

March 27, 2020

St. Petri Lutheran Church  
105 U.S. Highway 75  
Nielsville, MN, 56568

Secretary Chao,

St. Petri Lutheran Church partners with 3 other congregations forming a four-point parish called Peace Lutheran Parish. The Parish is served by one Pastor, John Jorgenson, who travels between congregations for worship, fellowship, funerals, weddings, and other coordinated events in the Parish using the Nielsville bridge. St. Petri Lutheran Church shares worship times with Salem Lutheran located just across the bridge in North Dakota: 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of the month worship is at Salem Lutheran, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays worship is at St. Petri.

Because of the closing of the Nielsville Bridge that joins these two congregations, Parishioners must drive through Climax, MN or Shelly, MN to get to services, adding time, mileage, and gas expense. When the bridge was open the trip from St. Petri to Salem was four miles; now the trip is 14 miles. Attendance is down because it is too far for some members from each congregation to travel because of muddy, snowy, and windswept roads, and many are on fixed incomes.

A group of women from Salem belong to the Town and Country Quilters that meet at St. Petri on a weekly basis from April through October. Because the bridge is closed, these ladies have the same concerns of time, gas, mileage.

Another concern is that members of both congregations have land on both sides of the river and support businesses in Nielsville. Farm equipment must now use either the Climax Bridge or the Shelly Bridge, adding increased time and cost that also affects the two congregations separated by the closed Nielsville Bridge.

With a Fire Station located in Nielsville, fire safety for Salem and its members who live near the church are dependent on Buxton, ND Fire Department, 12 to 15 miles Northwest of Salem. With the bridge closed, members are concerned that if they have a fire at the church or members homes, the Buxton Fire Department would not make it in time to save their homes or the church. Also, the insurance rates for them are bound to go up.

The members of both Salem and St. Petri pray every night for a new bridge and have done so for almost four years.

Thank you for considering a grant to build a new Bridge at Nielsville.

*Stephanie Kuntz*  
St. Petri Church