

**To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven.
(Ecclesiastes 3:1)**

April 21, 2021

Dear Friends & Members of Wayzata Community Church,

Earlier this week at the April Council meeting, Rev. Dr. John Ross shared with Council that after much prayerful discernment, he believes God is calling him at this time to retire from pastoral ministry. For the past 17 years, Wayzata Community Church has been richly blessed by the passion, love, vision, humor and energy that John has poured into his ministry and our faith community. Under John's leadership, WCC committed to a vibrant camp ministry, spiritual formation for all age groups, a successful building expansion, \$500,000 to affordable housing in Plymouth, and growth in our mission and outreach programs locally and internationally. John inspired us with meaningful worship, encouraged us in our times of need, led us with enthusiasm and faith, and cared for us in the ups and downs of our lives.

While we lament that John's time with us is coming to an end, we are joyful that he will have new opportunities to share his ministry and talents with the world. John's faithful ministry among us has prepared us for this next season of church life at WCC. We are very appreciative that John informed us of his intention to retire at the end of the year so we can carefully plan for this leadership change.

We are blessed by the leadership and wisdom of Rev. Danielle Jones, who has been integral in our transition planning discussions to date. Our Church Council and HR Committee will nominate a search committee in the near future to begin the recruitment process. Our transition planning efforts benefit greatly from the strategic planning our Council initiated last fall with Rev. Tod Bolsinger from Fuller Seminary. The outputs from this strategic process have already given us valuable insights into the core values of our congregation, and what WCC needs as we prepare for the future. We believe God will bring forth new things in and among us as we journey together to fulfill our call to "inspire the world with the inclusive love of Jesus."

Here are some details regarding next steps:

- ***Are we going to begin the hiring process right away?***
Yes. We are fortunate that lay leaders and clergy have been working since last fall to develop a strategic plan for WCC. As that work continues, it will help inform what WCC needs in pastoral leadership as we live out our mission in a changing world. We will keep you informed as this process unfolds.
- ***Are we hiring an interim minister?***
Since John will be with us for this transition, we do not anticipate hiring an interim minister at this time. Should that assessment change, we will inform the congregation and begin that search.



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- ***How long will it take to hire new clergy?***
Once a search committee has been formed, we anticipate it will take at least six months, and likely more, to conduct the search and a few more months for the transition.
- ***When will we celebrate John's retirement?***
We will not let John retire without a celebration of thanksgiving and appreciation for what the Ross family has meant to our church. Watch for information for this event to be held later in the year.

Please pray for John as he wraps up his 30-year career in pastoral ministry and please pray for our church as we determine together where God is inviting us to grow and serve in this next season of life and ministry as a community.

The upcoming months will be a liminal time for our congregation – as we await the end of John's leadership and prepare for new leadership at WCC. Together, we will pray, reflect, reaffirm our faith, and dream for the future of our incredible faith community. We move forward with full confidence in God's plans for us.

Sincerely,

Meg Good, Moderator 2021-22

Mark Palmer, Moderator 2020-21