

Thank you for the opportunity to be your pastor. It is a peculiar relationship that we undertake as minister and congregation. You elect a Pastor Nominating Committee to represent you. We begin a friendship based on carefully scripted concerns. We talk to one another about faith and experience and plans for the future. We look each other over for a period of time. After deliberate steps, we try and discern if this relationship is right. You chose me and I chose you. We don't do this alone. The Presbytery looks over our shoulder and joins in discerning whether everything is right. For twelve years six months and 21 days, we have shared in a relationship as pastor and congregation. It has been special to me for many reasons.

Thank you for the opportunity to come and preach God's word. It is a calling that is most special for me. Once Charlie Brown asked a group of us, "Why would anyone ever be called to preach to a congregation?" Charlie, you have always been good for great questions. His question caused me to go back and review why I believed I was called to preach the good news of God's love. It has to do with gifts and faith and a guided hunch this is how we may be useful. It comprises what we believe is God's call. The presbytery is there to affirm what we suspect is true. We come here every Sunday morning and we listen to God's word. We gather out of a shared gratitude for God's acting on us. We gather out of need that the Lord of the Universe will receive our praise and hear our prayers. God listens and offers pardon and blessing and renewing truth for living and serving. I have relished the regular challenge of listening to the biblical story and wondering what good news God has for us. I have believed that preaching is about God's conversation with a congregation and with individuals. Hopefully, from time to time God has used your coming into this sanctuary to offer an insight, an encouragement, an exhortation or a word of comfort and blessing, to offer you Jesus Christ. Hopefully, you have found him in various ways and as well fresh opportunities to receive him and know him and live by faith in him. I am grateful for those who have benefitted from what we have shared here on Sunday mornings. I am also grateful for those who have come faithfully whether or not what I was doing was useful to them at all.

Thank you for the opportunity to be part of a family of faith. Years ago, I read Dietrich Bonhoeffer's, Life Together. It helped form my own curiosity and desire about serving in the church. Bonhoeffer says we all bring wish dreams to the church: dreams of what we want the church to be, dreams about what is necessary for us to stay with it. He claims the Spirit of God keeps smashing these wish dreams and works always building something better, something faithful. I am grateful for the understanding of so many who make worship a regular part of your life. I am grateful for all who make Sunday school and the educational ministry of this church a regular part of your life. I am grateful for those who believe the church is about reaching out to somebody somewhere. This is something you have done and will continue to do for years.

Thank you for the opportunity to try and help this congregation grow. It was this idea that brought me here in the first place. For several years, we worked on getting the right staff people and positions. For several years now, we have worked on thinking about what really is transformative in our experience of God and church. I hope you will continue to make Christian Formation and the idea of renewal of the mind and the reformation of your lives a focus for all you do together.

I have learned in this challenge that transformation and growth does not happen overnight. It does not happen without our consent and commitment to Christ. We all will continue in our own ways abiding in God's love and grace to a pilgrim people. I have learned it takes repeated efforts. At times we fail. Quite often we fail at doing what is most essential. If major league baseball hitters are considered successful in 3 out of 10 times at bat, we must keep trying to get on base in order to win this contest against a secular culture and a crazy busy world. I believe Tuckahoe is poised for a new day, with new leaders and a new pastor. It will take some hard work by your Session and a Pastor Nominating Committee. I believe this path of finding an Interim Pastor so that the Pastor Nominating Committee can do its work...will lead you to God's person. I will continue to pray for the right leader for the future of Tuckahoe.

Thank you for the opportunity to come here and work with an unusually strong staff. I have enjoyed working with Charlie Brown. His wisdom and humor have offered me help as he has given freely to you who know

him best. I have enjoyed working with Mark Cain. I have appreciated his expertise with music that enables choir and congregation to worship God. I congratulate him on his twenty years of service and I wish you all well for twenty more years together. I have enjoyed working with Becky Loggins. I have appreciated her passion for shaping young worshippers and believers. I am thrilled she continues to lead teachers and young people in the pursuit of truly enjoying and learning from the biblical story. I have enjoyed working with Joan Neff. Her span of interests and skill is amazing. I am grateful she assists Mark in leading our choir. I have recently come to enjoy the good work of Sabrina Lindfors who has taken the role of Office Administrator that Becky Dale left. Sabrina has brought a new spirit to our church office and I am grateful already for all she brings into our office. Last of all, I have enjoyed working with Steven Good. I have appreciated his faith in God and the church. He is helping lead our youth in an experience of faith they could not have had with others. I have sincerely valued his friendship and wisdom and example.

Thank you for the opportunity to come here and do a number of things we have believed were important for ministry. When I arrived in 1998, we focused our mission with these words: to listen to Jesus carefully, to worship God gratefully, to share good news with our neighbor and to help one another heal those who hurt. Since the church had not had an interim, we went through an “in-between time.” As we lived those days together, we learned that changes needed to be made. This led to several different efforts at envisioning the future. From these efforts, we dropped an Associate’s position and hired part-time staff for children’s education, youth ministry and pastoral care. We assembled a pastoral care team who still address members’ personal challenges. We asked Charlie Brown to be our Director of Pastoral Care. We hired Becky Loggins to teach our teachers and our young people about the life of faith. We started a Sunday school class for 20s and 30s which I have helped teach. We called Steven Good to be our Associate for Youth and Family Ministries. We saw the need and created a Capital Campaign effort to refurbish these facilities. We are even now beginning to enjoy the hard work of many who have given and planned to make this happen. We restarted a DISCIPLE BIBLE STUDY series that continues. A number of you began a tutoring ministry to kindergarten-aged children in one of the poorer sections of our city. At several points we have set goals and realized objectives. Since 2007, we have acquainted ourselves with people like Tony Robinson who believes the primary purpose of the church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ. This past summer we started with the help of General Presbyter Nancy Dawson from Lynchburg. She is helping you discover a new vision for the future. It is my hope and prayer there will come a new vision, new values, perhaps new goals that will take this church to a more faithful future. Thank you for your kindness to me over many years. May God continue to bless and guide you.

Gratefully,

*W. Fred Rose*