

From the Pastor's Desk

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end; they are new every
morning." Lamentations 3: 22-23

Brothers and Sister in Christ,

Endings are difficult. When I left my first church, it was rather sudden. I had three weeks to pack and say goodbye, all during the Advent and Christmas seasons. Our ending has been much longer, but that does not make it any less difficult. However, I have taken a vow to go where the bishops appoint me and I firmly believe in the itinerant system. In the words of our former bishops, Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi and Bishop Steiner Ball, "One of the blessings of the United Methodist Church is the itinerant system. It is a blessing because it is consistent with the biblical model of the deployment of preachers and those who oversaw the order of the church". Additionally, it provides for strong, Holy Spirit led leadership to every congregation and "for the opportunity to experience the giftedness of pastors" whom they may not have called, but who are the right person at the right time for them.

But, in order for itinerancy to work, pastors must leave their current appointment and all the duties there in order start to begin their next appointment well. After the moving truck pulls away from the parsonage in June, I am no longer your pastor. Pastor Denise will serve you for all weddings, funerals, special occasions, and visitations along with each and every Sunday. But it also means that our relationship will change. In order to bless your new pastor and make room for you to grow in your relationship with her, there has to be a disconnecting, which includes not engaging on social media, texting, making phone calls, etc. We make such a clear cut, as United Methodists, because we know those special and painful times are often when the pastoral relationship blossoms, and we want to give the new pastor every opportunity to bless and serve you. This is hard work, I acknowledge that. And it is even harder in a time when we are so intimately connected through social media and our phones. But I firmly believe that God has gifted you with Pastor Denise and I would never want to hinder her ministry with you.

One of the parts of the theological beliefs that undergirds the appointment process is that as pastors we are moved for a missional purpose - cabinet covers each pastor and congregation in prayer, and we are moved based off of the needs of the congregation and the gifts that we bring. May you receive Pastor Denise's gifts and celebrate them - knowing that she is being sent here for a specific purpose, covered in prayer, and called by God.

"Goodbyes" are hard, but they are followed by "hellos". It has been my privilege to serve you over the last three years. I leave, trusting that you will bless Pastor Denise as you have blessed me.

Sincerely,
- Pastor Michelle