

## United Church of Christ

464 East Walnut Street  
Pasadena, CA 91101-1690

Marlene W. Pomeroy  
John H. Pomeroy  
Co-Pastors

# First Congregational Church of Pasadena

Leo Lynch  
Associate Pastor  
Andrew E. Schwiebert  
Associate Pastor



Monday September 25, 2017

Dear FCC family,

I am writing to let you all know that I am leaving FCC Pasadena and will serve next as Interim Co-Pastor at a different church in Los Angeles (TBA soon). After discussion with both pastoral staff and FCC Council, my last Sunday at FCC will be 10/8 and my last day will be 10/14.

The interim position in Los Angeles gives me some time and space away from what has been both comfortable and wonderful—ministry at FCC. Going to that church presents new challenges and opportunities to serve a community that has gone through some difficult transitions while I also discern my next (long term) call, whether that be in a local congregation or something else.

Serving at FCC and with (a)Spire Ministry has been wonderful and life-giving. And after pouring so much of ourselves into (a)Spire's creation, having to make the collective decision to close it in 2016 was painful for many of us involved. I was grateful to FCC for offering me the opportunity to continue in ministry in 2017 half time while I worked half time at the community organization, Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice. So after the heartbreak of 2016, this year has been a time of healing and also a time of new life as I have had the privilege of serving and leading the FCC community in various efforts since then; preaching, leading small groups, supporting and caring for our youth and children, and facilitating discussions about our community's response to challenges facing immigrant neighbors and more.

It's amazing to me that I've been serving FCC for 8 years! I began as sabbatical pastor in 2009, was hired as 1/4 time assistant pastor starting in September of 2009, became nearly full-time associate pastor in September of 2010, transitioned to full time in March of 2011, scaled back to  $\frac{3}{4}$  time in January of 2016 and then dropped down to  $\frac{1}{2}$  time this past January. I've walked with the church through the creation of a new ministry as well as its growth and eventual closure, a strategic planning process, a visioning process, a building sale vote and another round of conversations about selling the building. I've led funerals, weddings, baptisms and community events. It's truly been an honor and a privilege and a joy to serve here.

My family and I have become part of the FCC family, so the thought of saying goodbye is especially difficult. We all appreciate the love and care and support offered by our church community, so we will most certainly miss seeing everyone so often. There are guidelines from our local denominational leaders for transitions in ministry like this. As I learn more and reflect a bit in the next

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week on what could be most helpful for this community and myself and my family, I *may* offer some requests about communication and contact for the next year after my departure.

Again, I'm so grateful for the opportunity to serve this community. And I am grateful to our co-pastors who from day 1 have been 100% supportive, collegial, respectful and affirming. It's been a real joy to work with the Pomerroys, and I will miss it!! I'm also grateful to the members of FCC Council for their faithful leadership and support for me and our entire staff. It's been wonderful working with each of them.

I will pray for continued growth and new life for this community in the days and years ahead. I hope and pray that I have contributed to bringing greater health and strength to the life of this congregation.

Peace and blessings,

Andy Schwiebert

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