

A WORD FROM REV. SMITH

Dearly Beloved

It's an old-fashioned phrase, but one that expresses my feelings when I think of you, so...

Dearly Beloved,

I don't do endings very well. They are hard for me even when I know that the "goodbye" also means "hello" to something new and good. So let me just say thank you.

Thank you

- ... for the warm welcome and sweet goodbyes,
- ... for allowing me to laugh with you and cry with you
- ... for the privilege of preaching from this pulpit
- ... for the joy of teaching among you and learning from you,
- ... for making my ministry more meaningful
- ... for making this church a hospitable place for the needy
- ... for thinking of those who will come after you
- ... for the witness you bear to those who draw near

Some of you have heard me say that I believe this is a *kairos* time in the life of this congregation - a time when the Spirit of God is moving to shape the identity and renew the spirit of this congregation. To have been part of that work even for a short time is an experience for which I am grateful.

God bless each of you as you continue to grow in faith and witness in love. God bless you all as you begin this new chapter in your long, rich history as a faithful community.

Affectionately,

Vicki