

A NOTE FROM PASTOR SCOTT

Saying Goodbye and Granting “Release” from Pastoral Role on April 7

On Sunday, February 18, I notified Church Council and other leaders of the church that I was resigning my position as Pastor of First Congregational Church. An email notifying church members and friends went out on Tuesday, February 20, along with a letter through the mail. I have received a call to serve the Community Church of Fontana. While I am excited about the opportunities of a new call, I am also very sad to be leaving this congregation.

Working with Council, and in conversation with Associate Conference Minister, Jane Anderson, we have agreed that April 7 will be my final Sunday with the congregation. This will allow me to finish Lenten season, Holy Week, and Easter Sunday responsibilities, arrange for coverage for things like Confirmation, and allow time for saying goodbye to members and friends of the church.

On Sunday, April 7, we will celebrate communion together one last time and we will release one another from the vows and commitments made three years ago at my installation. During worship, we will participate in the “Liturgy of Farewell” from the UCC Book of Worship. You will be asked, “Do you, the members and friends of First Congregational Church, release Scott McLeod from the duties of pastor?”. And, likewise, one of the questions addressed to me will be, “Do you, Scott McLeod, release this local church from turning to you and depending on you?”. This is an important part of saying goodbye.

These vows of release remind us that while our connections within the Church of Jesus Christ will never change, the nature of our bond will indeed undergo significant change; the vows mean that I will no longer be performing pastoral services for you, nor leading any worship services, nor discussing any church matters. The vows mean that you will not expect me to perform such services nor make such requests of me. The “release” will allow you to connect with the next minister that comes to serve your church and will allow me to connect with the members and friends of the Community Church of Fontana.

With the assistance of the Associate Conference Minister, you will move into an interim time in the coming months. The purpose of the upcoming interim time is to enable you, the members, to separate from me as your pastor, as well as to learn more about your own identity as a local congregation. I pray that you will be open to that interim time, that you will clarify your identity as a church, and be ready to accept and welcome a new minister when the time comes.

Saying goodbye is never easy. But I do find comfort in our shared faith, for I am confident and feel assured that God continues to be at work among all of you. God has plans for First Congregational Church in Port Washington and will never abandon you. Specific and concrete plans for the future may remain a little cloudy, but there is a future for this congregation, and God will continue to bless you. I will always pray for your continued success and abundant ministry in years to come.

Peace,
Scott