



First Church in Cambridge, Congregational, United Church of Christ

*For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it?
I will make a pathway through the wilderness.*

- Isaiah 43:19

February 4, 2024

Dear Beloved Congregation,

Change is rarely easy or comfortable, but it is an inevitable part of our journey and how we learn and grow. Our beloved Senior Minister Dan Smith, who has served us faithfully with such dedication for over 20 years, has been called to move into the next phase of his life and ministry. We are excited that some of his next steps are emerging from our shared work, and that Dan will now have opportunities to share his talents and passion with the rest of the world. We are deeply thankful to God for Dan and his gifts to us.

While we prepare to say farewell, we also welcome the promise of new beginnings and the chance to explore new opportunities. As Dan reflected in his letter, First Church is on solid ground. We are a thriving, engaged, and gifted congregation that, with God's guidance, will find the path we are called to walk. We have begun planning for transitional pastoral leadership, and will soon appoint a small group to lead the search for an interim minister, with the hope that we will have someone in place by the summer. Once the interim is determined, we will begin to prepare the search process for a new settled pastor. We will be sharing more details about this process as they become available.

While this may come as unexpected news to many, we are blessed to have time and space to appropriately celebrate and thank Dan for his extraordinary leadership, guidance, and care over the years. As Dan shared in his letter, we will hold a leave-taking service in mid-June, and he will conclude his time as Senior Minister at the end of June. We will be working on details for his leavetaking and farewell in the coming weeks. We look forward to honoring Dan's ministry as we prepare to say goodbye.

We hope that you can be with us this coming Sunday, February 11, when Dan and several church leaders will be available to answer questions. Please know that Deacons and Executive Council members will continue to be available if you need support or would like to talk about this transition.

Together, let us embrace this with courage and enthusiasm, knowing that God is doing a new thing.

Peace be with you all,

Moana, Phil, Leslie, Casey

Moana Bentin, *Moderator*

Phil Jones, *Vice Moderator*

Leslie Pelton-Cairns, *Deacons Co-Chair*

Casey Marsh, *Deacons Co-Chair*