

Heritage Presbyterian Relocates

Presbytery of Milwaukee

21 May 2016

Managing the Transition to a New Identity

Heritage Presbyterian Church has relocated. Starting May 15th, 2016, Heritage Presbyterian began worshipping at their new location, Tudor Oaks Retirement Community, S77 W12929 McShane Dr. in Muskego. Worship will be every Sunday at 10:00AM at Tudor Oaks.

It takes just a few sentences to state the facts. But what was the transition that the congregation lived in order to arrive at that new location? Interim Pastor Michelle Henrichs shared some information with, specific to the transition. What follows are excerpts from documents published by the congregation to its members.

On November 18, 2015, the Session of Heritage voted unanimously to recommend sale of all real estate. Over the next several months, the congregation journeyed together in the process of remembering, grieving, cleaning, packing, and hoping. There were many opportunities for everyone to participate in rediscovering a common history together through the many filing cabinets, closets and rooms. There were also worship opportunities designed to help in this journey.

Session was committed to keeping an open dialogue on the process of the sale and relocation. They continued to meet on at least a bi-weekly basis for discernment and decisions. Next steps included:

- Requesting Presbytery approval of the congregation's action.
- Contacting the developers that have already been part of our discussions to close any loose ends.
- Inviting brokers to bid on representing Heritage in the sale of the real estate.
- Beginning conversations with potential sites for relocation in May 2016.
- Finalizing the 2016 budget and vision.
- Continuing their discernment of God's call to Heritage in this time and place.

Session members were sensitive to the fact that this was difficult news for many to hear. The Session members had many weeks of heartfelt conversations to come to terms with this decision. They carefully considered what would be lost. A common home. Common memories. Common comforts. Session members were committed to helping each and every member of the Heritage family through that loss. They offered to sit with congregants in need. They promised to talk with the congregants. They offered to listen to congregants. They offered to remember with congregants. They offered to hold small group sessions in their homes, and to dedicate time during worship to remember the common life together in this special and sacred space. They offered to do their best to support congregants in any way they needed.

Their number one priority was to help congregants to move through the loss and to help them find excitement and enthusiasm for the opportunity in this new beginning.

For a long time, many people in the congregation had felt as though they were/had something broken that needed to be fixed. But the congregants at Heritage are God's people, therefore not broken, although in need of transformation.

The congregants then imagined what could be done without the burden of an older building always needing repair. They imagined what could be done without the feeling that they were dealing with an impossible task. They imagined what their church could do if their energy and talents were focused on their shared calling in Christ? They imagined the meaningful impact they could make on the community. Who could they be?

From Pastor Michelle: God was with the congregation on the path and promised to make a way for everyone. No one traveled the path alone. Together, everyone made decisions, grieved over leaving the building, and looked forward in hope to what was springing forth.

Thank you, Heritage, for leading the way through major transition!

Submitted by Donna Holmes
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