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St. Luke's Episcopal Church

Press Release

St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Lebanon Calls Priest-in-Charge

LEBANON, PA (June 1, 2016)—St. Luke's Episcopal Church, S. 6th Street, Lebanon, today announced the call of The Reverend Dr. David Alan Zwifka to be its Priest-in-Charge for a term of three-years. The call of Fr. Zwifka comes after a several months long discernment process as part of its search for a new Rector.

Father Zwifka, a native of Western New York, began ordained ministry in 1980. He has served as a parish priest, diocesan administrator, and as a member of seminary and university faculties. He holds a doctoral degree in Canon Law (Church law) as well as degrees in history and theology. He is an alumnus of Houghton College (Houghton, NY), Christ the King Seminary (East Aurora, NY) and The Catholic University of America (Washington, DC).

As Priest-in-Charge, Father Zwifka will serve as priest and pastor of the only Episcopal parish in Lebanon County. In the practice of the Episcopal Church, a Priest-in-Charge is nearly indistinguishable from the office of Rector, except that it is for a definite period of time. At the conclusion of his term, the parish Vestry may invite Father Zwifka to become its permanent Rector.

In accepting the call, Fr. Zwifka noted: "My task as Priest-in-Charge is primarily to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, to guide people into a deeper relationship with God, and to help all realize that, like Christ, we are called to serve and not to be served. Christ calls us to gather all people into God's kingdom, especially the poor and those at the margins of our society. To this end, St. Luke's will remain a place where all are welcome. Above all, it will become a community that invites others to 'Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.'"

Located in downtown Lebanon, near the city's business district, the Lebanon Farmers' Market, and Good Samaritan Hospital, St. Luke's provides a place to seek, to learn, to pray, and to rest. Its beautiful church building is on the National Register of Historic Places and its Trinity Chapel, located in the Parish Hall offers a daytime place for quiet reflection. Members of its congregation come from Lebanon City, Cornwall, Annville, Myerstown, Mt. Gretna and beyond.

For Immediate Release

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In a letter to the congregation, St. Luke's Senior Warden, Beth Yocum, explained the unusual move to offer an interim pastor a more permanent position: "Our experience in clarifying our mission and our vision as a parish community over these last months has begun to show us the power of the Holy Spirit alive in our community in ways we may not have seen before. There is a real sense of excitement and a renewed hope for the future. . . . Our Vestry has agreed that the work we have earnestly begun under Father Zwifka's leadership must continue."

Founded in 1858, St. Luke's is one of the larger parishes of the Diocese of Bethlehem within the Episcopal Church, a member of the worldwide Anglican Communion. For more information about the mission and ministry of St. Luke's, visit www.stlukeslebanon.org.