



First Presbyterian Church Durango

Know Jesus, Live in the Spirit, Join in the Father's Work

1159 E 3rd Ave, Durango, CO 81301

Office: (970) 247-3175

Fax: (970) 403-1019

www.fpcdurango.org

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Dear First Presbyterian Church Family,

It is with such strong and mixed feelings that I write to you today. First, I want you to know how loved and cherished you are in my and my family's hearts and lives. FPC Durango has been much more than a pastorate, calling, or vocation. You are our family! Through you, God has been so good to us these past twelve years.

Thus, our hearts have been aching over a major life decision we've been discerning this past year. As you know, our son Asher has significant special needs. We've known for some time that his transition into adulthood would place more demands on our family, but it was impossible to tell until this past year of experiencing this new chapter of life. Kristin has done an amazing job creating an adult life for Asher that meets all of his needs (I'm blessed with this church and even more by an amazing wife)! However, while we're able to meet Asher's needs, the demands exceed our (and especially my) present availability, and it is likely that this demand for care will only increase in the future.

Therefore, through prayer, tears, and wise counsel I've decided to step down as Pastor of First Presbyterian Church in order to *step into* a more active care-giving role for Asher. I will be pastoring through the end of May with my last Sunday being May 26th and my last day, May 31st.

This decision has not come lightly or easily. We love you. I love you. I love being your pastor. Yet, it has become clear that God is calling me to new forms of ministry, the first of which is to my family.

I cannot put into words the gratitude that fills my heart for these last twelve years of being blessed and honored beyond belief to call myself pastor of such an

incredible church! I also feel confident that you as a church body are ready and poised for new adventures. We feel good about the work God has done through us this past decade, and this brings some reprieve from the grief of departing.

Upcoming for the Smith family, I plan to take a more active role as a caregiver to Asher. We plan to stay here in Durango, and Kristin will continue to serve our community as School Board President for the 9-R School District. I also plan to launch and work part time as a spiritual director. I will not complete my doctoral work for another year or two, but I am fully trained in offering spiritual direction and am already seeing a handful of “directees.” God has been so faithful as we have tried to discern our next chapter in life. It is a huge gift that I can continue to serve in a limited capacity in ministry.

God’s faithfulness to our family in this season gives me further assurance that there also are many exciting new adventures in store for First Presbyterian Church! Your Session has already begun the work of starting this transition in discussion with me, our Presbytery, and each other. They are a most capable group of spiritual leaders and will do an excellent job of seeking and finding an interim and eventually a newly called and installed pastor.

I realize this news may come as a shock to some and I want to let you know that my door is open these next two months to talk about your questions and concerns. Moreover, your Session is at the ready to listen and walk with you all through these next steps. Kristin, Asher, Eden and I are all eternally grateful for these last twelve years serving FPCD. We ask your prayers as we transition, and we will most certainly be praying for you all—our beloved church—as well.

Grace and Peace,

Beau