

Pastor's Ponderings Faith United Church of Christ September 2025

In July I informed the board and then announced to the congregation via email that I intend to retire next spring. Life often unfolds in unexpected and surprising ways, and at times the shifts in our own thinking can raise our own eyebrows. Two Christmases ago Leslie and I were enjoying a few days around the holidays with my daughter and family in Atlanta. We delighted in playing with the two young grandchildren during the day and playing cards with their parents in the evenings. Then, on the last evening of our stay, my daughter and son-in-law told us they wanted to put in an apartment on the lower level of their three-level home so we could come and live there when we retire. For years I had been saying I would “never retire,” and even then, less than two years ago, it seemed to me only a vague, distant possibility. But we were deeply touched by their offer, and it planted a seed that grew with surprising rapidity.

*For everything there is a
season
And a time for every matter
under heaven.
-Ecclesiastes 3:1*



Retirement is a major life event, marking a new season of life—a time to reap, some might say, after sowing and working the fields across the bulk of one's life. But I trust I will continue to sow seeds of life in my retirement, as well as reap some rewards of leisure and time with family. And I trust God will continue to open doors to new opportunities and possibilities as life unfolds.

The retirement of a pastor is also a major event in the life of a congregation—and a good time to take stock of the church's overall mission and what new opportunities and possibilities God may be opening up. These are not easy times for churches, or for any other person or community or institution in our world. There are challenges on many fronts. The ways our culture has changed rapidly and dramatically over the past twenty years or so presents special challenges for churches and increasingly calls for changes in how we think and how we do things. This is a good time for the church to evaluate its mission and ministry and explore opportunities and possibilities for its future.

Over the coming months the board will be forming a committee and working with our WNY UCC Associate Conference Minister to develop a church profile and prepare to initiate a search for a new pastor. In the meantime, I will continue as your pastor as I have done over the past six years, and we will continue as a congregation seeking to be a loving community of faith, embodying our Christian values of care and compassion in a society and a world in desperate need of both.

May it be so.

Ted