



Senior Pastor, Steve Autrey

Dear Denver UMC Family,

This morning in worship, it was announced that I will no longer be your Senior Pastor as of June 30th. I am being appointed to begin serving as the Senior Pastor of Providence UMC in Charlotte on July 1. The Reverend David Hiatt will move from his role as Senior Pastor at Park Street UMC in Belmont to serve as your new Senior Pastor at the same time. This was not a move that I or the church anticipated, so I wanted to take some time to explain how this change in pastoral leadership came about.

In December, our Church Council and I completed the necessary paperwork indicating we both wanted another year together. It was my hope, and that of the Church Council, that I would return to Denver for year eleven as your Senior Pastor. As you know, in our system, Bishop and Cabinet (the Cabinet is made up of our District Superintendents) determine where pastors serve, and each appointment is for one year. It just so happens that I have been appointed to Denver for ten consecutive years. When Bishop Carter called me early this spring, he asked me to consider this move. He gave me some time to pray and discuss it with Marcy, and I said yes.

My yes to Providence has nothing to do with not being happy at Denver or not wanting to be your pastor any longer. Rather, my yes is rooted in a call to ministry that I answered over thirty years ago. My yes is about an ordination vow that I took long ago to live under the authority of the Bishop and Cabinet to go where they choose to send. Bishop Carter did not have to give me an option; he graciously did, and I felt, with deep certainty, that this is ultimately saying yes to God all over again, as I know this is what God wants for my family and me.

My yes also reflects my trust in God that this is what is best for DUMC. It is time for a new Senior Pastor, and I have faith that God is sending the right person to lead this congregation at this time. David Hiatt is an exceptional leader, and I am excited to pass the mantle to him as I leave.

There is so much more I would like to say that cannot be expressed in writing. I love this church and each of you. DUMC has helped me grow tremendously and taught me so much about living life dedicated to following Jesus. You have watched my family grow and have been a tremendous blessing in my life and ministry. Over the next several weeks, we will have time to say goodbye and prepare well for Rev. Hiatt's arrival. For now, here are a few dates to consider as we work towards the transition.

April 26 - Announcement Sunday.

June 14 - My last Sunday at Denver to Preach - we will have a going-away event later that day.

June 16 through June 21 - I will be at the Annual Conference.

July 1 - David Hiatt officially becomes the new Senior Pastor at Denver.

July 5 - Transition Sunday (new pastors are not present in worship).

July 12 - First Sunday for the new pastor to preach in worship.

Thank you again, and may God bless us all,
Pastor Steve

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