



THE PRESBYTERY OF BLACKHAWK

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Bethany Presbyterian Church
5403 N. 2nd St.
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Dear Members of Bethany Presbyterian Church:

We, the members of the Administrative Commission, speak on behalf of Blackhawk Presbytery in expressing our sadness over your decision to leave the Presbytery and the PCUSA. Throughout its history the Church has experienced divisions as people from different backgrounds seek God's will in matters of faith and ministry. We all try to follow Christ as the head of the Church.

We are not going to beg, cajole or try to convince you to change your minds. However, we would like to express our disappointment that we were not able to come to this decision together as we engaged in the process for dismissal. It would have been our hope that, through the process, misunderstandings would be cleared and hard feelings would be softened. We may never have come to complete agreement, but at least, we would have a better understanding of each other's position and perhaps may have come to a meeting of the minds.

At this point though, we will wish you Godspeed. May the Lord bless you as you seek God's will for your future ministry. We will be praying for you and ask that you continue to keep us in your prayers. To that end we will be recommending to the Presbytery the dismissal of your congregation to the ECO and praying the enclosed Litany of Dismissal at our September Presbytery meeting. We are open to hearing from you in order to reconcile our relationship as we move forward.

In God's will,

The Administrative Commission

Kathleen S. Luke, moderator

Litany for Dismissal

Dear friends let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. (1 John 4:7) There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:4-6)

O Lord, our God, you have called us to be one body. You have united us under one faith, one baptism and one Lord. You have instructed us to love one another.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)

Lord, we have been given different gifts and kinds of service, and you want us to accept each other in our differences. But, instead of seeing our differences as blessings, we see them as weakness in the other. Instead of working together, each in our own way, we try to force the other to embrace our point of view. We point fingers at each other and blame our problems on the other, never looking at our own culpability. We confess that we have not treated each other with love. We confess that we have celebrated our disunity more than our unity in you. Forgive us.

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. (Colossians 3:12-13)

Lord, give us the strength and humility to ask each other's forgiveness for harsh words and angry spirits. Give us the compassion and gentleness to forgive the hurt and pain the other may have caused us.

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. (Matthew 5:23-24) And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:17)

While we may no longer be able to be united as one body, Lord, may we be reconciled with one another. May we be able to pray for one another and support one another in love. May our ministries, though apart, be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Amen.