



Season of Transitions

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June has been a month for transitions. Students are graduating, babies are being born, and people are marrying. As happens every June, Ann Gibbs and I celebrate birthdays – thank you, Maureen Wise (Forest Park Presbyterian) for the delicious cupcakes!

The Presbytery celebrated two other big transitions this month. On June 9, Jean Dow retired from ministry at Immanuel Presbyterian Church after 17 years, and the following Sunday, Kevin Tarvid retired after 27 years of ministry, including 20 years at Greenfield Avenue Presbyterian Church. I was blessed to listen to the expressions of love and admiration for these two pastors from their congregations. Tissue boxes were kept at the ready for those moments of tears, but laughter rippled through the pews just as often, as their ministries were remembered and celebrated. Kev and Jean served their churches and their communities well and will be missed.

On Sunday, I was struck by the parting words of Kev Tarvid. As he looks toward the prospect of retirement, he remarked, “There are things I want to do less, and things I want to do more.”



No matter what our life stage, it's worth reflecting what we'd put into those two categories. Fewer errands, doctor visits, meetings, and goodbyes? Perhaps more time with friends, travel, learning for fun, and stretching? As a congregation, maybe you'd like to spend less time finding ushers or pulpit supply and more time imagining new ministries for the community. Too often we put the things we most want to do on the back burner to simmer, letting all the rest fill our schedules and our thoughts.



I pray that, as individuals and in our collective ministries, we will ask God to help us prioritize those things we should do more or do less...and help us make those transitions now. Placing those questions before God forces me to admit that my choices aren't necessarily those that will sustain me. But, it's also true that I trudge along with things that deplete me, out of a sense of responsibility rather than a sense of call. With God's leading, may we be freed from the things we've always done but can't remember why. More important, may we give priority to what has deep meaning, endures, and connects us to God and to each other.