



ALLEN PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)

Jim Faile, Interim Pastor
Michelle James, Associate Pastor

June 27, 2018

My dear friends,

I have found through the years, that life's journey takes us in some amazing places, offers us the gift of wonderful friendships, and leaves us with memories that last a lifetime. Allen Park Presbyterian Church has been just such a place for me. I have made many wonderful friends and memories with you and will cherish them all for the rest of my life.

As I'm sure you know, the Session has faced the challenge of balancing a budget with resources that are limited and/or are restricted. We have approved deficit budgets for a number of years and have cut just about as many corners as possible without resorting to drastic measures. We've been "kicking the can down the road," but the can has become battered, and the road has come to an end. We have reached the time when we must take off our kickin' shoes, recycle the can, and start down a new road.

At APPC's 2018 Annual Congregational Meeting in January, Session made a recommendation to change the current (decades-old) staffing model. This change will bring the budget into balance for the first time in over a decade! This downsizing will remove the positions of Parish Nurse, one of the Financial Secretaries, and Associate Pastor at the end of day on December 31, 2018. At the same time, all of you will have already begun putting on your marching shoes, and started down a new road with exciting scenery, lots of work to be done, and new friendships to make – no cans required!

Just as our bodies begin an exciting time of growth and change from the moment we leave the womb, the body of Christ also needs to continue to grow and change from the moment she is established, through her adolescent "can-kickin' years," and into a more mature time of life, when she is fertile, and new life is birthed and grown in her. My friends, the Allen Park Presbyterian Church has completed her childhood and adolescence, and is ready to leap into a season of birth and growth, and you have the distinct privilege of being her midwife, bringing new life into this congregation, this community, and into this world! What an exciting time this is as you prepare to make the journey of faith and life on a new, and even more productive road, and with God's faithful help, you will continue to become a life-giving

ALLEN PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

...in the *Heart* of Allen Park

7101 Park Avenue • Allen Park, Michigan 48101-2091
(313) 383-0100 • FAX (313) 383-7668

body of Christ, poised to take on new challenges, meet new ministry goals, and grow together in faith and in life.

While my heart aches to leave you, especially at this exciting time of growth and change, it is also time for my body and soul to rest for a time so that I can discern what God is calling me to be and do next. The program year has finished for the summer and plans are being made, necessarily, without me for the future. And because a year really is too long to say goodbye, I have asked the Session and the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry to negotiate with me a severance which will allow me to rest, regroup, and continue the work of discerning a new call to ministry. That severance was approved at the Called Meeting of the Congregation on June 17.

I have been working with Rise Against Hunger to establish that program in the Detroit area and throughout the state of Michigan, but so far, it has been very part-time. I hope to be able to grow that ministry over the next year into a full-time position, helping others to Rise Against Hunger and end hunger in our world by the year 2030. It's a challenging goal, but I believe, with God's help, we can make it happen. So spread the word! #2030IsPossible

I am taking a family vacation this week and will lead worship on July 1st while Jim is away for a family wedding. This will be my last time to be with you and worship at Allen Park Presbyterian Church, so I hope you can make it to worship that morning, and to stay for a bit after worship for a time of fellowship and sharing. The Thrive Band will treat us to their musical gifts during worship on July 1 as well, so we will move the service across the street to the Fellowship Hall that morning. I know some of you will be away on vacation or up north, so please drop me a note to say goodbye and share some fond memories of our time together.

I wish you many blessings on this journey of faith. I will be in prayer with and for you as the Holy Spirit continues to move in and through you, sharing the gospel of hope and life "in the heart of Allen Park" and beyond. So tie on your party shoes as we celebrate our time together and kick off a new chapter in your life and mine.

And may the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle James". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Michelle James