

Solomons United Methodist Church

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Dear Solomons UMC,

Grace and Peace to you! Halfway through 2018, Pastor Dottie and the Council want to give each of you an update on the ministries of SUMC, so that we may all be aware of what is going on in the life of our worshipping community.

Earlier this year, we shared important information about our financial reality. The two largest areas in SUMC's budget are fixed costs associated with our building and property, and staffing. There have been significant reductions in staffing expenses this year. First, the director of music has stepped down, and there are no current plans to fill the position. Our contracted musicians are graciously filling this need, working with Pastor Dottie to plan music and schedule available Sundays. Many thanks to Betsey Dewland and Chris Laing for their ministry of music.

We've had plenty of actual rainy days this summer, and previous generations at SUMC planned for the figurative rainy days that inevitably occur in the life of any congregation. Our "rainy day" fund, better known as our Endowment Fund, has helped keep us afloat recently. In July, the Council approved taking \$30,000 from the Fund to help SUMC meet its expenses, hopefully through the end of the year and into early 2019. The decrease in congregational giving and tithing is the primary need for this. If summer plans have you behind in your regular giving, you are invited to catch up as the summer winds down. If you have a rainy day fund of your own, would you consider making a gift to SUMC at this time? And if unexpected summer expenses have you struggling to stay afloat yourself, and to make your gifts to SUMC on a regular basis, please feel free to reach out to Pastor Dottie to discuss and pray about. We are all in this together.

Next, as of July 1, 2018, SUMC has gone from a full time pastoral appointment to a half time (1/2) pastoral appointment (20 hours a week). Pastor Dottie has remained in the appointment, which is possible because she has found additional employment outside the church. She is currently the interim aquarist at the Calvert Marine Museum and is an applicant for the permanent position. This 35-hour a week position allows her enough flexibility to continue as

pastor at SUMC. Council, the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC), and Pastor Dottie have met to discern what ministries she will focus her time and energy on. Those include worship, a visioning process with an outside facilitator, working with Council and staff, and some pastoral care and counseling. She will work Sundays, some time week days (lunchtime), and some evenings. Every third weekend she will work Saturdays and Sundays, with two days off during the week. Fridays will continue to be her Sabbath.

In a full week, trade-offs will need to be made regarding her time. This will be an adjustment for all, and we thank you in advance for your patience and grace. Please keep Pastor Dottie in your prayers as she navigates this transition in a way that is beneficial for her, her family, and SUMC. This also means our lay leaders within the congregation will be taking on additional ministries, while other ministries will no longer have any leadership. Please also pray for all our congregational leaders during this transition. If you are feeling called to serve in a leadership position at this time, please contact Pastor Dottie to prayerfully discuss.

Pastor Dottie understands this arrangement as a possible new vision and direction for SUMC, one that embraces SUMC's history and location in Solomons, connects people who love the beauty of Solomons and want to maintain it, and combines both of Pastor Dottie's calls to ministry, as a pastor and a marine biologist. Pastor Dottie has written about this recently; see the attached article she wrote for the Baltimore Washington Conference. It is possible that a full time appointment could be made from being a part time pastor in a congregation and a part time aquarist. Our District Superintendent (DS) believes that these kind of non-traditional appointments are going to be the future of the UMC, as traditional appointments and churches evolve and grow with changing times. SUMC could be on the forefront of piloting such an appointment and vision.

Time and discernment and the Spirit will tell us what will be. In the meantime, the Council and Pastor Dottie want you to be aware of all that is before us – the invitation we have to respond faithfully to what the Spirit has done, is doing, and will do with us and through us and in spite of us. Please be in daily prayer for SUMC, its leaders, our DS, and Pastor Dottie. Please feel free to contact any one on the Council or Pastor Dottie with questions, feedback, etc.

Thank you.

Dianne Bergman | Roberta Bordash | Lin Gauchat | Keith Koerper | Pam Jones | Richard Jones | Craig Vaughn | Sue Vaughn | Pastor Dottie Yunger