

Dear Friends,

Well this is my last opportunity to address the good friends I have made here in this region over the last 16 years. It has truly been a privilege to serve this community of faith. Thank you for taking a chance on this outlier from Wisconsin and opening your hearts to me.

Every year has brought new opportunities and challenges. I never know what I will face each morning. I enter the day with a plan and God surprises me with situations that have opened new horizons of exploration and learning through your questions and suggestions.

Thank you for your patience and forgiveness when I didn't quite get things right. Thank you for your willingness to provide me with second and third chances to try to right the wrongs.

In visiting our congregations around the country, I have often said to the pastors that it is not fair that God has so richly blessed that particular church with so many gifted wonderful leaders. This is the same sentiment I have about our region. It doesn't seem fair that God has placed so many gifted faithful leaders all in this one place we have come to know as our spiritual home.

I would imagine that every Executive Minister feels that their region is the best region in the country. But I have been in many other regions and I find none which compares to Rochester Genesee. There is a spirit of openness, love and respect that is not found elsewhere. It is often said that love is contagious. It is the love present in the members of this region's churches that makes it the place to be, because this is the place in which people are made to feel that they mattered, that they belonged.

As I close this chapter of life and turn the page to a new one titled "Retirement" my thoughts and prayers will always be with you. Although I will no longer be your Executive Minister, I will always be your friend.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alan G. Newton".

Alan G. Newton