

Dear Youth, Young Adults, Members and Friends of FUMC,

For some time, I have been listening for clarity about the next steps in my life's journey. I have walked with church leadership in this discernment and I am appreciative of their assistance and support. Although I am still exploring, it seems appropriate to bring my time at FUMC to a close and to begin a new stage of discerning God's call for my life. This difficult decision does not lessen the fact that I have cherished every moment of ministry during my time at First Church.

For the past seventeen years, First Church has been a home to me. Since that first Sunday when my father was introduced as the lead pastor, our family was welcomed with open arms. Through my involvement in the many programs of the church, from helping assemble *The Chimes*, playing in the praise band and assisting with the food pantry, to chaperoning youth events, working as the Office Manager, and even slipping into the pulpit a few times, I've gotten to know and work with so many inspiring people.

During my past eight years as the Coordinator of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, it has been an astounding privilege to help guide and nurture our young people in cultivating lives of love through the meaningful programs and experiences that connect us and bring us closer to one another, to God, and ourselves. Also, I have treasured those magical in-between moments: circled around candlelight and sharing late into the evening because no one wants the feeling to end, watching kids let down their guards and laugh with abandon, listening to an adult leader open up about their life on a long van ride, witnessing a middle schooler say the most profound thing you've ever heard and in the next breath belch out loud, connecting over coffee with young adults lifted in excitement at finding this new church home, and seeing exhausted kids push themselves on a mission trip, because they know they are making a difference in someone's life. I am humbled to have shared some space in the inner lives of these wonderful youth, families and young adults.

Our community is blessed by the intentionality and care of the hundreds of adults who have given their time, energy, and gifts to support the young people of this church and to fulfill the vows made at each baptism. I am honored to have worked with them and cannot thank them enough. This church has occupied so much of my life, and I'm grateful that my children and family have been able to be an intimate part of it. Not a day goes by that I do not appreciate what an incredible gift this has been.

There has been a long tradition of amazing youth and young adult ministry at FUMC and I'm confident this will continue in new and innovative ways. I am thankful for the support of the staff over the years who have made it so enjoyable to go to work and particularly for the leadership of our pastors Keith, Carly, Phil, Tina, and Mark. I am excited for the growth and energizing vision that First Church has as it continues to meet the needs of this city and the world.

Again, my gratitude, thanksgiving and blessing to each of you.

Seth Schroerlucke