



**The  
United  
Methodist  
Church**

**Drakestown United Methodist Church**

6 Church Road, Hackettstown, New Jersey 07840

(908) 852-4460

drakestownchurch@gmail.com

www.drakestownchurch.com

---

March 6, 2022

Dear Members and Friends of Drakestown Church:

It is with sadness that I share the news that after June of this year, I will no longer be your pastor. I have realized for a long time now that I was over extended in trying to balance serving in two distinct and geographically separated ministry settings, but I felt blessed to be here with you and believed, as I still do, that God was using me for important work here at DUMC. As a result, I was reluctant to make a change, even though Ellen and I realized that I and we were paying a price for not doing so. However, a recent health scare impressed upon me that I need to make serious changes for both health and family reasons. As a result, I requested that Bishop Schol appoint me full-time to Meadow Lakes, my other ministry location, as of July 1<sup>st</sup>, and he has granted my request. I will continue to serve here through the end of this June, and you will receive a new pastor in July.

I hope you will all realize that this was a very difficult decision which Ellen and I have both agonized over. I will dearly miss being here with all of you. I have felt blessed, honored, and privileged to be your pastor and wish it was realistic to continue in that role. Sadly, I realize that I can't keep working the equivalent of 1.5 jobs per week to make the arrangement work as I have been doing. I have been perpetually exhausted for a long time and have not had adequate time to focus on my health. I was hoping to be here another year or two or longer, but I was recently diagnosed with a mild heart condition and I now know that I need to start taking much better care of myself. Therefore, out of necessity, I made the painful decision to leave Drakestown Church.

I came here three and a half years ago to serve as a six-month interim pastor. Our former District superintendent, Steve Bechtold, asked me to help you heal after a period of conflict and begin to move forward as a church again. I was privileged to stay an additional three years, lead you through Covid-19, and walk with you through an extended period of grief as we said goodbye to five precious members, who have gone on to experience God's eternal, loving embrace. I also had the joy of welcoming six new people into our fold and had the exciting opportunity to celebrate Drakestown's 210<sup>th</sup> anniversary with you as well. I will always fondly remember my time here and the gift of walking in faith with all of you.

*Cont'd.*

Being here has blessed me in many ways. I am humbled by your faith and perseverance. I believe deeply in you and in Drakestown church, and I am sad that I will not be here to help you create the next steps in the church's long, faithful, journey of ministry. However, I trust that our District Superintendent, The Rev. Dr. Eunice Vega Perez and Bishop Schol will find someone very capable to follow me. I pledge to support you and work with whoever you invite to be your new pastor to ensure that the transition goes smoothly.

Wishing you God's blessings wherever God may lead.

Yours in Christ,

*Paster John*

The Rev. John D. Callanan  
Pastor, Drakestown UMC