



## THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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SUDARSHANA DEVADHAR  
BISHOP  
NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE

BRENDA C. BORCHERS  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

January 21, 2016

Dear Pastor and Members of the SPRC Committee:

Greetings in the precious name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

My prayers are with you in this time of transition for your church. I am writing to share material for your use during this time and to express the expectation of the Bishop and Cabinet that you will work diligently to enable this time of transition to be one of grace in the face of change.

A change of pastors is part of the connectional life of the United Methodist Church. In order to support both the pastor and the congregation and help everyone transition more easily without impeding ministry, we have created transition workshops. You will be contacted by your District Superintendent with more details and logistics on these workshops.

We have also developed a transition calendar outlined below for the smooth transition of pastoral appointments this year. We strongly encourage you to adopt the following transition calendar:

1. June 19 will be the last Sunday the present pastor is officially in place. The order of worship that Sunday might contain the "*Order of Worship for the Farewell to a Pastor*," found on page 598 of the Book of Worship. Farewell celebrations should be held before or on that date. The pastor will not preach on June 26. Emergency pastoral needs will be taken care of by the pastor, but this is a time of moving and transition for the pastor and family. A moving date of June 20 or later should be set in consultation with all concerned parties to allow for cleaning the parsonage and preparing for the arrival of the new pastor, which should be negotiated for a date between June 21 and July 1.

The pastor's present church is to take care of all pastoral compensation through June 30, 2016, even though the pastor's last Sunday in the present appointment is June 19, 2016.

2. On June 26, the church will provide either a lay speaker or another preacher for the worship service. This service should be one of reflection on the church's ministry. It can focus on gratitude for the parade of leaders over the years, a service of prayer in the time of transition, or a service of intercession for God's guidance into the future. It is simply to be a Sunday of prayer between the leaving and arriving of pastoral leadership.

"If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation."

II Cor. 5:17

3. On July 3, we recommend the service include “*The Order of Worship for the Celebration of an Appointment*,” found on page 595 of the Book of Worship. The new pastor may or may not preach that Sunday, leaving the preaching to a lay leader or lay servant, if desired. This decision needs to be made in consultation with the incoming pastor. The new pastor will preside at Holy Communion, if it is a part of that Sunday’s worship service.

It is our hope that the transition workshops and calendar will help ease some of the stress of transition for the pastor, church leaders and congregation and allow everyone to move forward with more grace and understanding.

If you have any questions on this matter, please do not hesitate to speak to your District Superintendent.

In Christ’s love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sudarshana Devadhar", written over a horizontal line.

Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar

SD:bb