

May 8, 2024

Dear Members and Friends of Federated Church,

I write to let you know that, after much reflection and prayer, I have decided to retire from Federated Church and from full-time pastoral ministry. My last Sunday in the pulpit will be October 27, 2024, and my retirement will be effective November 1, 2024.

After more than 37 years in the ministry, I am ready to assume a different pace to life. Mary and I look forward to doing some traveling and to having the chance to visit with family and friends. I anticipate opportunities to contribute to, and to enjoy, life in new, and as yet unimagined, ways. It's a time, for me, of open-ended promise.

At the same time, though, retirement will be, for me, an event of notable loss and of palpable grief. When I began my ministry here in November of 2004, I could hardly have imagined the graces that awaited me. I have experienced unsurpassed joy in the ministry. The opportunity to partner with you in the gospel has been extraordinarily rewarding. You and I have shared major life events, including illnesses and divorces and deaths and births and baptisms and weddings. We have together opened ourselves to God's presence, guidance, and peace. We have sought to discern direction for the church, for ourselves, for each other, and for the world. We have wrestled together with manifold challenges. We have shared times of both desolation and elation. It has been the joy and privilege of a lifetime for me to have served as your pastor for these last 20 years, and for us to have served God together. "Thank you" hardly seems adequate for that incredibly rich grace.

After my retirement, Mary and I plan to continue to live in our current home in South Russell. And while that means I may see you around town, it is also important for me to remind us all that, effective with my retirement, and in accordance with the practices of retiring United Church of Christ pastors, I will no longer be performing the public functions of ministry at Federated and with church members. I will absent myself from the church. And I will no longer be performing baptisms, weddings, and memorial services for church members. And while that separation may strike some as harsh, it is the larger church's way of assuring that you establish a bond with the new pastor who will follow.

Federated Church is a remarkable place. You will now move to a new chapter in your common life, and I am convinced that it will be a chapter that is full of grace. My prayer is that you will lean into that and look excitedly toward the future that is to come.

I will miss you more than I can say. And at the same time, I trust that God will go with us all into the new vistas that await us. May God hold us all close in this tender transitional time.

Yours in Christ and with immense gratitude,



Hamilton Throckmorton  
Senior Pastor, Federated Church



May 8, 2024

Dear Members of Federated Church,

I know the news of Hamilton's retirement is a shock to all of you. Like all retirement announcements, we're incredibly happy that he can spend time with his family and gently lay down the burden of pastor life that he's carried for so long. We're sad for all of us, he's done an amazing job leading Federated for twenty years and we have a hard time imaging the next leader. But as with all challenges that come to us, God is with us through this journey.

First, a thank you to Hamilton. You've been a beacon of light, a compassionate leader, a powerful educator and an inspiration to us all. You've done the good work of the Lord in our lives and left us better for it. As you spend time relaxing, traveling, laughing and walking around the neighborhood, rest easy that you did an amazing job. You're leaving a congregation that is extremely grateful for all you've done for us.

Hamilton's retirement will be effective November 1, 2024. The council is working closely with the UCC denomination team to find an interim pastor for a 12 month term. After November 1, all church inquiries and needs should be directed to the new pastor or the church office.

Finding a new pastor is a serious undertaking. We'll be forming a pastoral transition committee that will work to carefully understand and document the needs of the church and lead up to the beginning of the search process. Jeff Miller, Vice Moderator, will be leading the interview process for the interim pastor and also leading that transition team. The transition team will work through the summer, leading up to a formal search committee that will be elected and approved by the entire church body in the fall.

Hamilton, we want to express our deepest gratitude for your selfless service. Your dedication, wisdom, and love have left an indelible mark on our hearts. As you step into this new chapter of your life, know that you carry our blessings, love and prayers with you.

As we prepare for this transition, let us come together in prayer, celebrating the legacy Hamilton leaves and eagerly anticipating the next chapter for our congregation.

May God's grace continue to guide us as we move forward.

With heartfelt appreciation,



Stephen Downey

Moderator, Federated Church

