



Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren

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"Anointed to Share Transformation in Christ Jesus"

October 25, 2020

To the Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren Congregation:

On September 9, 2020 Pastor Belita met with me to share her intent, after much prayerful consideration and consultation with family and trusted advisors, to move on from her position here at Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren effective December 31, 2020. I formally shared this with the Executive Committee and subsequently we as the Ministry Coordinating Team accepted her letter of resignation at our meeting on October 6, 2020.

This news certainly brings about a lot of emotion – anxiety, thankfulness, concern, and a hopefulness for both what God is doing with Pastor Belita and what He continues to do in this congregation (among what I imagine are many others). As we reflect on what this means for the congregation, we as the MCT became keenly aware of all that Pastor Belita has meant to this body over the past 18 years. She brought to us the vision that we all share today:

We are called to be a Christ-centered multi-cultural community in the inner city, sharing the love, healing, peace and justice of Christ.

Pastor Belita has been the embodiment of this vision and has given this to us as a gift. At the local level, she has called us to a new level of awareness of the vision of Revelation 7:9 where “a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.” Look around you today and remember if you can what HFCoB looked like 18 years ago. And more than that, we have begun to have the challenging conversations and doing the difficult work of this vision as demonstrated most recently in our series on the complicity of the Church in racism in America.

Pastor Belita has been a voice for this vision denominationally through her work as Annual Conference Moderator among many other acts of service at both the national and district levels. It was under her guidance that the denomination was able to pass the [Separate No More](#) paper of 2007 which adopts this Revelation 7:9 vision as the “denominational vision for the remainder of the 21st century”. We are at the center of what God is doing in the world today, and I am personally thankful for her leadership in this time!

But even more than that, Pastor Belita has walked with many of us through the realities

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of life. It is in these moments that we can be most thankful. It is the call of a pastor to pour out so much, and we are very thankful for all that has been poured into us over these past years. Whether are are new to the congregation or were part of the team that brought Belita on board so long ago, we are changed because of her commitment and sacrifice. It is a beautiful thing to see someone who God has used so well.

Pastor Belita, we send you with our blessing and love. May the Peace of Christ and the experiences we share guide us all from this place. And may we cry out together, Maranatha – “come Lord Jesus”! Thank you our dear Sister and may God be with you until we meet again!

In Christ’s Love

Jonathan Brenneman

MCT Chairperson, Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren

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