



...an inclusive family of faith seeking to follow Jesus and live the love of God

A letter from Pastor Jeff:

July 10, 2019

Sisters and Brothers of Bridgewater Church of the Brethren,

I write with what is significant and for some, surprising news.

After a lengthy discernment process, involving prayer, conversation, and serious consideration, I will be stepping down and resigning as Senior Pastor of the Bridgewater Church of the Brethren effective September 28, 2019.

In 2010 this congregation took a risk in calling me as one of your pastors. Over the last 9 ½ years we have been companions on a journey that has taken many wonderful, joyful, difficult and challenging turns. You have welcomed me into your most intimate and sacred moments. We have cried together and we have laughed together. We have broken the bread of communion, and shared in the fellowship of daily bread. My family has grown here, our lives shaped by yours. You have taught me how a faith community can be a place of welcome, how a faith community can care for its own and sacrifice for others. We have accompanied one another in times of deep sorrow, and in momentous celebrations. Together we have lived, grown, served and loved, and as a result of sharing such life together announcing this decision has not been easy for me. It is difficult because I have grown to love this community, its mission and ministry, but most importantly you, the children of God who make up the BWCOB community of faith.

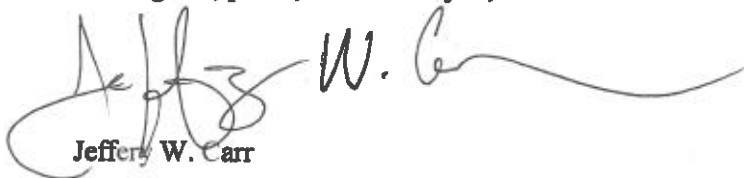
In my discernment I am feeling led to explore ministry more intensively in the healthcare context. This exploration may involve further education, thus the timing of this notice. Additionally and honestly I am burned out without a clear vision for how to lead the church in the next chapter of life. So this transition will also create, for me, some intentional time to rest and renew. I need to give energy to my own wellbeing and to my family, as I listen for the next direction that my path will take. I believe the same is true for the BWCOB family. I firmly believe God is calling us each to new ways of ministry. How those will be fully understood is yet unknown but I have faith that we will discover God's faithfulness as we live into the callings that are before us.

Feelings of shock and grief are real. I have them too and with them I am also hopeful as we look and listen to how God is calling us to continue to love and serve the world with grace and peace.

My last Sunday in the pulpit will be September 1, 2019. I have shared this news with the Board Chair, and Moderator. As you would expect, they are acting in ways that ensure the continued vibrancy of this community as they implement plans for this transition. BWCOB is and always has been in God's hands, which is to say in the very best hands. This community of faith is strong and ready for whatever God will draw you to next and I look forward to hearing how God will continue to call and be alive in this very special community.

Serving as one of your Pastors is a deep joy, for which I am grateful. I trust in the relationships we share, and in Jesus our Christ, who binds us together in a large and glorious family, to which we will always belong.

God's grace, peace, and love to you,



Jeffery W. Carr



...an inclusive family of faith seeking to follow Jesus and live the love of God

July 10, 2019

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Pastoral transitions are special moments in the life of a congregation. Please know that we intend to minimize uncertainty and anxiety and make this a time of re-assessment and renewal. We have already been in conversation with District Executive John Jantzi about hiring an interim pastor, and we will pass along relevant information just as soon as possible.

The process of hiring a new pastor is usually lengthy. As the faith community moves through this transition, we pledge to keep it informed and involved and to be good listeners. Feel free to share your thoughts with us.

Jeff was our spiritual guide for ten years. From commission meetings to hospital visits to memorial services to Sunday mornings, he was warm, winsome, caring, professional, and inspiring. He was wonderful. We will miss the puns, and we will miss him. We wish Pastor Jeff and Wendy Godspeed.

Yours in Christ,

Rufus Huffman
Chair, Board of Administration
rufushuffman@hotmail.com
828-2983 (voice)
383-8714 (text or voice)

Please note that I will be out of town on a family vacation from 7/12 to 7/22. If you need to contact me during that time, feel free to use any of the above.

Steve Longenecker
Moderator
slongene@bridgewater.edu
433-2749