

Nearly 6 months into my role as pastor here at UMC, I'm finding a rhythm of preparing for sermons and worship services, tending to administrative tasks and continuing the joyful work of getting to know you better - through walks together, shared meals, cups of tea. What a delight it's been!

The question of communion, who it's for and how we open the table with hospitality and grace, was brought up at an elders meeting this fall. That conversation flowed into questions I've been having about who we are and where we're going as a congregation. Since that initial conversation, my discussion with the elders has broadened significantly, with us wondering together about vision. Who are we? Who do we want to be?

I've come to realize that answers to questions about who's welcomed at the communion table and how we welcome new members into the congregation belong grounded in a shared vision of who University Mennonite Church is at this time and place. As one writer on the visioning process said "I asked this small church to consider what chapter two might look like if they wanted to go beyond a great first chapter. Part of any good book is that it progresses and changes; you can't just rewrite chapter 1 for chapter 2."

I see part of my work as your pastor to be helping us figure out what chapter 2 has to say. We can't just rewrite chapter 1 for chapter 2. And so I invite each of you to consider with me:

*What are we doing?*

*Why are we doing it?*

*Where do I, as a participant at UMC, fit in?*

This will be a process that will take months of listening and talking together. For a shared vision to be heard requires that we all participate. Your voice matters. I ask that you commit yourself to be a part of this process, both through prayer and through showing up, considering these questions as we discern where God is calling us to serve, who God is calling us to be at this time and place.

We are exploring bringing in an outside facilitator to help us shape and guide these conversations. More to come...

I'm excited to be here, at this time, to live into a great chapter 2 together. May the God who surprises us with abundance guide us and lead us on this journey.