

THANK YOU FROM PASTOR MIKE AND AMY

Thank you all for coming to celebrate our retirement.

We are honored that you have come from all over the country to celebrate God's faithfulness from generation to generation in each church we have served and alongside you as colleagues in ministry.

We were engaged 40 years ago in the middle of my first year in seminary, and have served together as "Mike and Amy" in Glendale, Moraga and Solana Beach ever since. You all represent thousands of relationships--you are our letters of recommendation of lives that have been changed through a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. We have all worshipped together, grown in community and served with our spirit-shaped gifts in ministry in the church and with mission partners all over the world.

We are grateful for pastors and ministry couples who have been mentors and colleagues and friends in ministry. We have served along staff, lay leaders and mission partners to demonstrate the kingdom and invite others to follow Jesus. We have had rich and fun times together in places like Israel, Turkey, Greece, Ukraine, Russia, Ethiopia, El Salvador, Oaxaca, and right across the border in Tijuana and Rosarito.

What a privilege it has been to serve with this current staff at SBPC. Some of you have served for more than a decade before we arrived! And many of you have taken the baton from previous generations who laid the foundations you are now faithfully building upon. Thanks for your collaboration, your friendship, your Christ-centered leadership.

Thank you to the Session and lead governance elder, Mark Halling, for discerning and praying, and walking with us; taking the risk to step out in faith and provide for the next generation of leadership; leading our congregation to trust God and trust each other; and ensuring that "our members, friends, and neighbors live as fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ in growing community."

We are grateful for those who have led in worship today. Pastors Candice Richey Womack, Jamie Nelson and Jpetul J'ernantes--you serve our whole church family (in English and Spanish) with humility, skill, and integrity. Aaron Burgett and Derren Raser, the Worship Band and Chancel Choir--you lead as a beautifully united mosaic of voices and instruments that inspires us to declare God's praise and offer ourselves in worship. Sydney Johnson and Lea Southcombe--for reading and praying today in worship and for your commitment to the life of our church--along with the children and students of our church family. Elizabeth Wilson--for your decades long commitment to this church, for our friendship that began on the pastor nominating committee 22 years ago, and for praying for us and with us. John Kentera--for reading one of my favorite passages and reminding me

of your life long and renewed relationship with Christ and this church. Paul Cunningham--for being a faithful pastor at La Jolla Presbyterian Church, being Morgan's dad, preaching the message today and for the friendship we share with you and Shannon. To those behind the scenes: Chris Hobson, you are an amazing professional and I'm grateful for your weekly sound support; Doug Peterson, you tie our worship together online, in the Sanctuary and on the patio, and our life together with a heart for ministry; Janean Merryman and the Worship Planning Team, you handle the logistics graciously and seamlessly.

Brendan and Connor, you are the best surprise of our lives. Thank you for singing the song B arranged for the choir in 2012 that inspired how we worship today; reminding us of how you have used your gifts to lead from the time you were little boys; growing in Christ as teenagers and now husbands, fathers and leaders. We are surrounded today by generations of the church that have loved you and nurtured you. We are grateful for who you are and what we have experienced together, and we look forward to all God has ahead for us in this new season.

Thank you, church families, for the expressions of gratitude we have received in person, with cards, gifts and videos. This has been a uniquely meaningful season of transition where we have trusted God and each other and courageously taken the next faithful steps. We are looking forward to the next season of transition and welcome for Peter and Katie, Remy and Glory Dunn at Solana Beach Presbyterian Church.

Together in Christ,

Mike and Amy

Surely this is one of the most exciting hopes of Christian ministry: to be an instrument of the Spirit's upbuilding of a community that, by the very quality of its life together, signals ultimate hope to the world. *Richard John Neuhaus*

Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. *Psalm 37:3-4*

I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

As needed, refer to the Order of Worship and Resources at solanabeach.church for sermon video, message outline, and small group questions print version.

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

Before beginning your time in John and the message, consider going around and sharing how you experienced the retirement celebration in worship and party on the patio?

CONNECT WITH GOD (Use the below practices or choose one from a previous week. This week's practices are from *Everyday Connections Year A*, ed. Heidi Haverkamp.)

- **Weekly Examen Alone:** Spend time in prayer, quiet reflection and journaling, following the steps below.
 - Take a quiet moment, seek our God's presence, and pray for the guidance of the Spirit.
 - Consider the past week-recall specific moments and feelings that stand out to you.
 - Choose one moment or feeling for deeper examination, thanksgiving, or repentance.
 - Let go, breathe deeply, and invite Christ's love to surround and fill you in preparation for the week ahead.
 - End with the Lord's Prayer.
- **Lectio Divina Alone:** Read Psalm 23 and underline a word or phrase that especially grabs your attention. Pray from that word or phrase and ask God to help you connect to its particular invitation for you this week.

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

Together: **Read John 10:1-18**

- Before digging into the scripture and message more, pray together. Ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate and enlighten, and to speak to each one of you through the passage.
- Alone: Briefly spend time alone, considering the passage. Reflect on the question below.
 - What connections have you made between John 10:1-18 and the world beyond Scripture?
- As a whole group: Around the circle, share your personal reflections and questions about the passage. Encourage one another to engage curiosity, confusion, or bigger questions.

CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE

If needed, read the passage again. Then select the best questions or customize the questions for your group.

- Review the main points from the sermon outline.
- How are you reflecting on the message from Sunday?
- What connections have you noticed between John 10:1-18 and other passages from Scripture?
- What contrasts does Jesus set up in the parable in verses 1-5?
- How might we-as Jesus' sheep-learn to be more attentive to the voice of our shepherd?
- What attribute of the "good shepherd" does Jesus repeat three times in verse 11-18? Why?
- What parallels, similarities, and differences do you see between the context of the passage and our context today?
- Is there anything in John 10:1-18 that you will continue to wrestle with and explore?

ENGAGE AND EXPLORE

Together: explore the quote below, in connection with John 10.

"The text also makes clear that while the church must employ capable women and men to shepherd God's 'flock,' ultimately, there is only one shepherd: Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior..., and the task of God's appointed shepherds here on earth is to lead the flock to its one true Lord, in whom we find abundant life (v.10)." - *Ruben Rosario Rodriguez*

PRAYER

Along with prayers of intercession for one another and the world, pray this prayer together: "Jesus, holy gate, you came that we might have life; make me your shepherd that I will know your voice and guide others—and also myself—to your abundant pastures." (*Everyday Connections, Reflections and Practices for Year A*)