



“Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching” ([1 Timothy 5:17](#)).

March 27, 2017

To the Council of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church,

This letter is to request council to consider conferring the honorary title of Pastor Emeritus of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church to Pastor Frederick J. Harms.

What is pastor emeritus?

The term pastor emeritus is used by a local church to honor a person whose lengthy ministry in that local church has been one of distinguished service. The designation recognizes an individual's retirement from a particular local church and from active ordained ministry. The honor is never an automatic one but rather is recognition of exceptional service.

What is the process?

Conferring this honor begins with the church council. Council creates a formal resolution, outlining the specific highlights of the retired pastor's ministry. It is important to include in the text of the resolution a description of the pastor's distinctive qualities that members continue to hold in high regard.

The resolution is then presented to a meeting of the congregation for their approval.

Following that action, a date is set for conferring the recognition within a worship service.

Points to consider:

It is important to note that sometimes when someone has served a local church with distinction over a long period of time, it can be difficult for both the person and the local church to sever functional ties. For this reason, the following should be taken into account:

- Preserve the cherished memories and on-going relationships of the pastor emeritus.
- Seek to inquire about and be concerned for the ongoing health and happiness of the pastor emeritus.
- Include the name of the pastor emeritus on church stationary, the church website, and other settings where such listing is appropriate.
- Invite the pastor emeritus to play a specific role in particular church experiences under the direction of the current pastor.
- Maintain the health and vitality of the pastoral office under the current pastor's leadership

In Conclusion:

Pastor Harms provided many years of distinguished and exceptional service to the St. Paul community. He has earned and is well suited to be conferred the honor of pastor emeritus.

Therefore, we request council to consider conferring the honorary title of Pastor Emeritus of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church to Pastor Frederick J. Harms.

Forever in Grace,

Rev. Justin Dittrich, Pastor
Cheryl Wiseman, Council President