

Dear Church,

I've now been your bridge pastor here at St. Paul for nearly two weeks, and I have some observations to share:

***You love your church!***

From day one, I've been impressed with your hospitality and faithfulness. You are dedicated to serving your community and your world, to worshipping God, and to loving your neighbors. You have not let a pastoral vacancy, congregational history, or a pandemic keep you from being church! *Thanks be to God for your ministry!*

***You have great leadership!***

St. Paul is fortunate to have good congregational leadership! I've experienced a lot of churches in my life, so I know good leaders when I meet them. Your church council, call committee, Sunday School and Confirmation guides, worship leaders, staff, volunteers, and so many others are all incredibly dedicated to keeping this ministry vital. *Thanks be to God for good leaders!*

***You put your faith into practice!***

Believing intellectually with our minds is important. But God also wants us to believe with our hearts and our hands! Many of you give generously of your time, talents, and treasures as a way to practice your faith. You practice the love of Christ by supporting local, national, and global ministries. And you look out for each other in times of hardship and crisis. *Thanks be to God for your love and faith.*

I thank God for you! Thank you for being Christ's light in the world.  
Pastor Christoph