



Good Shepherd

February 12, 2024

LUTHERAN
CHURCH

Dear Good Shepherd Family,

I came to Good Shepherd in August 2008. Since then, we have been through much together. I have worked with seventeen different staff people, baptized eighty-five children and youth, and confirmed seventy-eight students. There have been three hundred people who joined during my tenure and thirty-two members who have died. But statistics alone can't tell the story. Within those numbers are wonderful, rich, and sometimes heartbreaking stories. That is what I remember the most. So many stories of my life entwined with yours.

In August 2018 I celebrated my 10th anniversary with you. At the time I was wondering and praying about whether my time at Good Shepherd was at an end. I asked God, "what is ahead for us if I stay?" The answer was a fire on September 5th, which while difficult, gave me the certainty that I needed to remain as pastor of Good Shepherd.

The recovery from the fire became a \$3 million building project, which then moved to a fight with the insurance company leaving a part of the building plan unfinished, a pandemic, and a recovery from all of it. Through it all I have been so proud to lead Good Shepherd. We overcame so many obstacles because you stepped up in a way that renewed the sense of purpose and mission that we all hold so dear today; a sense of mission that continues to attract new people to our doors and membership. When I tell people either in the Oak Park community or the greater Chicagoland Lutheran community that I am the pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, they express a sense of respect for who we are and what we stand for.

In 2023 our numbers in worship began to surpass our 2018 statistics. Discovering greater clarity of mission during our time of overcoming obstacles, and leaning into the changes demanded by the past five years, has made us better, sharper. Children began to return to Sunday School. Involvement in Social Ministry expanded. As I look out at the horizon before us, I see so much opportunity. I know that 2024 and beyond hold amazing opportunities for Good Shepherd.

Yet simultaneously, I again found myself praying whether my time is at an end with Good Shepherd. This past year I have felt that my energy for ministry is ebbing at the same time that your energy as a congregation is increasing. In every area that can be quantified and measured, Good Shepherd is in a stronger position than it was before the pandemic. Quite frankly, you are stronger today than any point in my time here. There is so much marvelous ministry taking place and so many new, excited

A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

611 Randolph Street, Oak Park, Illinois 60302
708-848-4741 • churchoffice@goodshepherdilc.org • goodshepherdilc.org

Embracing the diversity of God's creation and celebrating our oneness in Christ.

Pastor Kathy Nolte
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
611 Randolph St.
Oak Park, IL 60302

Philippians 4:4-9

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, siblings, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

people joining in ministry. Again, I am certain that the future for Good Shepherd is incredible. I am also certain that God is calling someone else to lead you into that future.

It is both with sadness and deep gratitude that I announce my departure as Good Shepherd's pastor on April 15, 2024. At that time, I will transition to full-time employment as Associate to the Bishop in the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the ELCA.

I am sad to leave a place that has held me together through so many personal challenges – when I was struck by lightning, when my youngest struggled with a then undiagnosed mental illness, as my husband's health has faltered. I am also grateful for the many ways that you have embraced both me and my family.


I am grateful for the synergy that I have felt being your leader for these past 16 years. It has been vastly enjoyable not just to get to know you individually, but to bring your many talents together to accomplish God's work in the world. I am thrilled that you are one of the best examples of church that I have ever witnessed. You are truly awe-inspiring!

In the weeks that remain I will be working closely with everyone in leadership for a smooth transition. In addition, I plan to have small gatherings just to sit and talk. Look for details on the website calendar and weekly epistle. There are already plans for a part-time interim pastor assigned by Bishop Curry to lead the congregation through the transition to a new pastor. In addition, Pastor Kerstin will remain in her part-time role guiding the worship team and providing pastoral care.

I know that this news may be hard to digest. Please know that it comes after many months of prayer and discernment. It isn't easy to leave a place that you love. Yet, I am also certain that it is time. I

came to Good Shepherd as a pastor with seven years' experience and we grew this congregation together. I am certain that God is already preparing the next pastor who will work with you to grow the ministry in fruitful new ways.

May God bless you always,



Pastor Kathy Nolte

A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

611 Randolph Street, Oak Park, Illinois 60302
708-848-4741 ☎ churchoffice@goodshepherdlc.org ☎ goodshepherdlc.org

Embracing the diversity of God's creation and celebrating our oneness in Christ.