



Vestal United Methodist Church

January 16, 2022

To my friends and partners in ministry and mission at Vestal UMC:

I request your prayers as I look toward a major transition in my life. I have been a full-time pastor for 38 years, and have served here at Vestal United Methodist for 21 years. I have made the decision to retire from full-time ministry, effective July 1st of this year. Retirement will enable me to spend more time with my son, Nathan, who is getting married at the end of next July to a wonderful woman named Santana, who has a 6-year-old son, Maddox. Retirement will also enable me to shift my focus of ministry to mission both in Haiti and elsewhere in the world. I plan to live part-time in the United States renting a home near Nathan, and part-time in the country of Haiti, where I am building a house with a friend.

In the next 5½ months, I will continue as Senior Pastor here at Vestal UMC, and I look forward to serving God in ministry with you during that time. Please keep in your prayers our District Superintendent, Nancy Adams, and our Bishop and the rest of the cabinet, along with our Staff-Parish Relations Committee as they work together for the appointment of a new senior pastor beginning July 1st.

In many ways, the years have flown by. You have been there with me through many fun and wonderful times. And we have been together during some of the most challenging times of our lives, as well. I have celebrated as your children and grandchildren have been born, baptized, graduated, and married – and have shed tears beside you at the loss of your loved ones. We have faced and overcome many difficulties, and through it all we have never failed to see the incredible ways that God always provides. I cannot begin to find words to thank you for your support over the last couple of years during these most difficult times of ministry in this pandemic, and during the overwhelming loss of my son, Bryan, and both of my parents.

Together we have been stronger, and have accomplished more than we could ever imagine. This is the unfailing promise of God. You will always be in my thoughts and prayers, and I know – as over the last 191 years – this community and our world will see and experience the love, grace, and hope of God through Vestal United Methodist Church in the years to come.

May God bless you, as you are a blessing,

Pastor Mike



Dear Members and Friends of Vestal UMC,

Now that you are aware of Pastor Mike's retirement plans, I want to assure you that we will have a new senior Pastor come July 1, 2022. You may have forgotten or may not even be aware of the appointment process of the United Methodist Church. It has been over 20 years since a new Senior pastor has been appointed to Vestal.

In the Methodist church the bishop of the conference annually appoints pastors to their charge to begin each July 1st. So, actually Mike has been appointed over 20 times to Vestal. This year the bishop will appoint a new senior pastor for Vestal.

The process has already started. The district superintendent has reviewed the church profile report which is prepared regularly by the SPRC. This report describes the church on many levels and what its plans and needs are. The SPRC has met with the district superintendent to review the report and further discuss what the church may need in terms of future leadership.

The district superintendent then takes all the information she has gathered to the bishop and his cabinet, which is largely made up of all the district superintendent's from around the conference. The bishop, with input from the cabinet, then prayerfully discerns who they think will best serve as the next senior pastor for Vestal. When they reach that decision, the district superintendent will inform us, and the bishop will make the appointment effective July 1, 2022.

Barry Biddle
Chair, Vestal UMC Staff-Parish Relations Committee