



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL
408 Cedar Street
Wallace, Idaho 83873

17 March 2024

Dear members and friends in Christ,

This is not an easy letter to write but as the Executive Board of our church, we have some very hard news to share. We met after church today and after long and careful conversation, voted to terminate our relationship with Jeremy Bullen effective immediately. We are extending a 60 day severance package to him. We took this action with tremendous sadness and while we weren't unanimous in making this decision, we are working diligently to pull together and move forward.

To ease your minds, we have already taken steps to assure that we continue with services, especially as we approach this Easter season. Our former pastor, Alice Ling, will be stepping in for the next few weeks while we establish a longer term plan. We will be meeting with the Rev. Phil Hodson, our UCC Conference Minister who will help us with that work.

Let us share a little bit of background/context for our action:

1. Alice retired in the Summer of 2022 after serving our church for approximately 8 years.
2. Jeremy made himself available to the church almost immediately.
3. We welcomed him as a supply preacher for a few weeks and then extended that arrangement for a few more weeks.
4. In October of 2022, we signed a one year Letter of Understanding for him to serve as our "Supply Pastor".
5. In November of 2023, we signed a second one year Letter of Understanding for him to serve as "Designated Pastor".
6. Both of those letters included clauses requiring Jeremy to "pursue an active relationship with the Pacific Northwest Conference East Side Committee on Ministry with a path toward ordination and standing in the United Church of Christ". That work progressed in the Fall of 2023 and into early 2024.
7. For reasons we do not fully understand, Jeremy presented a working paper that was decidedly anti-UCC as well as harshly critical of the Open and Affirming clause in our local church Constitution in mid-December.
8. His work with the Committee on Ministry deteriorated quickly and his relationship with our Board became extremely divisive.
9. On February 9 he proposed sweeping changes to our Constitution and Bylaws and called for our church to sever ties with the United Church of Christ.
10. In a series of communications and culminating at a Board meeting on March 3, Jeremy

clearly stated that he had “no desire to work in or with the United Church of Christ”.

11. As stated above, we met today to sever ties with him. Sadly, Jennifer Carrico stepped down as Moderator and resigned from the Board at the beginning of our meeting. We will miss her a lot!

We take full responsibility for having hired Jeremy as well as for the action we have taken today. Jeremy (and Katie) have done some great things during their time with us and we celebrate that.

We need to confess to some regrets that we have in retrospect. We never had any kind of formal interview with Jeremy. If we had, our eyes might have been opened and this timeline might have played out quite differently. We never established clear guidelines to define his scope of work. We let divisiveness creep into our work and were slow to take decisive action when it was called for. Those failures are clearly on us and we ask your forgiveness.

We will not be making any further formal statements about this matter but we will be available to sit and talk with all of you this coming Sunday. We’ll answer your questions as best as we are able within the confines of this being a legal personnel matter.

The Board has a lot of work to do both logistically and relationally and will undoubtedly have some recommendations for all of us to consider as we move forward. We ask for your prayers and we encourage you to stay tuned and stay engaged.

Faithfully,
The Executive Board
Lou Larson, Clerk
Rev. Benjamin C.L. Crosby, Treasurer
Katie Bauer
Geoff O’Meara
Christi Thielman