



Central Congregational United Church of Christ

Dear Central,

Let me start by saying I cherish the love and creativity we have brought to the many beginnings we have seen in the past year...our adoption of a Just Peace covenant, our deepening relationship with the Interfaith Children's Movement, our engagement with Georgia Interfaith Power and Light... just to name a few! The recent announcement of departure by our beloved Senior Minister, Scott Cox, while difficult for us to hear, is also part of our journey of beginnings.

Amidst the pause to envelope Scott in loving support for his decision, Council began the activity of attending to our congregation. We immediately focused our efforts on compiling and refining plans for three separate, but intertwined initiatives outlined below, and formed a Pastoral Transition Subcommittee to do just that:

1. Conduct a loving and appreciative release of Rev. Scott's responsibilities and a celebration of his time here with us.

On Sunday, November 26th, we will conduct a Litany of Release for Scott, followed by a celebration and farewell luncheon. More exciting details to come!

2. Assess needs and ensure that Central has the pastoral ministry and staff resources we need once Scott departs at the end of next month.

We worked collaboratively with our very capable staff to understand what they need to forge ahead on their committed pathways. Rev. Thomas will continue his preaching rotation as well as his vast array of current responsibilities at Central while we also engage support from congregational and local area ministers for church services and pastoral care. A personnel sub-committee will manage critical executive and administrative duties.

3. Assess our congregational needs and available financial resources and review our options for selecting our next senior minister. Those options ranged from seeking a new Settled Minister, an Intentional Interim Minister or a Designated Term Minister, each of which serve distinct and diverse sets of goals.

On October 8th, Council approved the recommendation of the Pastoral Transition subcommittee to pursue selection of a Designated Term Minister for 24 months. The role of a Designated Term Minister is to accomplish specific tasks outlined by the congregation. Central's specific requests are to empower us to complete development of our multi-year strategic/financial plan and stay laser focused on its rigorous execution. We anticipate arrival our Designated Term Minister by April 2024.



Central Congregational United Church of Christ

Our goal over the next couple of years will be to achieve a pace of transformation that allows discernment of the long-term Central to which we will invite our next Senior Minister. Some of this work has been accomplished over the past few years, and we do not anticipate any meaningful departures from our core mission of being an open and affirming congregation in pursuit of our Just Peace Covenant.

This time and process of transition will be conducted in the spirit of Central's energized outreach – the re-opening of Plymouth Harbor, our embrace of technology, our attention to children, and intentional welcome and programming for 20s and 30s adults. Embracing our continuing ethos, in short: Open, Progressive, Christian, we look ahead to all that yet may grow, even surprise us.

I want to acknowledge the tremendous level of activity within Central's Council, Boards, and Committees that began when Rev. Scott shared the news of his departure and continues still. The Pastoral Transition Subcommittee consists of myself, Eric Lucas, Evelyn Brewer, Michael Ares, Gracie Theobald and Dave Spence. We were guided by the competent hands of our Southeast Conference Associate Minister, Heather Fosburgh. The sub-committee leading the process for selection of our Designated Term Minister is Allen Moye, Makesha Spence, and Martha Wetzel. Issues for the executive and administrative personnel sub-committee will be managed through myself and Marlee Givens.

As a reminder, Council serves as representatives of the whole congregation and we value your thoughts. You can reach out to anyone on Council or email me, Denise Chiavetta, directly at chiavetta@bellsouth.net.

Thank you all for your patience and support as we continue our journey in Christ.