



the  
church  
OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

*Seeking and serving Christ in all persons.*

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April 30, 2023

Dear Parishioner or Friend of Church of the Good Shepherd,

In most of his letters to churches or partners in ministry, the apostle Paul began by mentioning he always gave thanks to God for that church or person. Like Paul, I share that deep sense of gratitude for all of you, for Church of the Good Shepherd, and for our season together as rector and parish.

Seasons change, and now our season together will begin drawing to its end as I have accepted the call as the next Rector of St. Matthias Episcopal Church in Minocqua, Wisconsin, effective July 1.

I am deeply grateful for our ministry together in Athens. You have been so generous in your support of my presence and creativity, and I will carry you all with me. For the past few years, I have been sensing a call to return to Wisconsin, but it wasn't until the first part of this year that I sensed it is now time to leave Church of the Good Shepherd. This revelation initially made me sad, however the search process revealed how the Holy Spirit is calling me home, which brings both Michael and me joy, and leads me to trust the Holy Spirit is also calling Church of the Good Shepherd to something new.

This means we are now entering a new phase in our life together as priest and parish; the phase of finishing up what we need to and to make time to say goodbye. Before I leave, I will continue to celebrate Sunday services, officiate Julie Nehl's funeral service and oversee CrossRoads Café starting up again with a new manager. I will also be handing over responsibilities for campus ministry.

After I leave in early June, the Diocese will be in touch with Alex Buckley about your transition process. That process will not start until after I leave so that we can focus on this season of our ministry.

This letter is not goodbye yet (that will come in a few weeks), it is the start of a new, although brief season together. In our last 45 or so days together, I hope this season will be one of gratitude for each other, where we can celebrate, pray, grieve, and hope together. I am still available if you want to get together to talk or listen together.

And I am still and always will be grateful for you.

Many Blessings,

*Mother Deborah*

The Rev. Deborah Woolsey, Rector

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