

As you hopefully know by now, Pastor Crystal will be moving to a new congregation at the end of June. The Staff-Parish relations committee would like to take this opportunity to explain the process for our new pastoral appointment.

The United Methodist system of moving pastors from church to church is unlike most other denominations in which congregations "call" a pastor. Our practice is called itineracy. Our system of annual appointments of pastoral leaders connects all United Methodist congregations with a pool of ordained and commissioned individuals who have a wide variety of gifts and graces for leadership. Ideally, this itinerant system allows both pastors and congregations to thrive in the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

This cooperative system allows United Methodists to retain qualified pastoral leaders for local churches on a continual basis. The S/PRC is responsible for modeling and ensuring fairness, justice, and appreciation for those who facilitate God's work in the name of the church. The S/PRC plays a vital role, along with district superintendents, bishops, and pastors in this appointive process. The S/PPRC represents the voice of the congregation as it consults with the district superintendent.

The S/PRC committee met with Rev. Brenda Leigey, the district superintendent of the State College district of which we are part, on Sunday, March 7 to allow her to better understand who we are as a church. We talked through the strengths, weaknesses, goals and passions we have within our congregation as well as what gifts and abilities a new pastor would need to lead us forward.

Rev. Leigey took extensive notes in the meeting to ensure that she can represent us to the Bishop and Conference Cabinet. The next step is that she and the Bishop and the Cabinet will first pray over our need and then will work to match up an available candidate that best fits our congregation. Once a new person is identified, they will be introduced to the S/PRC and given a tour of the church and parsonage. Once their congregation is officially notified that they will be moving, then, the announcement of the new pastor will be made to our congregation.

We ask that you be in prayer for Pastor Crystal as she prepares to depart to serve a new congregation, that this transition will be a blessing to her as well as to them. We also ask that you pray for the needs of our congregation as well as for the Bishop, Cabinet and DS as they endeavor to bring the best possible new pastor to serve us. We also ask that you pray for the yet to be named pastor, that their presence here will be a blessing for them as well as for us.

Change is always difficult. We need to acknowledge that we will have feelings of loss in the weeks and months to come but we know that God is with us in this as He is throughout all of our lives. Please remain in prayer for this need.