

*This is to let my beloved community at Aldersgate know that I am resigning my position effective the end of July.*

As many of you know I have faced some difficult decisions recently. I've had to admit that, as much as I would like to clone myself and continue to try to balance 5 legs on a 3 legged stool—it isn't sustainable. In trying to balance:

- 1) Raising a teen-aged son,
- 2) Ministry as a Pastor,
- 3) Working at Compass Health,
- 4) My private counseling practice, and
- 5) Developing the Connections Counseling organization,

None of these 5 areas have had as much of my time as they need. All are worthy endeavors but I can't continue to try to juggle them, hoping none of the balls will drop (to mix metaphors terribly). Something has to go.

How does the saying go? If wishes were horses, beggars would ride? I've had to accept my limitations and make some hard choices.

Working in Pastoral ministry is my first call. But it can never really be a part-time endeavor. It is something—as every Pastor knows—that you give your heart and soul to. I was incredibly honored to be offered a position as Pastor at Green Lake UMC—but it was still only part-time, with no benefits and no housing allowance. Turning down that job—and for purely financial reasons!—was one of the hardest things I have ever had to do. I remain deeply sad that working as a full-time Pastor is simply not an option for me at this time—as I know it is not an option for many others. Hard choices, painful realities.

To paraphrase Parker Palmer, “ ‘Way’ doesn't always open before you—but quite often ‘Way’ closes behind you, and that's very nearly the same thing.” The Way of Pastoral ministry has closed behind me, at least for now. And given that raising my son is my first priority, and working in a job that supports him (and me) is my second, realistically that only leaves one more area I can give myself to. I have been praying over what that area is or will be for the past month. I'm not sure I'm there yet, but I trust God to continue to guide me to where my ministry is most needed. It may just take some more time for that to be clear.

I'm not good at goodbyes, so please know that I really do not want any kind of gathering at this point. I'm open to have coffee, tea, lunch – one on one – but I simply can't bear to cry in front of you all (or more like sob piteously).

Know that I will always pray for you and will always crave your prayers for me. “Thank you” is not enough to express my gratitude for the patience, support, and friendship you have shown me over the years. You have all contributed in significant and lasting ways to the growth I've experienced on my Christian journey.

Love,

Laura