



6626 North Oliphant Avenue
Chicago, IL 60631 773-631-9131
www.edisonparkchurch.com

June 25, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Edison Park Lutheran Church,

You are a wonderful, gifted, called, compassionate and generous people. I have loved your spirit, and I love you. I have enjoyed working with you to continue moving this community in Christ forward. While many congregations are faltering you have continued to grow and remain strong. There are always challenges, but you face them and are willing to follow God's call to serve others—a special thanks to so many positive and optimistic leaders I've been fortunate to work with here. Your partnership has been a gift beyond measure.

You offer pastors and staff who work with you a great opportunity to experience the bold mission of the body of Christ at its best, always with an orientation and reliance on faith. I have loved serving alongside you since June 2010. When you think of the lives you have touched over the congregation's ninety years it is an amazing story of shared blessings.

It is with a deep sense of gratitude, and contentment, that I share with you today that I have accepted another call. I actually received the telephone call letting me know of this the same day, June 4, that Matt Haider brought his letter to me informing me he had accepted a new position. You can imagine, I was a bit numb—since I had not imagined these two transitions would happen simultaneously—but could not share the news with you at that time. It became official Sunday, June 24. I have worked with the church council and the bishop during these past weeks to prepare for this additional transition.

I have accepted a call—one of the great honors of my life—to serve as pastor of my home congregation, New Hope Lutheran Church, in Sand Creek and Pine Creek, Wisconsin. It is a multi-site congregation worshipping in two locations. I grew up in Sand Creek, and my family has been present in the congregation since the 1860s, so for all of 150 years. I am grateful to my great-great grandparents, Andreas and Helene Hanson, and Gregers and Helen Anderson, for carrying their faith from Norway to the hills of northwest Wisconsin. It was through this congregation that my faith was nurtured, and where I first sensed the call to ministry. An assistant to the bishop of Northwest Wisconsin Synod wrote to me last fall: *"End your ministry where you began! Interesting idea."* So, the Holy Spirit has moved my heart, even as I continue to hear the haunting words of Jesus from Mark 6:4: *...a prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his relatives....* " God does have a sense of humor!

We've experienced mountaintops together here at EPLC—Thank you! We have experienced moments of frustration, and dangled at the end of our fraying rope together. You have allowed me to minister to, work alongside with, and serve the ministry as your pastor. Know that you have ministered to me too. Together it all adds up to a life lived as God's people.

When he was about five, one of my son's referred to a Picasso as a "Fiasco" as we walked through a museum in Boston. It's very descriptive of the church. It often looks, and is, messy. However, through the filter of Jesus Christ, God miraculously sees a masterpiece. This is true when God looks at the body of Christ, and when he looks at each one of us. Amazing grace indeed!

My ministry with you will end the weekend of July 21/22. In the words of Dag Hammarskjold: ***"For all that has been, THANKS! For all that will be, YES!"***

Peace,

Pr. Michael

Rev. Dr. Michael D Sparby

Church
Council

See a letter from Council
on the opposite side.



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Update

June 25, 2018

Dear Friends in Christ,

The great cloud of witnesses that surround us at Edison Park Lutheran Church remind us today that there is but one constant. Hebrews 13:8 says *"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever."*

While we grieve the loss of valued partners in ministry, we also know there are seasons to our Christian walk. As a congregation we have experienced many in the past ninety years and will experience more in the future. The truth that reassures us is that God has continually blessed us beyond measure. We are continually being made new.

We celebrate with Matt Haider and Pr. Michael Sparby as they are called to new ministry elsewhere. We have been blessed by their gifts. During their tenure EPLC has continued to grow, while many congregations have declined. Our baptized membership in 2010 was 706, and as this year began we were at 864. We have much to be thankful for, and it invigorates us to continue these positive trends. We ask your continued prayers, optimism, and action as we move into God's new plan for us.

Both Pr. Michael and Matt have also shared that they have been blessed tremendously by the ministry, mission, and people of EPLC. Their decisions to move on did not come easily. At the same time, they must respond to the Holy Spirit's call on their lives, and they now follow these calls into new ministry. Even as we grieve, we are happy for them and those they will now serve.

The Council has begun the deliberative process and planning for moving forward. We will meet with Bishop Miller at our July meeting to discuss moving forward with calling a new pastor. The search process for a new worship and music director is underway. At present, we have all worship services covered through August. The promise is sure, and we know God has great things in store for us. We will meet the challenge!

There is also a vision process which was already in the works, and set to begin soon, which is timely. We already have five who have stepped up to serve on this task force – five women and one man (thank you!) – we could use a couple more men! Will you serve? Do you love EPLC? Please contact us and get involved. We are the church!

Thank you for your continued prayers and encouragement. Let's rally together and move into the future in faith, continuing to keep our congregation strong. We are EPLC...thanks be to God!

We will celebrate Pr. Sparby's ministry with us with refreshments surrounding worship during coffee hour Sunday, July 22.

Sincerely in Christ,

Carolyn Nasheim

Carolyn Nasheim, president
Werner Calder, vice-president
John Cherry, secretary
Wayne Ammentorp, treasurer
Armando Arriazola
Kevin Burkum
Vicki Evers
John Jackson
Mark Schaeffer

Our Mission: To be a people living, loving and serving as Jesus did...so that all may know.