

September 1, 2020

Dear People of God at BLC,

I know that I am far from alone when I say this: I never expected 2020 to turn out like this. I began this year thrilled to return to ministry after parental leave with an amazing partnership in place with my Co-Pastor, serving a congregation I love, and finding our groove at home as a newly-expanded family of six with wonderful and appropriate childcare and education for each of our four children. I was grateful to return to ministry with somewhat reduced hours for the first part of the year through the additional time afforded me through the Family Leave Act. The first few months of this year were all that I could hope for as a working parent.

Then COVID-19 happened. And like the rest of the country (and world), our lives were turned upside down. Like many of you, Kevin and I have spent the past six months juggling all the things – work, caring for and educating children, running a household – all without the village of resources that normally make our life sustainable.

As it became clear to me that the pandemic is here to stay, and this school year will look so very different with remote learning and a lot of uncertainty, it also became clear to our family that we cannot continue with a piecemeal approach for the long-term. I cannot continue to live with no margins, always short-changing either my family or my church.

I do not want to leave all of you and the ministry that we share. I continue to feel called to serve as a Pastor of this congregation. I am keenly aware that it is a privilege to even consider stepping away from paid employment. I grieve all that should have been in this season of our life together. I remain hopeful that the circumstances regarding school, childcare, and life in the time of pandemic will stabilize in a way that allows me to return to the full breadth of ministry among you.

I imagine this announcement might come as a surprise to you. I wish the circumstances had allowed for more lead time to share conversation more widely and to process these next steps together. Even now, it feels as though the future is only clear as mud.

I suspect that I am not alone. We are all challenged to adapt and navigate decisions and circumstances we never expected as we live through a pandemic. I also fully expect the church, the world, and all of us will be changed through this time in ways that we can't even anticipate. I am eager to remain in conversation with Pastor Amy and congregational leaders as we chart the course for ministry through these changing realities. Together, we will cling to our faith and trust that God's hand is leading us and God's love supporting us as we move into God's promised future.



I am deeply grateful for Pastor Amy, Council and Core Ministry Team leaders, Beth and the rest of the BLC staff, and all who have been so deeply compassionate, overwhelmingly supportive, understanding and accommodating over the past six months. It is humbling to be on the receiving end of such grace.

I welcome your prayers in the months to come. Please know that you will most certainly remain in mine.

Faithfully Yours,



Pastor Abigail Zang Hoffman

*Lord God,
you have called your servants
to ventures of which we cannot see the ending,
by paths as yet untrodden,
through perils unknown.
Give us faith to go out with good courage,
not knowing where we go,
but only that your hand is leading us
and your love supporting us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*