



February 5, 2017

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To the good people of Boehm's Church,

By the time you have received this letter, the public announcement will have already been made in Sunday worship. I have been appointed to serve Memorial UMC in Quarryville. My first Sunday in the pulpit is July 1, 2017. A successor has not been appointed to Boehm's yet.

Itinerancy (pastors changing churches) is part of who we are in the United Methodist Church going all the way back to John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. It is part of our "connectional" nature stressing that congregations are united in gospel ministry together.

As an ordained Elder I made a commitment to the itinerancy knowing full well what that means for me, my family, and the churches I serve. It is an important part of my call. And I believe it fits well with the United Methodist vision for lay-led ministries. I pray that I have been faithful to that call and vision.

The Staff-Parish Relations (SPR) committee is tasked with consulting with the District Superintendent (Rev. BK Chung) about the church's desired gifts and skills in a new pastor. SPR is in an advisory role only - the DS communicates that advice to the bishop and cabinet. Though I reported months ago that I prefer to stay at Boehm's, there is no guarantee that a pastor will get their first choice. The Bishop and Cabinet weigh all of this carefully with the needs of the mission field, then make each appointment.

The United Methodist Church is relatively unique in this approach. But I believe in it. Churches are free from the burden of a months-long search committee process to try to hire a new pastor. Pastors don't have to deal with other churches trying to recruit us away. Church members don't have to fear that another UM church is dangling a "plum pastorate" in front of their pastor, and they don't have to wonder if increasing salary will help them "stay competitive" to keep their pastor. We are in this together as a family of churches, and this system ensures that Boehm's Church will always have a pastor.

SEEING GENERATIONS RAISED

Once an appointment to Boehm's is made, SPR and I do the important work of preparing the congregation to receive and support the new pastor. I have confidence in your ability to do this important work. Almost six years ago you welcomed my family, prepared for my ministry, were gracefully patient with me, and were open to changes that might come. I am asking you to do the same once again.

We have important work to do together, you and I. We will fill important teams and volunteer rosters. We will tighten up our systems and help identify a handful of priorities in need of new pastoral guidance after the transition. And we will strengthen our adult education ministries. It swells my heart to imagine my successor sitting down at that first Church Council meeting and hearing *"Welcome, pastor, we're ready to get started together."*

I also look forward to the opportunities that SPR will create to say our goodbyes. Us Edens have so many cherished memories with you. The times to share them together, laugh together, and encourage one another onward are precious indeed.

Please pray, daily. Pray for my family, the SPR committee, and for the congregation. Please pray for the Bishop and the Cabinet in their discernment. Please pray for Pastor Shauna Ridge at Memorial UMC in her transition to Thorndale UMC. And especially please pray for your sisters and brothers at Memorial UMC .

Over the next five months I am enthusiastically YOUR pastor - so don't be shy about requesting prayer, notifying me of health concerns, or asking for ways you can serve through church ministry. Any questions or concerns you may have about the transition, however, should be directed to the Staff Parish Relations committee. This releases Amanda and I to focus on the work we must both do.

The grace and peace of Jesus Christ to each and every one of you,

Pastor Chris Eden