

Dear Friends,

I want to thank all of you for the many ways you have allowed me to be your pastor. I am profoundly grateful for our time together and know that I will always remember our adventure together in ministry with great love and thankfulness. I hope the same will be true for you.

We have walked a road in these last 6 years that few congregations are able to successfully navigate. God had led us through a journey that initially appeared to be filled with difficulty, but has given us great hope for the future of the church, the community, and the work of the kingdom of God.

We have shared a lot! Some of you have come to First UMC since I have been here. All of you have brought your gifts and support to the church, making us stronger by your presence. I've had the great privilege to perform weddings and baptize children. I've watched our children grow up. I've visited hospitals and shut-ins, and I've been part of too many funerals to count. Through it all, I have been grateful for the presence of God's Spirit.

One of the great joys of my time here with you has been watching the leaders grow and develop over the last few years. I appreciate the diversity, the talent, the wisdom, and the passion for ministry that I have witnessed through our time together. Our leaders rely on each other and seek the best ways to serve God together, even when it isn't easy. Together we have laughed and cried, dreamed, prayed, and persevered. While I am leaving you as your pastor and will not perform any pastoral duties after June 30, 2019, I will always be your friend. I also want you to know that God never ever leaves any of us alone. God continues on the journey with you just as God has traveled with people since the beginning of time. God's love never fails us! Bishop Taylor is sending you two of the best and brightest pastors our conference has to offer, Re. Jodie Ihfe (senior pastor) and Rev. Gary Ihfe (part-time associate pastor.) I am so excited for you! Please pray for them, support them, offer them help as you are able, and work with them to continue the kingdom work here at First UMC. As our baptismal covenant says, "Do all in your power to increase their faith, confirm their hope, and perfect them in love." It won't be easy, because it never is! With God and the wonderful membership of First UMC, great things will continue to occur!

I will continue to pray for each and every one of you. I pray that First UMC will have a future like we read in Jeremiah 29: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." I know that First UMC has a wonderful future ahead with more and more connections to the community and more and more people joining into your midst. My prayer is that you deepen in your relationship with God and be confident that God is the source of all strength and hope for you. I also pray that more people will come to know God, and God's unconditional love, through you. And I pray most that you will continue to BE exactly who you ARE—beloved by God and loving people of God. Remember that God loves us all the same! I'll be seeing you around. Andy and Bree, Avery, Ellie, and Drew are very active members here and I plan to worship here with my family from time to time. Remember your purpose each and every day— to make disciples of Jesus Christ. You are GOOD AT THAT!

God bless you. Love and prayers always,

Jane

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FIRST UNITED METHODIST JOHNSON CITY

Partnering with Second Harvest Food Bank of NE Tennessee is saving your agency money! Let's take a look at how this partnership has benefitted your organization:

- First United Methodist Johnson City has distributed 28,260 pounds of food from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018
- 11,214 pounds of this food came from USDA (no fee)
- Your agency has paid \$7,084.73 in fees during this time for "shared maintenance" and "cost sharing" fees
- The estimated retail value of this food was \$47,759.40. This is based on the current formula that 1 pound of food=\$1.69, which is the estimated retail cost of food in today's market
- Partnering with Second Harvest during fiscal year 2018 has saved your agency \$40,674.67

We appreciate everything you do to serve those in your community who are in need of your assistance. We understand that the cost of this mission cannot only be measured in dollar amounts! You are giving of your time, energy, and heart and we could not serve so many without you.

Thank you for joining Second Harvest Food Bank of NE Tennessee in the fight against hunger.

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