



Board of Directors
South Dakota Conference of the United Church of Christ
October 13, 2017

Dear Board Members,

My father used to frequently quote Saint Augustine: "God writes straight with crooked lines." Those words feel quite true in this moment. This action is one my heart laments, but one my soul remains committed to. Perhaps we have not ended up where, at times, we thought we would be, but I trust that our God is the author of it all.

Therefore, with thanksgiving for our time on this journey together and with hope in God's unfolding future, I submit my resignation as the Conference Minister of the South Dakota Conference of the United Church of Christ. This resignation is to be effective as of January 1, 2018 or any date thereafter that is mutually agreed upon by myself, the Reverend Brigit Stevens, and the Executive Committee of the Board.

I do want to reiterate that even though some our time together may seem like a crooked line, I am convinced it is what was drawn by the hand of our God. I believe with my whole being that our time together was necessary for our Conference to be equipped for this exciting new part of the journey on which you are about to embark. We were able to form a trusting relationship based on healthy boundaries, mutual respect, and a common vision of God's call. Given the history of our Conference, that was no small feat. I would encourage you to build boldly on that so that you may quickly establish a collaborative, dynamic relationship with your new Conference Minister.

I also need to name how transformative my time among you has been. I came to you as one exploring a new call. I know without question now that my call and my passion is to serve as a Conference Minister. While responding to this call will inevitably draw me to a new conference, be assured that time among you has been formative to my ministry. My understanding of small and rural church ministries has grown immeasurably. And not a day will go by that the gifts of the Spirit that have been shared with me by our Lakota sisters and brothers will not be shaping my thoughts, my words and my actions. Our time in ministry together may be drawing to a close but your impact on my ministry will not lessen.

Our scriptures tell the stories of several leaders who are not able finish the journey their people were on. Perhaps I find myself in the presence such of good company. More importantly, these holy tales remind us that the most exciting part of your story is yet to be written. May you enter these new days with hope, courage, faithfulness and an eagerness to encounter all the new ways the Divine will reveal itself to you. And may you know that you will remain in my prayers as you do.

Yours in Faith,

Gordon Rankin
Conference Minister
South Dakota Conference of the United Church of Christ

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