

To Friends and Members of St. Andrew's UMC,

One of the things I don't enjoy about the United Methodist system of moving pastors around is saying goodbye. Each appointment I have served has been dear to me in a particular way and leaving them was like leaving one of my limbs behind. St. Andrew's was my fifth appointment, so at this point I'm all out of limbs! Methodist pastoral transitions are hard.

I will grieve as I leave St. Andrew's. I've put a goodly amount of sweat, tears, and prayers into my eight years here. Some things have gotten checked off of the to-do list, and others will be left undone. Isn't that always the case? Part of my job is to be at peace with that, to ask for your forgiveness where it is needed, and trust God with the rest. Thank you for the honor of serving as your pastor.

My last Sunday in worship with you will be June 9th. I will, however, remain the pastor appointed to St. Andrew's until July 2nd, moving day. In between those two dates I will still be around, but I will not be in worship. Julie and I have a lot of work to do to get ready to move and we will need that time not only to pack, sell the house, and find a new place to live; but, I will also need the time to gear down a little bit. On July 2nd, Sherri Barnes will become the appointed pastor of St. Andrew's. She, too, will need some time to adjust to a new place. Her first Sunday with you will be July 14th.

On my last Sunday in worship, June 9th, I will formally release you from relating to me as your pastor, and you will formally release me to go and serve elsewhere. As at a wedding, sometimes these liturgies get zipped over in the moment without reflection as to what they really mean. So here's the practical part of what that service will mean. On July 2nd, Sherri Barnes will be your pastor. I will no longer offer members of St. Andrew's pastoral counsel, advice, or leadership. I will not return to conduct weddings, funerals, or eat at the delicious shrimp boil. Those privileges are reserved for your pastor. The Lord is sending Sherri Barnes to St. Andrew's, and I do not want to stand in the way of that. I would covet your prayers as I go to Skyland UMC. Any notes of encouragement you might send, especially if they are written in small letters on twenty-dollar bills, will be greatly appreciated.

I've gotten some of the same questions since the announcement went out. Here are some items people are asking about.

Q: What's Julie going to do? A: Julie is stepping down from her position at Myers Park Presbyterian. She will take a little time off to help us get settled, then start a job search in the Asheville area.

Q: Are you going to sell your house? A: Yes. Interested?

Q: Do you have a place to live in Asheville? A: No. We will probably rent somewhere initially. We need our place to sell before we buy anything else.

Q: How are the kids? A: The kids are good. Hank is living in Chapel Hill before moving to Seattle in August. Lucy will be living with us through the move.

As hard as transitions like this may be, I humbly take heart in the fact that these transitions can be better for us than anything we could plan for ourselves. I'm reminded of Ephesians 3:20 (NRSV) *Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine.* Change is often how the Lord works more than we can ask or imagine. These possibilities are what you will get to discover with Rev. Barnes, and I will get to discover with Skyland UMC.

Thank you for receiving me as your pastor. Receive my blessing to you as I take my leave.

Peace,
Dan