



## St. John's United Church of Christ

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August 4, 2022

Beloved St. John's members and friends,

It is with deep, deep sadness that I write to you to let you know of the passing of our beloved Rev. Sue Bertolette. Thursday morning, August 4, surrounded by loved ones and covered by the prayers of many, she entered into eternal rest and fullness of life, held, body and soul, in the loving hands of the one who created her.

Though we, as a community, have been journeying with Sue throughout her long cancer journey and throughout her time in Hospice care, the loss is still great and the sadness profound. Rev. Sue held you, the members and friends of St. John's, close to her heart, and it felt important to share this critical information with you promptly, clearly, and with great care.

I urge you, my friends, to hold and share this information with that same tender care. As a church family, please reach out to one another to offer your comfort, support, and love as you grieve the loss of a beloved pastor, teacher, leader, and friend.

The family has found great strength in the outpouring of love and support that all of you have offered during this critical time. Your prayers have made all the difference over the years, but especially over the past few weeks. As we know, prayer strengthened Sue throughout her ministry and her long and difficult cancer journey. I know she felt you surrounding her in her final days, and now, I am counting on your prayers of comfort and peace to continue for her family as they navigate this tremendous loss. As you continue to hold them and be the warm, loving community of St. John's, please call, text, email, and message the family with great mindfulness and discretion.

**There will be two opportunities to greet the family with calling times at St. John's on both Thursday evening, August 11<sup>th</sup>, from 6-8pm, and then again before the service from 9-10:30am on Friday, August 12<sup>th</sup>. The service to celebrate Sue's life will take place on Friday August 12<sup>th</sup> at 11am in the sanctuary at St. John's.** Be mindful that, beloved as Sue was, the crowd gathering at church will be quite large. Please plan accordingly and offer grace to the family who will do their best to greet as many people as possible while also attending to their own needs of the day.

My friends, hope in God's promises is what sustained Rev. Sue until the end and what she gracefully and faithfully stepped into as she left us this morning. It is that same hope and those same promises that we cling to now, knowing that we do not do so alone and, as Rev. Sue always said, "trusting that God has hands large enough and strong enough to hold each one of us." May it be so as we grieve and remember.

With love,

Rev. Addie Stong