



East District

of the United Methodist Churches of Indiana

April 27, 2021

Dear Friends at College Avenue and Riverside United Methodist Churches,

I pray this letter finds you well and blessed. I am writing to share important and exciting news for all of you. As you know, leaders from each church and I have been praying and exploring the future God has for you. Those prayers and conversations resulted in a proposed merger for these two wonderful congregations. We hope that will be completed by October 1, 2021, however, we will not sacrifice care and thoroughness for expediency. This is a very important, and hopeful, season for your churches and we will honor that as we strive toward the goal set.

Following our process of prayer, consultation, and discernment, the Cabinet (Superintendents) recommended and Bishop Trimble appointed, Rev. Keith Turner to be the pastor of the merged congregation, as well as, the pastor during the transitional step of a two-point charge. Keith will assume this appointment on July 1, 2021. For those of you at College Avenue, you will soon learn what the folks at Riverside already know; Keith is a dynamic, caring, visionary pastor whose excellent communication skills will be a blessing in the coming months. I invite you to keep Keith in your prayers as he prepares himself, spiritually and professionally, for this new appointment.

I also want you to know that, following the same process, the Bishop has appointed Rev. Dr. Karen Bray to a new appointment beginning July 1, 2021. While I cannot, yet, share the details of that appointment I do believe it is an opportunity for Karen to serve in ways that are honoring of her gifts, study, and passions. There will be an announcement very soon about where she has been appointed.

As I said above, this is a hopeful and exciting time for each of your churches. I am praying that God will be glorified, missional living and service will expand, and the witness of this new congregation will be greater, much greater, than the sum of its parts. In the Book of Acts we see the Disciples lead ministry into the world in such a way that the world would never be the same. The life-giving message of Jesus Christ became hope for everyone it touched. That is my prayer for this new, forming church – may life in Christ be claimed, shared, and magnified through all we do. Blessings and prayers.

Shalom,

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