

## CONNECTED: Being the Church Together

6/20/23

Many years ago, there was a popular country song entitled, "How Can I Miss You if You Won't Go Away?". Thankfully we haven't heard anyone singing it to us yet! In fact, we aren't going anywhere for now. The plan we put forth in January was that we would hopefully reduce our hours by late summer/early fall to enable the church to call a new minister. Then, the three of us would work together in an overlapping period of several months, until Paul and I fully retire at the end of 2023 or early 2024.

This is a newly emerging model for pastoral transitions, and one we are convinced will work well for Congregational. As for the timeline, we have known all along, and shared with church leaders, that we will need to be flexible. Our Call Committee is doing an incredible job of carefully searching for a minister who will be a great fit, laying the foundation for a smooth transition. And such a search should take time — this is too important to rush through, as they know very well. So for now, we will continue as we have been for the foreseeable future. When a call is extended, and that person is approved by the congregation, we will then reduce our hours. If the search continues into the fall season, we will keep our hours as they are now.

So for now, you're stuck with us! And since we are in this together, let's keep praying for the committee and their faithful work, praying for the right candidate, praying for our amazing congregation. Somewhere down the road, you can sing the song. But not yet!

—Julie