



**First  
Presbyterian**  
CHURCH OF PORTLAND

February 11, 2024

Dear Members and Friends of First Presbyterian,

On February 9, at our Session Retreat, I announced my decision to retire as pastor, effective May 31, 2024, after more than ten years in ministry together with you. On May 19, I'll be turning 65, and it feels a fitting time to retire to have more time with family, to travel, and to enjoy our new home overlooking the Coastal Range. While I will miss the congregation and our staff, it seems a good season for the church to move into a new chapter of its life and ministry.

I'm thankful to God for the call extended to me by First Pres in the summer of 2013 to serve this congregation. God has blessed our time together through all the changes recent years have brought. I'm grateful for the love and encouragement from you all, and for the welcome and warmth you have given my husband Bruce and our family. It has been a great joy to be with you!

During our time together, we have marked milestones in the church's life, with first steps being taken to redevelop Julia West House as affordable housing, and Menucha now launched, retaining a connection with our congregation. We've completed a capital campaign to refurbish the church's gathering spaces and buildings. We have renewed our heart for the city through adopting Alder House and providing community dinners there and at the Rosebaum apartments.

We have seen good days and difficult days, celebrating baptisms and weddings, sharing our sadness at memorials, as well as weathering the pandemic that kept us isolated from one another while we worshipped online. Through all these days, by the grace of God, First Pres has remained a place of warm connection, thoughtful worship, beautiful music, and faithful service.

The church's strong team of pastors, staff and lay leaders are well prepared to guide the congregation through what lies ahead, working with transitional leadership and the Presbytery of the Cascades. I'm thankful that God will continue to guide and strengthen you as your life and work continues.

This Sunday after worship, our Clerk of Session, Doug Blomgren, and Chair of Personnel, Jon Bates, outlined next steps in the transition process, including a search team to be formed later this spring to begin looking for an Interim Pastor. Our church website will include a place where you can read updates on the pastoral search as it unfolds. Please continue to support the church's life and work, and to hold the church and this transition in your prayers.

Over the coming months I look forward to sharing our gratitude at having been part of this wonderful community of faith in this chapter of First Presbyterian's life.

May the grace and peace of our Lord be with you,

Audrey