



A PLACE TO WORSHIP IN COMMUNITY



A letter from Pastor Steve

Dear friends,

Attached you will find a [letter](#) from Margaret Burnett, our Associate Pastor for Outreach and the Executive Director of Children and Family Enrichment (CAFE) announcing her resignation. Her final day here will be June 30.

This will give us some time to let her know how deeply we love and appreciate her, but a few thoughts from me are in order.

Margaret has been here for 16 years, which makes her the longest serving associate pastor in Idlewild's history, a truly amazing fact considering the varied challenges of urban ministry. We are a far different church because of her ministry here...far more faithful, far more active, and far more understanding of the church's role in the greater Memphis community and the world.

As you know, Idlewild has always had a special role to play in ministering to those whom Christ called "the least of these." Margaret has built upon that storied tradition, and has done so with grace, kindness, creativity, and passion. Where there has been a need, Margaret has found the resources to help. This includes far more than making funds available for those who need a bus ticket or a meal, but Margaret has been able to find the many resources and talents of our congregation and has used them for faithful ministry. Through it all, she has provided spiritual nourishment for those inside and outside the church.

When Margaret and I first started to talk about this position 16 years ago, it was clear that she was the right person for this calling. It was also clear that she had a special passion for children, and wanted to make sure there would be room in this position for helping to make all of us aware of the power and joy of our baptismal vows as we partnered with children, who are not just the future of the church, but are vital parts of our church today, with gifts to offer us.

It was through this calling that a real miracle has taken place called CAFE. Only those of us close to her know all that she has done to make this vision a reality. The Early Enrichment Center is not just a pre-school or day care facility, but far more. Margaret has led us and the staff there to understand the latest in child brain development, ways to help children develop resilience to so many of the adverse childhood experiences they might face and do so in a nurturing, loving atmosphere. In fact, the important work of CAFE was highlighted just today in this article in the Daily Memphian.

Finally, one could not ask for a better colleague in ministry. Margaret has been seen by the entire staff as one we can trust, can go to in times of stress, and with whom we can share tears of sadness and tears of joy. She has been one of my spiritual advisors, and I know that I am not alone. Her preaching and prayers have been a constant source of strength for me.

In terms of where Idlewild goes next: The session will call a congregation meeting to (as the hallowed Book of Order says) vote to "dissolve the pastoral relationship" between Margaret and the church, and will then help discern the next steps to fill this position. CAFE will begin looking for a new executive director.

In the meantime, we rejoice that God has sent Margaret to us and that she has led us with "energy, intelligence, imagination, and love" as promised in her ordination vows. And we know that God isn't finished with her. Our prayers will be with her as she enters a new phase of ministry.

Blessings to you all,

Pastor Steve

[Margaret Burnett's letter](#)

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