



*"I am confident of this, that the One who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ." - Philippians 1:6*

At the end of April, I attended a workshop for pastoral transition and learned that pastoral changes are like two runners who pass and receive a baton in the changeover zone. If the transition between pastors is done well, the rest of the transition will happen smoothly and joyfully. If this is done poorly, it can ruin the entire race.

Churches are notorious for holding onto former pastors instead of embracing new ones. I was blessed to start my ministry with Minooka UMC at a time when the congregation was ready for steady leadership. I am grateful for former pastors who paved the path for me at MUMC. Minooka UMC congregants opened their arms to welcome me. Church leaders encouraged me to try new ideas – some worked out well, others did not work out well. Yet, I always felt your support and care for me and my family. I encourage Minooka UMC to continue this wonderful legacy by embracing the incoming pastor with a warm and welcoming spirit. As I write this article, we do not know who the new pastor will be. However, we trust in God's provision. We trust that God who began a good work in us will bring it to completion.

Here are two key lessons for a positive pastoral transition that I learned from the transition workshop. The workshop presenter, Rev. Jim Ozier shared that while transitions are difficult for both pastors and congregations, they are opportunities for new growth and development.

The first and most important step involves ATTITUDE. If we're going to have a positive transition, we need a positive and hopeful attitude. Even before we know the name of the new pastor, we can celebrate God's grace and ongoing work among us who will open the next chapter for MUMC. As we transition into our new home on Ridge Road – as we transition with pastoral leadership, we can encourage one another to be grateful, gracious, and optimistic for the future.

Second, the most important part of the transition is PRAYER. In the midst of uncertainty and anxiety, let's pray for the incoming pastor and family. Let's pray for the outgoing pastor and family. Let's pray for one another - our congregation members and families. Let's pray for the people in our neighborhoods and community, who God is calling us to reach out, serve and love during this period of change.

The Changeover Zone is a unique and special time. It can be an irreplaceable opportunity. Therefore, let's be hopeful and prayerful with the deep trust in Jesus who will strengthen us to get through the changeover zone beautifully.

The building process on Ridge Road is coming along beautifully. I am so happy that we have been on this journey together. I encourage all of you to finish this season well by offering your full support. Keep praying. Keep serving. Let's continue to invite people to encounter God's grace through the ministries of MUMC.

God has been always faithful. I am grateful that our paths crossed for the last eight years. Minooka UMC has been gracious and patient with me with your encouragement and prayers. Thank you for allowing me to journey with you, to pray with you, to laugh with you, to cry with you, and to share your burdens. It has been a privilege and honor serving as your pastor – growing with you, and doing my best to lead and guide our ministry. Just as I came to MUMC knowing that God was doing good work in you, I leave MUMC with confidence that God will continue to do good work through our congregation. I am excited about MUMC's next chapter and all the ways God will use MUMC to serve others and bring people to Jesus Christ. You are always in my heart and prayers.

Your pastor and friend,  
Pastor Sarah