



First Lutheran Church

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Since the announcement of the Special Congregational Meeting to discuss and vote on First Lutheran's commitment to the Chinese Lutheran Ministry (to be held on July 22nd) the Church Council, the Visioning Team, and Pastor Berg have received and responded to questions from members of the congregation. While acknowledging that the timing of this process and getting information disseminated in the summer is not ideal, the Council saw the importance of bringing this decision to the congregation. Bob Berg (chair of the Finance Committee), Tom Payne (chair of the Visioning Team), Joyce Thode (FLC Council Vice President), Pastor Berg, and myself met to identify the frequently asked questions and communicate the answers to the entire congregation so that everyone has as much information as possible in advance of the meeting.

If you have any additional questions or comments, please let me know.

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Frequently Asked Questions

About our upcoming Special Congregational Meeting

Regarding our support of the Chinese ministry.

Why are we meeting?

For the past 15 years FLC has hosted a Lutheran Chinese ministry, formerly known as Living Truth Chinese Lutheran Church. It was started by the ELCA and the Northwest Washington Synod as a new mission start. The ministry proved to be a fruitful ministry to Chinese students and those with working visas. It became apparent that this ministry was not going to become a stand-alone congregation, but that it is an important outreach to the Chinese community. In April this community decided to change its focus and put an end to Living Truth as a congregation and then entered a 50-day discernment process. During this time the group met every Sunday with Pastor Berg and Pastor Jade to discuss the future. Pastor Jade has also been in conversations with representatives of the ELCA and the Synod. It has been difficult to ascertain a way forward. It was clear that the ministry is still an important evangelism tool to a mostly unchurched immigration



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population, so it was decided to ask the ELCA and the Synod if they would be interested in funding the ministry as a Synodical Authorized Worshiping Congregation (SAWC), much like how a campus ministry is funded. We finally got word that they would be interested if FLC would agree to become the sponsoring organization. This idea was brought to the congregational council in June: if FLC will fund 1/3rd of the Chinese Ministry through December 2018(\$9,000), the ELCA and the NWWA Synod will fund 2/3rds (\$18,000). The council voted to offer the \$9,000 to the Chinese Ministry for 2018, and to call a special congregational meeting on July 22nd for the congregation to affirm their decision.

How is the Chinese Ministry Funded?

The ELCA and the Synod provide grants to support new ministries. What is being suggested is that the ELCA and the Synod continue to fund the Chinese Ministry at the rate of \$50,000 a year in 2019. This amount matches what they were funding Living Truth in 2018. The Chinese Ministry group was to then come up with \$25,000 to fill the budget so that they could call a pastor at $\frac{3}{4}$ time. The ministry is not able to match that number in 2019. This fall, during FLC's visioning process, we will consider whether we should fund this ministry in 2019.

How does this process fit with our Visioning Process?

This is the most important question. It is true that we are just now embarking on a visioning process to enter into a time of congregational discernment to determine where is God leading First Lutheran as a congregation—what is God's mission and purpose for us? It may seem to some that making a decision of this magnitude would circumvent this process. To others it may seem to let this ministry disappear would circumvent this process. The Congregation Council discussed this at length. Their decision was to find a way to maintain the status quo so that we can provide time for the visioning process to move forward. We hope to answer the question of whether or not we feel called to support the initiative of a partnership with the Chinese Ministry. This process would come along side those conversations this fall and winter. The visioning team is aware of this and feel that this is a very good way to move forward.

Are we calling Pastor Jade to be our pastor?

No. Pastor Jade has a call to the Chinese Ministry. We are being asked to support her and the ministry not just with our dollars, but also with our time and talents. Pastor Jade will also be present in our midst offering her gifts to us. We call this mutual ministry, two entities doing ministry in the same space offering their gifts to each other.

What is the Chinese Ministry?

The Chinese Ministry is made up of about 15 people who have come to the USA from several different countries: Cambodia, Hong Kong, Taiwan and mainline China. A few are naturalized citizens, but many are here on a visitor's visa, working visa or a student visa. It is a ministry to a mostly transitory community. Many of those who have come to this ministry are people with no



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faith or a faith other than Christian. This ministry teaches the basics of the faith and raises up new Christians. It is hoped that these new Christians will spread the Good News as they go back home or wherever life takes them.