



## St. John's United Church of Christ

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January 2022

Dear St. John's Family,

As a new year begins, the time has come to share with you my plan to retire as St. John's Sr. Pastor on June 15, 2022. Little did I know that when I pulled into the church parking lot on Monday morning, June 2, 1980 ~ fresh out of seminary, newly ordained and eager to begin as your Associate Pastor ~ I would become St. John's Sr. Pastor and have the unique privilege of living out my call to ministry among you, St. John's wonderfully motley crew!

Because you have claimed a place in my heart which you will hold forever, there is a profound sadness that comes with sharing these plans, yet I feel the time is right and I am eager for the possibilities that lie ahead as I look forward to life with a different pace and the opportunity to spend treasured time with the family I love.

For a multitude of reasons, I believe St. John's is well positioned to face the future. The strength of the church's current staff and the leadership of St. John's members have carried the church through what has been, without question, one of the most challenging times in the history of both St. John's and the world. Over the course of the past many months, the compassionate spirit of solidarity you have demonstrated, along with your generosity and commitment to being and working together in community, have made it possible for us to continue to do God's good work in ways never before imagined. St. John's is also well situated to attract highly capable and well-qualified candidates to fill the position of Sr. Pastor as you embark on a search in the months ahead.

Regarding the months ahead: leadership from the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference will be working with St. John's leadership to identify an Interim Sr. Pastor to journey with you as a Search Committee is formed, viable candidates are pursued and interviewed, and ultimately as you vote to call St. John's next Sr. Pastor. Between now and June 15<sup>th</sup>, we will have the opportunity to bring closure to this journey we have engaged in together, and I will look forward to sharing with you my hopes and dreams as we laugh and cry, reminisce and remember, and as we look to God for guidance and direction each step of the way.

For the privilege of being part of many of your lives for 42 years; for the love, nurture and support you have offered to both me and my family; and for trusting me as your spiritual leader on the oftentimes tumultuous journey that is real life, I am thankful beyond words. With God's help, may you continue the good work we have begun together, shining a light so lovely that others who see it will want with all their hearts to know its source!

With Deep Gratitude and Much Love,

Rev. Dr. Susan C. Bertollette