



Deering Community Church

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Dearest Deering Community Church and Friends,

August 2020

It is with a heavy but full and grateful heart that I write to tell you I am retiring from active parish ministry in December 2020.

Come September-October Lisa and I will move with some friends to Warner, NH where we will begin a new adventure and chapter in our lives. We intend to start a **small** community, farm and retreat center. It will take some time to get fully established and operational. But between the move and December I will commute to Deering which is actually 15 minutes closer than Keene.

This, of course, could not come at a more strange and inconvenient time. Who would have guessed that we would be in the middle of a plague, sheltering in place, social distancing and, in some places, still quarantined? The Conference Ministers assure me that there have been very wonderful and meaningful goodbyes during this time and they will be here to assist us.

Parting is never easy. My heart, which is so full of Deering Community Church's love, dedication and commitment, aches. Yet we will rise and part with the dignity, integrity and intention that our parting deserves. We will continue with our ministries as we have been during these years but particularly during this time of COVID. We have done well. We have risen, we have learned, we have been able, each in our ways, to assess our lives, relax a little, walk, pray, think, still reach out, love and support one another. We will continue to do this during our time of transition. We will find practical, safe ways to celebrate all that we have shared by the love with which we have engaged, and held each other in laughter, tears and mourning, song and full-bodied worship, suppers, singalongs, faires, BBQ's, and multiple ministries with food pantries, prisons, peace, justice and our commitment to being a faithful Open and Affirming, Ukama Church.

Deering Community Church faces some challenging questions to live into through and beyond our transition. They are not new questions. How does this church, small but mighty, humble and bold in its vision, mission and ministries, sustain itself over the long haul as it struggles to grow? What answers might be found in thinking outside the box? Your journey with the Conference and through an Interim period can provide guidance to our Church Council leadership in discerning a pathway into the Unknown Future. In the meantime, we carry on faithfully as we are able.

With Deepest Love and Respect,

Bill Beardslee