

Dear siblings in Christ at Peace and St. Andrew,

One of the most challenging aspects of being a rostered minister in the ELCA is the transition from one call to another. It is an emotional time of discerning and making difficult decisions while being open to where the Holy Spirit might be leading. I am writing to share with you that I have been offered and accepted a call to serve Calvary Lutheran Church in Morganton, North Carolina as their Deacon for Faith Formation and Outreach. Morganton is a small city between Asheville and Charlotte in western North Carolina. My call will also include serving 1/3 time helping lead the NC Synod's Children, Youth, and Family ministries.

As most of you know, I served for 20 years in the South Carolina Synod before coming to Texas, and I also spent a great deal of time with congregations and camps in North Carolina. This new call brings me back to familiar places and colleagues. It brings me much closer to my family, my mom, my sister, and my son, Zack, who all live in Georgia within easy driving distance. With Grace eventually moving to the US, this was a very important part of my decision to accept this new call, to be settled close to family.

When I made myself available for call through the ELCA Churchwide office, I knew that I would only leave my current call here at Peace and St. Andrew if it was the right call and in the right part of the country. I knew it was definitely a small window of possibility. I also knew that such a call might not exist or become available. The plus side for me has been knowing that I could remain right here doing what I do with all of you and be completely happy for many more years.

When I first shared the possibility of this call (and move) with Pastor Jake and Pastor Chris in August, I told them that if I could just pick up these two congregations and bring you all with me, I'd be delighted to continue as your Deacon for Faith Formation until my retirement. I shared the same heartfelt sentiment with I met with both congregation councils via Zoom while I was in Japan to notify them that the possibility of this new call was imminent.

The five years that I have served Peace and St. Andrew have been deeply rewarding for me on so many levels. Together we have seen a lot of changes in our communities and in the world, especially navigating through the COVID pandemic. Through all of those changes, I've always felt very blessed to be a part

of two congregations filled with people (YOU!) who share a deep passion for the gospel and a courageous openness to listen to and follow the Holy Spirit. As disciples of Jesus, we are called to witness to the love of God in the midst of a hurting world that needs this good news now more than ever. We will continue to share in that ministry together, albeit now from different parts of the country.

My last Sunday here in Texas will be Sunday, October 6th. I am going to split my four remaining Sundays between Peace (9/15, 10/6) and St. Andrew (9/22, 9/29). I welcome your calls, emails, and texts, and I will make myself available to meet with people between now and when I move. Saying goodbye is never easy, especially with so many wonderful memories of sharing in ministry and friendship with all of you. I go to North Carolina filled with joy and thanksgiving to God for you! I ask for your prayers as I begin this transition into the next chapter in my life. I will also be in prayer for all of you and for both congregations, confident that God will continue to work wonderful things through you.

Yours in Christ,

Deacon Andrew