

Pastor Jeff's Retirement Letter

Pastor's Page March 2007

Dear Congregation,

I am announcing my retirement from full-time ministry, which will be complete at the end of August. I am very proud to have served Bacon for a third of my Thirty –Three years in ministry. In addition to loving God with all of my heart, soul, and mind, and in the same way my beloved wife, Beth, so I have served Bacon with similar passion and devotion.

My ministry at Bacon began eleven and a half years ago. I am proud to have started the summer and vacation camps at Bacon. I owe the inspiration to Beth. She was working at the Salvation Army as a social service counselor. She observed the camping experience there, and said she thought we could do the same thing in our church. We have had eight years of continuously meaningful outreach to children and families with our church camps. It has also been a major portion of our income. As you know I am and have been a hands on Pastor. When our camp needed to be rejuvenated, I went to work for fifty-hours a week during the summer for three years without compensation. I am thankful to Beth for her creativity in creating programs that are still operative in our camps. I am also thankful for her time and hard work during those three years. I always said I worked for her. She was planning the camping experience. I was just implementing the programs. I am also thankful to her for helping me in selecting our Camp counselors for this year. Her diligent work and contributions in this church remain invaluable.

I am thankful for the opportunity to have inspired and begun Taste of Bacon events, i.e., dinner theatres, Miracle on 59th Street, dinners with an auction, and Thanksgiving and St. Patrick's Day dinners. I am very proud of the community business connections that Beth and I have forged over the years. This has resulted in several thousands of dollars of contributions to our basket auction in conjunction with our Thanksgiving Dinner. In addition, I believe I have inspired many people on our Session and within our congregation to realize their gifts and talents and to use them in the necessary work of our church, i.e., leading Bible studies, overseeing the prayer chains, painting and repairing our church, working in our church camps, helping with Taste of Bacon dinners, leading and serving on committees, and working with youth and the Sunday School. In addition, I am proud to be mentoring one of our elders, Terry McIntyre, while he continues to work toward completing his Lay Ministry Program. It has been my pleasure to recognize, inspire and provide opportunities for people with spiritual gifts to deliver inspiring Sunday messages, most recently Ray Hubert, Terry McIntyre and Darren MacDougall, a Ph.D. candidate in religious studies.

We have instituted several spiritual life and renewal programs including Bible studies, speakers, group discussions and 24-hour prayer vigils. We recently started the prayer chain. It has been very active in the last several months. I am very proud to have reinstated bereavement dinners at Bacon Memorial when I came to Bacon church twelve years ago, and to have worked closely with the Deacons to ensure the quality and quantity was appropriate for grieving families.

I know our quarterly Praise and Renewal services have been a blessing to our church. Our radio program, "Taste of New Wine", which I started eight years ago, continues to be a blessing to our shut-ins and people throughout Western New York and Southern Ontario, Canada.

I am thankful for Beth's assistance with the Hospitality Evangelism Program I felt inspired to create. I believe with all my heart that gratitude and recognition are essential to a healthy Christian Community. In furthering this necessary work, Beth and I created the following programs, i.e., Church Youth Recognition Sunday and Recognition of our 90, 80 and 70-year young children of God. As well, members with 20 years or more of service to our church were recognized during several Sunday services. In order to create a special day for each participant, the recognitions were planned in conjunction with special Third Sunday Luncheons as well as a beautiful decorated sheet cakes for all to enjoy.

Finally, I believe the most spiritually fulfilling experience for me throughout my twelve years of ministry at Bacon Memorial Church is to have ministered to each of you through baptisms, sickness, funerals and bereavement, weddings, counseling and to have been led by Jesus Christ to inspire you to realize and actualize your gifts and talents within our church. I thank each of you for your contributions, and I look to you to further Christ's work at Bacon Memorial Church.

In preparation for my retirement, Presbytery has recognized my gifts, passion for ministry, and Beth's and my desire to unite with a community of faith where I can serve as a part-time minister; one where both Beth and I can worship and fellowship together in a mutual ministry of love. The words that best express my intentions in our next church are: "Come grow old with me. The best is yet to come."

In Christ's Service of Love,

Pastor Jeff

Rev. Dr. Jeffrey L. Grove