

January 22, 2010

To: The congregation of Bethany United Church

This short message to all of you is to say a sincere "Thank-you" for your kindness in allowing me to serve as your minister for the interim period January 15 to June 30, 2010. We know these six months (or so) will pass very quickly, and before we know it we will be on our way and you will go through the process of welcoming a new minister all over again. This is the downside of interim ministry. It serves a very worthwhile and healthy purpose of "bridging a gap," but it also sets up a time of unsettled transition for congregations.

When your former ministers wrote a message similar to this one they outlined several questions that are common to everyone who moves to a new location. Some of these are:

Will I be welcomed here? Will the people greet me with warmth and friendliness? Will this be a place where I will feel comfortable? Will I feel as though I belong here?

Based on our experience here over the past week, Audrey and I have no hesitation in answering these questions with a resounding "YES." You have really gone "out of your way" to make us feel welcomed and at home. For this we thank you.

We look forward to getting to know you better and to working with you to preserve what you have already accomplished, and also to offer you some leadership in moving forward to meet new challenges as you prepare for new and permanent clergy in July. Audrey joins with me in saying that it is indeed "good to be here." May God's blessing be upon us as we work, play, and worship together.

Harry J. Whitehorne (Rev)