



July 1, 2026

Grace and Peace Family & Friends of New Connexions UMC,

This past Monday was moving day. After a hectic morning packing with the movers, remembering everything we didn't know we had forgotten, I came ahead to the parsonage to prep for everyone's arrival. I had a moment of panic when I realized there was no where for the movers to park the moving truck. I came into the house, tried to think of a creative and quick solution and offered a short, somewhat desperate prayer. When I walked back outside obstacles were being cleared and there was a vast open space right in front of the parsonage, just big enough for a moving truck. It was one of the quickest answers to prayer I have ever witnessed. Almost as if God knew what I needed before I did. It wasn't exactly the same as moving mountains, but somehow felt like it.

God often speaks in the Bible about clearing paths and it certainly feels, to me, as if God has been at work making a way not just for moving trucks, but for our journey in ministry together. It is a journey I am immeasurably excited about and committed to. I believe it is fair to say there is no church and community I feel more strongly drawn to at this point in my journey. I want to thank you for the warm welcome we have received thus far and all the words of encouragement as we step onto this new path together.

I am very aware that transitions are hard. Pastor Grace has provided strong and caring leadership for this congregation and community. Pastor Bette before her. I consider them both friends and respect them. We will continue to build on the foundations they have laid. Their faithful leadership cannot and will not be undone. Still, I know that every transition comes with a degree of change and therefore, uncertainty. We will undoubtedly encounter challenges in our new life together. Perhaps we can endeavor to all err on the side of gentleness and compassion, giving space for grief as we also discover new pathways of vitality and hope.

It will take time for us to really get to know each other and to find our stride together. I've been among you as a guest, but it is different to be appointed your pastor. For those of you to whom I am not yet familiar I encourage you to read the biography that was made available at the appointment announcement. Even better, come to worship this Sunday, July 5th, when there will be a time of conversation after the sermon where you can ask me any question you'd like.

I also want to acknowledge that our situation has the additional layer of me being a bi-vocational (I also serve as the Chaplain of Northern Dutchess Hospital) or 'part-time' pastor. I know this might raise concerns for some even while it might offer some financial relief. It is my understanding that this church has never had a part-time pastor before. Well, I've never been a part-time pastor before. We'll navigate these uncertainties together and collaborate on appropriate and productive boundaries that are healthy for all of us. I want to help to ensure that everyone is appropriately cared for. I believe my training and work as a board certified chaplain actually enhances my parish ministry. Still, my time will need to be more directed to

priorities, which we will decide on together. For those who have lingering concerns I invite you to join me in reading a book recommended by D.S. Monk, Part-Time is Enough, by G. Geoffrey MacDonald.

There is so much to say, and God willing, we will have time to say it as we continue our journey together. I'd like to leave you with some thoughts from John O'Donahue from his book To Bless the Space Between Us:

"We find ourselves crossing some new threshold we had never anticipated. Like spring secretly at work within the heart of winter, below the surface of our lives huge changes are in fermentation. We never suspect a thing. Then when the grip of some long-enduring winter mentality begins to loosen, we find ourselves vulnerable to a flourish of possibility and we are suddenly negotiating the challenge of a threshold...

A threshold is not a simple boundary; it is a frontier that divides two different territories, rhythms and atmospheres. Indeed, it is a lovely testimony to the fullness and integrity of an experience or a stage of life that it intensifies toward the end into a real frontier that cannot be crossed without the heart being passionately engaged and woken up. At this threshold a great complexity of emotions comes alive: confusion, fear, excitement, sadness, hope."

O'Donahue's words speak to my heart today, and I hope to yours. He recognizes the tension in the transition, the troubles we find at the threshold of something new, but he also offers this reminder, which I would like to echo: "No threshold need be a threat, but rather an invitation and a promise. Whatever comes, the great sacrament of life will remain faithful to us, blessing us always with visible signs of invisible grace. We merely need to trust."

Peace,

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