



“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

Hebrews 13:8 NRSV

March 21, 2021

To the people of Adnah United Methodist Church

Dear Ones,

**Greetings in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ!**

It was announced in worship today that you will be receiving a new pastor. I will be with you through June 30th and the Rev. Ben Herlong will be your pastor beginning on July 1st. I want you to know that I have thoroughly enjoyed being in ministry with you. I also want to tell you a little about my decision.

On December 13 of 2020, I submitted my *Advisory Response of Pastor* form to the Bishop and Cabinet indicating a preference to be appointed to another charge. The form itself uses the language of preference. I had two options to choose from, both of which began with the statement: “I am available for appointment either to this charge or to another charge...” the difference is in what follows. The first option available to me was to check “I prefer to be appointed to this charge.” The second was “I prefer to be appointed to another charge.” I checked the second box. And so, I was put on the move list that the Cabinet consults as it assists the Bishop in making appointments. I want you to know that it would be untrue to say that I had a preference to no longer be your pastor.

As my fall consultation with our current DS drew near, I became more and more aware of being called by God to another place. In October, our friend, the late Rev. John Hipp, was laid to rest in the Adnah cemetery. Right before the graveside service began, I was asked to give the benediction. As I spoke, I realized that the feeling of being called away from this charge was real. I became aware of something that, for me, was quite beautiful. The Rev. John Hipp was the District Superintendent who had me sent to Adnah. When I met with him for my annual consultation in the Fall of 2010, his first words to me (even before “hello”) were: “you’re

moving.” He then told me that he had a place he wanted to send me but he couldn’t tell me where. In the summer of 2011, I was sent to the place John wanted me, Adnah.

John had served this church in the 80’s. I spoke about that at the graveside service and I realized then that my season here really was coming to a close. The one who was responsible for my being the pastor appointed to Adnah had passed on. Standing beside John’s grave I felt as if a door were closing.

What I want you to know is that I indicated a preference for another appointment not because I preferred to no longer be your pastor but because I prefer to be faithful to God’s call. My time with you has been a real gift to me. I am incredibly grateful that we have shared 10 years of faithful ministry together. I have enjoyed loving and serving God with you. I have enjoyed loving and serving our neighbors with you. I am thankful to have known you and thankful for who you are.

I thank Tom Bowen for making the announcement today. I feel relieved that I no longer must bear the burden of keeping a secret from people whom I dearly love. As I write this to you, I am grateful to remember that Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. We will be going through a season of change together, but Christ who does not change will be with us and goes before us.

I love you all.

Under Christ’s mercy,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pastor David". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.