

May 23, 2016

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I feel I must confess I am feeling more anxious than usual. I realize that this will be my last letter to you for four months. There is a very real part of me that does not want to go – changes will happen while I am absent. You will not be the same people you are when I leave you, and, conversely I will be changed. Life happens, events in our lives help mold us – as the Apostle Paul would say, “gives us character” so that we grow stronger in faith and our faith-filled living.

And, yet, I know my level of exhaustion. I know I need a break. I did not work this hard when I was earning six figures! At least three days a week I have 12 to 13 hour work days and for the past several months I have either worked Friday or Saturday or both days. I never knew ministry would be this challenging. And yet, there is nothing in this world that I find more fulfilling than ministry at Bethany. I have been blessed beyond measure.

I know Elder Peter Pagerey will do wonderful work bringing the Word to Bethany for the month of June. Peter is a long time member of First Church in Albany. He has served on their Consistory and as their Elder Delegate to Classis. I also know that you will be carefully guided by Rev. Glenn Van Oort in July, August, and September. You already know him well and probably cherish his deeply spiritual and down-to-earth leadership in worship. God has been good and faithful to us by placing smart, compassionate people in our path.

Although Bethany will have strong worship leadership, governance of Bethany lies with your Board of Elders. You have called them to their leadership roles and you have taken a vow to follow their instructions. You know they love Bethany as you do. I don't believe there is a mean bone in any of the three! There will be much work to be done in my absence – The Strawberry Festival, Brooks BBQ, Home-Coming. These are all efforts that we enjoy doing together. A sense of camaraderie and joy working with our brothers and sisters always seems to evolve. Be encouraged to participate as fully as possible.

And yes, we even have a new Office Assistant, Carla D. She will be working in the office on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 to 12:30. If you want something in the Sunday bulletin please, please, send it to her via email at: bethany.info@verizon.net Or leave your neatly handwritten announcement on her desk by Tuesday. This is so that Carla can figure out the line spacing on her draft copy that she sends out on Wednesday afternoon for proof-reading. Carla will be printing the bulletins early on Thursday so that she can have them folded by the time she leaves.

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So many details ... I know as hard as I am trying there will be something that I have forgotten. That is where Grace comes into play, my friends.

Know that I love you as I have loved no other. I look forward to seeing many of you on August 14 when Bethany Family and Friends come to my home in West Sand Lake to picnic and play.

I will continue to pray for each of you as I hope you continue pray for me.

Pastor Peggy