

To the people of God at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church,

What a joy and an honor to receive the call to become your pastor! You are a wonderful church, with a deep knowledge of and love for God's Word. You have a talented and dedicated staff. In an era when many young people are falling away from the church, you have a thriving ministry to children and youth. You have a heart for sharing the gospel with the world and with those in your community. What a joy to see!

As I contemplated the call to become your pastor, I kept coming back to one of the questions in the back of the call documents, "Are there ministry opportunities you and your present congregation have not met? Is the Lord by this call leading you and your present congregation to be recommitted to each other and to meeting these opportunities together?" There are so many good things at your church I would love to be a part of, and yet, I believe God is calling me to stay and reinvest here. For this reason, I must decline the call to become your pastor.

I was challenged, strengthened, and reenergized by my time with you, and for that I thank you. While this is not the outcome you hoped for, I pray that God uses this time to challenge and strengthen you and prepare you for whatever is ahead. You are in my heart and in my prayers.

Pastor Phil Cook