

# McCabe United Methodist Church

New Beginnings

Proverbs 3:5-6: May 18, 2014 (Farewell Message)

Pastor Rick Fossum

Do you remember an old movie called *Annie*? It was a musical filmed in 1982 based on the comic strip *Little Orphan Annie*. Anyway, someplace in the movie, there's a great line that goes like this: **"How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard."**

That's me. **"How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard."**

The reason saying goodbye is hard is because we give away a part of ourselves every time we love another person or place or even a career. If you've ever fallen in love, you know what I mean.

I was visiting with a lady awhile back. She'd been married for over fifty years when her husband died. She said, **"It's hard. It's hard to say goodbye to him."** She had given him a piece of herself and he had given her a piece of himself.

I think it's meant to be like that. Saying goodbye, whether to a loved one or loved place, shouldn't be easy.

It's hard for me to say goodbye. Soon, I'll be leaving not only a church that I dearly love, but also a career that I love. It'll be hard to say goodbye.

In some ways, I'm ready to move. I've been serving as a pastor for over thirty-two years. I don't know how many funerals I've been a part of or how many weddings I've had. I know it's been a lot. I don't know how many baptisms I've had or the number of confirmation students I've confirmed. I know it's been a lot. I don't know how many Bible Studies I've led or hospital visits I've made or visitors that I've welcomed. I don't know how many meetings I've attended, but I know it's been a lot.

So, in some ways, I'm ready to retire. Yet, in other ways, it's going to be hard to say goodbye. Usually, when I've moved before, it's been from

one church to another church. It's different this time. Now, I start something new. A new beginning.

I don't know what McCabe's future will look like, but I believe that your best is yet to come. Pastors come and pastors go, but the spirit of McCabe remains.

It's your spirit along with God's Spirit that fills this place. You are the ones who will continue to carry on the traditions and ministries of McCabe. You are the ones who will keep building on the past while setting the course for the future.

McCabe's best is yet to come and here's why:

- You have many leaders in this church, both old and new, who are capable of looking into the future and bringing out McCabe's best.
- You have youth with spirit. They're searching for ways to grow their faith. They're realizing that God has plans for them.
- You have workers who aren't afraid to roll up their sleeves and do what's necessary whether it's in the kitchen or outside mowing the lawn or taking care of the flower beds or helping out in the office.
- You have people with talent. Look around this room. You have musicians who bless us with their music. You have people dedicated to teaching young and old. You have people with the gift of caring and other people with the gift of hospitality.
- I don't know if you realize this, but McCabe has people who are hearing the call of God to serve in more active ways. You have some among you who are working with the Conference *Certified Lay Ministry Program* and some who are considering becoming full-time United Methodist pastors. This is exciting. By the way, you'll be hearing one of these candidates preach in a couple of weeks.
- You have a great staff and they're all dedicated. They will support and encourage your new pastor and help her achieve the goals she sets.

McCabe's best is yet to come.

Don't worry about what other churches are doing. You are McCabe Church. It's part of your job to help McCabe be the best it can be.

For those of you who watched the late TV night program *Saturday Night Live* back in the 70's you might remember Gilda Radner. She was one of the original cast members. One of her characters was Roseanne Rosannadanna. She still makes me laugh. She would rant and rave about some random topic during her news commentary, until someone would remind her what the real issue was, and then she would say, "**Well it just goes to show you, it's always something.**"

Gilda Radner died of cancer in 1989 at the age of 42. As she was nearing her death, she wrote these words of wisdom: "**I wanted a perfect ending. Now**

**I've learned, the hard way, that some poems don't rhyme, and some stories don't have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what's going to happen next."**

This is life, isn't it? Our poems don't always rhyme. Our stories don't always have a clear or happy beginning or middle or ending. We don't know what's going to happen next. Yet, with God's help, we're never alone. God is with us, helping us to accomplish God's best.

One of my mantras that I mumble underneath my breath several times a day is a passage from Proverbs. It's a passage that goes like this: **"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own insights or understandings. In all your ways acknowledge him, and God will make straight your paths."**

**"Trust in the Lord with all your heart."** This is my prayer for McCabe. **"Trust God to make all your paths straight. Trust God in all ways and in all things."**

For me, I'm glad I can say, **"How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard."**

I'll be around a bit longer. I'll preach another time or two, but this chapter of my life is fast closing.

May God continue to bless you and keep you. Thank you for allowing me to be your pastor. It's been a gift I'll always cherish.