



First Church in Cambridge, Congregational, United Church of Christ

April 4, 2024

Dear Friends,

Now that we are through Lent, Holy Week, and an especially joyous Easter Sunday, I want to share a follow up to my February 4 farewell letter with more information about what the next few months, and beyond, will look like for me and for you.

My last Sunday in worship will be June 9. I hope to see many of you there! At that time, we will be joined by UCC conference staff, who will guide us through a ritual “release” of the vows that I took when I was first installed as your pastor. Our leaders are also planning an after-church farewell reception. I will then spend much of the rest of June packing up my office, organizing files for my successor, and saying goodbye to our beloved staff. I’m also excited for a 5-day conference at the end of June led by several local tribal elders and our friends at the Upstander Project about indigenous peoples and lands. My last day “on the job” will be June 30, and my family and I will be moving out of the parsonage in July.

To be clear, after June, I will no longer be available to you as I have been – via cell, text, or email. We won’t be keeping in touch about what’s going on in your lives or about church-related decisions and happenings. This is a matter of professional ethics and is part of my ordination vow to leave as clearly and cleanly as possible. This clarity is necessary so that you can form a new bond with future clergy and so that I (maybe one day!) can be fully present with a new congregation. Such clear boundary setting may seem unnecessarily harsh, and as much as I wish things could be different, I can’t imagine another way to honor the “letting go” that this transition needs to be for us all.

I remain enormously grateful to our staff and church leaders, especially Moana and Phil (Moderator and Vice Moderator), and Casey and Leslie (Co-Chairs of Deacons) and to our Interim Search team and Leavetaking and Farewell team! If you have feelings, questions or concerns about my leaving and what it means for you, please don’t hesitate to reach out to any of them. In addition, I’d love to see you, say thank you, and hear whatever may be on your heart or mind. As of late April, I’m opening my schedule for as many farewell 1:1 and small group



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meetings with you as possible. If you'd like to find a time to meet with me before I go, please visit my Calendly site.

Several of you have asked what comes next for me and Nancy. I can tell you that Nancy and I have found a condo on the Cape in Brewster, nearby where my mother lives year-round. Moving out of the parsonage and the hustle and bustle of Harvard Square will be a major adjustment, but one we are both excited to make. Nancy's hybrid job as a development writer at Mass General will allow her to commute to Boston a few days per month. I'll also be making regular trips back to continue teaching and mentoring at Harvard Divinity School and for ongoing hybrid work with the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative.

I've mostly built my life around my job these past 25 years. Moving to the Cape, catching some midweek sunsets and experiencing what it's like to have more evenings and weekends to myself is part of a move to start building my job around my life. I also want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the unexpected gift of an external grant that allows me time in these coming months to focus on writing, building relationships, and planning next steps in my racial justice work. My recent experiences have confirmed a new "way opening" for me, and one that I trust will evolve and allow me to expand some of the work we began together here at First Church. I'm excited to see what emerges next. Please pray for us!

My heart continues to be filled with bittersweet grief and so much gratitude for all of you and for these last 20 years. I have faith that God will continue to show me and this uniquely vibrant community of a faith a beautiful way forward.

Dan