



Greetings St. John's

As we enter Holy Week, we take this time for reflection on Christ's journey to the cross. We walk with gratitude and appreciation for all that was given for us and the ultimate sacrifice. I find it no coincidence that I reach out to you this week to inform you that Pastor Erin has been put up for call as the Associate Pastor of a congregation in Arizona. If approved on the May 1st vote, Pastor Erin will be leaving St. John's at the end of June. Her letter to the congregation is on the other side.

While many feelings have moved through me since I learned of this development, one that keep resurfacing in me is excitement. Transition can be challenging, but the silver lining is beginning new and charting a fresh course. Pastor Erin has been an incredible gift to our congregation. Her energy has lifted us, her thoughts have challenged us, her love has comforted us. I know this is an exciting time for her as she looks forward to her new journey. This is also an exciting time for us. As we move forward with the call process, we have the opportunity to find the next dynamic leader who will forge a new path for St. John's. I know we are in great hands with Pastor Bruce stepping up in this time of transition.

I'm reminded of when I joined St. John's. Pastor Rammy Lybrand welcomed us with open arms and 6 months later, transitioned to another call. I felt many feelings then as I do now but realize that the church is not a pastor or a building. St. John's is the love of family and I know that feeling is very much alive in all of us. To Pastor Erin, we say Thank You. St. John's is in a better place because of your gifts and hard work. You are a shining star who will do amazing things and we are grateful and blessed that our paths crossed.

As we Canoe the Mountains together, I am comforted by Psalm 32:8 "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you".

This is a time of change and transition and you will have questions. I encourage you to reach out to your Church Council and invite you to attend the Lunch with the Bishop and Synod Staff on May 1st as we hear more about the call process.

Yours in Christ,

Chad Dingman
Council President



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*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.
Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take." —Proverbs 3:5–6*

It is with deep sadness and full confidence that I write this letter to the St. John's Family. On April 10th my name was released to a Congregation in Arizona, and on May 1st they will be voting to call me as their Associate Pastor. If the vote is yes, I will accept the call and my last day at St. John's will be June 26.

There is deep sadness because I love you. St. John's has been so patient and loving as I have learned how I lead in ministry, how I Pastor a church. You have embraced my energy, my quirkiness and my desire to make our faith in Jesus real as we learn and grow together. We have not always agreed, but I feel we have loved and been faithful. You all have touched my heart caring for me and my father. You have let me into your celebrations of Baptism and allowed me to care for you during the death of loved ones. We have laughed, cried, been exhausted, and exasperated together. You have changed me, and I am sad to leave you.

Yet, with full confidence I know it is right for me to leave. What the future holds for St. John's is beyond my gift set. My gifts have always laid in finding peace in chaos, putting the pieces of a puzzle together, challenging what has been done and question if it is still what needs to be done. These gifts were needed during the time of pandemic, during staffing changes and as we look towards the possibilities of what is next. Now it is time for someone else to come and lead this family. In these past months I have experienced what being a Lead Pastor can be like, and although I can do it, I realize that I am not called to do it. I have always sensed my call to be a partner, an Associate. It has always been my call and sometimes the location changes. In leaving St. John's at this time, it allows for lots of new possibilities for the Spirit to work.

The future of St. John's is bright and I have full trust in the Spirit. We have laid the foundation with the Strategic Plan and the Spirit is moving, bringing more groups to campus, growing the family, bringing new giftedness to worship, and securing the future with dreams. The leadership is excited and invigorated, reading together how to lead the church in this new and creative times. St. John's is ready for its next Shepherd. Someone with vision, who understands the past and can dream of a future, who can build what God has envisioned for St. John's. I have been part of creating a solid foundation and now it is time to bring in the next level of leadership. And you, as the body of St. John's, who are resilient, faithful and strong, will continue to trust in God.

When I do funerals, as some of you have experienced, I say, "whatever you are feeling right now is the right way to feel." For some of you this may be a shock, others may have seen it coming. Some may be frustrated, disappointed, angry, or feeling abandoned. Some may be relieved. All of those are honest feelings to have, and we will hold space for each other to feel those feelings.

Thank you, St. John's. It truly is that simple. Thank you.

Pastor Erin Morris