

Greetings all,

Well, this is it. The final edition of Midweek.

It may continue or may continue under another name, but this is the final time I will work to organize my thoughts, with much God-help, to offer you encouragement and comfort and perhaps just a nudge to keep being God's love. Even though I will not be writing to you on a weekly basis and preparing weekly sermons and planning worship for you, you will remain in my thoughts and prayers. I covet your prayers as I transition into this new and unfamiliar stage of life.

There is so much I could say. There is so much I simply cannot put into words...and I am a word person. So let me keep it simple. Thank you. Thank you for allowing me to offer spiritual guidance and be present with you during those challenging times: especially those intimate family times like birth and baptism, death and funeral planning and burials, and sickness and surgery and loss on many levels. Thank you for your willingness to seek me out for conversation and healing and prayer and a renewed trust in God's guiding Spirit. It has been a privilege to journey with you. The memories of all we have shared are overwhelming. Eight years is long time.

Monday when I walked several laps in the sanctuary, I pictured each of you in your regular spot. And I prayed as I walked, for you and your family. I know some of you reading this have not been here for some time. Still, I have a general idea where you usually sit. I also remembered and celebrated our recent saints, those whose lives we celebrated as they transitioned to life eternal. Those memories included, Winnie Smith, Robert Shandy, Sarah Clemmons, Kenneth Cochran, John Reber, Rex Ford, Lester Zimmerman, Hal Cordry, Bill Samuelson, Lila Zimmerman, Bob Badenoch, Sharon Huffman and Al Camblin. There were others. Several of your family members and friends who were not members here were also part of the work I did, especially during the pandemic as we celebrated their lives at gravesides and in two cases funeral homes. It is such an intimate time with so many shared stories. What a privilege it was.

There was also much joy that was celebratory in a lighter way. Certainly the wedding of Brenda Price and Bob Clelland was one such event. Also, the wedding of Christi and Jon Hardesty's daughter Collene to Alex which was at a KC venue. I cannot forget the joy of the renewal of vows for Kem and Sharla Cooper as they celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary. We talked about it together just last week. Perhaps the greatest joy for me is that of officiating a baptism. It feels especially joyful in a deeply spiritual way. I say, "May the Holy Spirit work within you, that being born of water and Spirit you will grow to be a disciple." And, each of you present that day, promises to help them...often tiny little ones, grow in their faith.

This has been quite a journey. God was profoundly present with us through it all. How I wish the Covid-19 pandemic had not separated us for what was a little more than a year. How I wish it had not lingered. How I wish so many had not lost their lives. I am grateful that for the most part, we continued on. And although several of you were very ill with the virus, you and we together survived.

It has left us scarred and scared. We are not the same as we were prior to March of 2020. Much of the world is not. My prayer is that Shawnee Heights UMC will

use this change in pastoral leadership as an opportunity to grow closer to God and one another. This can be an opportunity to embrace the change and reinvigorate the way we do ministry. What an opportunity SHUMC and Berryton UMC have to work in shared ministry with Pastor Annie's leadership.

You will remain in my prayers. We have accomplished much. Yet, I know God is not finished with any of us yet. May we grow more curious and more interested in reaching out to those without a church home, those who are convinced the church is irrelevant, and those who have been harmed by the church and people who claim to be Christians. May we remember the church does not exist for us, but for those who have not yet risked connecting or taking the bold step to walk through our doors. We are to be God's love for everyone.

After Sunday, I will no longer be your pastor. I am grateful for the eight years we shared together. Keep being God's love.

Stumbling forward into the next great adventure,
confident of God's love for us all,

Barb

Coming Up:

Worship this Sunday, June 11th is based on Matthew 28: 16-20
The sermon is titled, "No Recipe, Few Ingredients."

A reception follows worship.

Sunday, June 18th is Father's Day.

Bob Resnik is preaching. The scripture is Genesis 12: 1-9
The sermon is titled, "A Change is Coming."

Noodle Making is June 23-25.

Sunday, June 25th

Don Stewart is preaching. The scripture is Romans 12: 9-13 using the NIV
The sermon is titled, "The Good, The Bad and The Not So Bad."

July 2nd. Pastor Annie's first Sunday **Worship Time Changes to 11:00**

July 9th: A Pot-luck lunch, following worship to greet Annie,
her husband Jason and daughter Eva