

November 20, 2022



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

It's with mixed feelings that I share with you my plans to retire from pastoral ministry, and as the pastor of Buffalo United Methodist Church, effective June 30, 2023. Although that's still seven months away, it's necessary for me to share this news with you today in order to give our church, and the Minnesota Annual Conference, adequate time to prayerfully and thoughtfully consider who it is that God might be preparing as your next pastor.

I say my feelings are mixed, because even as I have been anticipating the joy of embarking on new adventures in my life, I am also grieving the end of what has been an incredible journey of faith with you over what will have been nine years of ministry with BUMC.

So much has happened in those nine years. We've welcomed new people into our church family. We've celebrated weddings, Faith Stepping Stones, and new ministries. We built a new park for our community and launched new outreach ministries in it. We've also said goodbye to friends we've loved, discontinued ministries that had run their course, and navigated the unprecedented years of the Covid pandemic. There has been much laughter, plenty of tears, occasional disappointment, and some disagreement, but always the grace of Jesus Christ has remained for us to cling to when times were tough.

Thank you for the many ways you have strengthened my faith and made me a better pastor. I can't imagine a more fulfilling community of faith in which to invest these last years of my pastoral calling. I ask for your forgiveness for the times I may have let you down. It's not those moments that I'll carry with me into retirement, so much as the joy-filled friendships I've shared with so many of you over the years as we've served Christ together.

In the months that lie before us, I am not planning on sitting idle. The needs of this world and the communities around us continue, just as God's call to ministry on our church continues, even as we prepare for your next pastor. The annual appointment cycle for new pastors typically begins in January with a Cabinet retreat, although some of the groundwork for that retreat has already begun. After the Bishop and Cabinet select a new pastor, there will be a consultation meeting with our Staff-Parish Relations Team to affirm the missional fitness of the appointment. Once that happens, and the incoming pastor has notified the church they're currently serving that they'll be leaving, the Staff-Parish Relations Team will announce the new appointment to you in worship and with a letter.

I ask that you pray for our church and the new pastor who will be coming. Pray for me and for Jana as well as we prepare for this new phase of our life together. I'm looking forward to spending more time with my family and further developing ways to share my passion for wildlife photography. Jana and I are planning to continue living in the area, but regretfully, it will be necessary for us to find a new church home upon retirement. We'll miss you all so much, but at least we'll have seven months for a proper "Minnesota Goodbye!"

In God's grace,

Pastor Bill Reinhart