



April 2, 2017

To the Congregations of Blooming Grove & Waterville Evangelical United Methodist Churches:

It is the intention of the MN United Methodist Bishop, Bruce Ough, to appoint Pastor JJ Morgan and Pastor Stefanie Morgan to the Waterville Evangelical and Blooming Grove United Methodist Churches (UMC). Acting on behalf of our congregations, the Pastor/Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) has unanimously confirmed the Bishop's intention in an interview meeting held on March 28th, with Pastor JJ, Pastor Stefanie, and District Superintendent Fred Vanderwerf. This appointment is effective July 1, 2017, with June 25th being their first Sunday in the pulpit.

Especially unique to this appointment is that Pastor JJ and Pastor Stefanie will co-pastor our congregations and share one full-time position. We are excited and optimistic about this new arrangement, and look to everyone for added grace and patience as both we, and the Morgans, live into it.

Pastor JJ is licensed as a local pastor. He has earned a Masters of Divinity degree and is free to pursue ordination when ready. Pastor Stefanie is currently finishing up her candidacy process. It is anticipated she will be licensed before July 1st. Upon licensing, she will attend licensing school (at the conference's expense) this summer and will attend, at minimum, two courses per year in our United Methodist Course of Study program to retain her license.

Pastor JJ and Pastor Stefanie come to us from Thief River Falls where Pastor JJ served the Thief River Falls UMC for the past two years. They, along with their family of 3 children and their family dog, will arrive at the Waterville Evangelical UMC parsonage sometime between June 12th – 24th. (The exact date is dependent upon the Conference moving schedule.) They are excited to be closer to Pastor JJ's family in SW Minnesota and Pastor Stefanie's family in the St. Cloud area. They both attended college in Mankato, so already have strong connections to our local area. The enclosed pamphlet provides a snapshot of their history, background, and passions in ministry.

Our March 28th interview meeting included a time of introduction, conversation, questions, and prayer. At the meeting, we also discussed, and agreed upon, the following for Pastor JJ and Pastor Stefanie:

- Each of their positions will be ½ time. A normal work-week will be 21 to 23 hours each, to be split between BGUMC and Waterville Evangelical UMC.
- They are each permitted to work part-time in other vocations, and may seek additional employment, provided they are able to effectively carry out their UMC appointive work with us.
- They will each receive 4 weeks' vacation (must include 4 Sundays). They may take this simultaneously as a family, or individually, with the other one covering the pulpit and pastoral duties.
- They will share mileage, continuing education, and professional reimbursement budget allocations, however they best deem appropriate.
- We will provide scheduling flexibility around Pastor Stefanie's pastoral education. She may use continuing education funds for these studies.
- Our joint PPRC will work with the Morgans to set up a series of "meet and greet" opportunities throughout the summer so they can get to know the congregations in smaller groups.

In order to help our churches move into a compensation package that now includes family health care insurance, the Minnesota UMC Annual Conference has awarded to our parish an Equitable Compensation Grant in the amount of \$3,000 for the conference year beginning July 1, 2017. In the 2nd conference year, we can anticipate \$1,500, and in the 3rd year - \$750. (These amounts are split in half for both churches.) These funds are to be used only for pastoral compensation and have been awarded as a Conference investment, with anticipation that our congregations will grow.

Pastor Sharon Nelson's interim service to BGUMC and Waterville UMC will continue through June 24th. Up until the arrival of Pastor JJ and Pastor Stefanie, please continue to contact Pastor Sharon for all pastoral care needs (including illness, hospitalizations, and funerals as well as joyous celebrations of baptisms, weddings, and family events). We thank Pastor Sharon for the support, gifts, and talents she is sharing with us during this time of transition in our congregations.

We ask that you continue to pray for, and support, Pastor Sharon in her remaining time with us as interim pastor. We also ask that you now include Pastor JJ and Pastor Stefanie in your prayers, as they prepare to join us in the next chapter of our ministry.

Feel free to contact us with any questions or suggestions regarding how we might best welcome the Morgans into our communities and congregations.

Sincerely,
Joint PPRC of Blooming Grove UMC and Waterville Evangelical UMC

PPRC members from Blooming Grove UMC

- Allison Janke (507-456-7840) – call or text
- Beth Christesen (507-210-5819) – call or text
- Judy Mahler (507-456-3937) – call or text