Counting Team will tally the ballots. This team has been appointed by the Church Council and does not include any current Staff or Church Council members of Christ Church. The vote will be announced as soon as the votes or totaled.

Since the first vote on January 31, 2010, the Church Council has fulfilled our Constitutional obligation to meet with Bishop Craig Johnson from the E.L.C.A. for consultation. This meeting was held on Tuesday, April 27. There was honest discussion and prayers of blessing.

The Christ Church Council has also been exploring options for our future affiliation. An Open Forum was held on April 19 with Paul Spaulding representing Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC). Other options were also clarified and discussed with the Council and congregation.

After prayerful consideration, the Christ Church Council has also called a second "Special Congregation Meeting" for Sunday, May 16, 2010. This meeting will follow immediately after the conclusion of the first meeting for the ratifying vote. The purpose and only agenda item will be to vote on the following resolution:

"The congregation of Christ Lutheran Church in Otsego, MN, hereby votes to affiliate with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC). The Church Council is hereby authorized to finalize all documents related to this affiliation."

These procedural steps include a re-certification of our pastors, the moving of Pension and Medical plans, the temporary adoption of a Church Constitution, and any requirements by the State of Minnesota and the Internal Revenue Service.

The Church Council reviewed four viable options for our new denominational affiliation. They are Word Alone, Lutheran CORE, the emerging North American Lutheran Church (NALC) and Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC). We discovered that Word Alone and Lutheran CORE are not denominations to join but rather organizations that will continue to provide connections and resources to the various Lutheran denominations.

The North American Lutheran Church is a new denomination that will officially organize in August and is being birthed out of Lutheran CORE. The information available suggests that NALC will be similar in organization to the ELCA with bishops and a hierarchical structure. It represents the traditional arm of Lutheranism that wants to reclaim our Lutheran heritage.

Both the Christ Church Staff and Church Council felt that LCMC is the best fit for Christ Church in terms of theology and practice. It is solidly biblical, mission focused and congregationally centered. In other words, LCMC does not have a "top-down" organizational structure like a typical denomination. It represents the more contemporary arm of Lutheranism, including congregations like Christ Church that are involved in a variety of community and ecumenical partnerships. LCMC is also the affiliation that is being joined by Central Lutheran in Elk River, Lord of Life in Ramsey and Redeemer Lutheran in Fridley. These are congregations with whom we have worked closely in the past and will continue to partner in the future. The Christ Church leadership is very excited about this new affiliation.

Without this letter getting too long, please visit any of the following sites and learn more for yourself:

www.lcmc.net
www.lutherancore.org (also includes info on NALC)
www.wordalone.org

Your participation in these two "Special Congregational Meetings" is encouraged as a member of Christ Church. While we are saddened at the direction of the ELCA that has led us to this decision, we are also very excited about the future and our partnership with congregations in LCMC. It is God's Church and we continue to seek Him above all else!

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Greg Pagh
On behalf of the Staff and Christ Church Council