



December 17, 2018

To the Congregation of Skyland UMC:

Below is an announcement which was made in all three services at church on Sunday, December 16th. I wanted to be sure everyone in the congregation got this information and understood the situation.

On behalf of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC), I want to inform you of a decision made to address some needs of Wes and Skyland as well. The SPRC, with collaboration with Wes and the District Superintendent, Beth Crissman, are recommending a leave of absence for Wes to have him focus on his personal health and family needs. The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church outlines a Formation & Spiritual Growth Leave (paragraph 350.3), which is eligible to full-time Clergy every 7 years. Wes has never taken advantage of this opportunity to regroup and recharge. This request was not originated by Wes. The SPRC strongly feels Wes needs this to focus on his health and family ultimately to improve his overall ministry.

As a result, the Blue Ridge District Office, the Bishop and Cabinet along with the Skyland UMC Admin Board has approved the SPRC's request of this Formation & Spiritual Growth Leave starting January 7th through the remainder of the conference year (6 months). During this period, Wes is still appointed to Skyland and will be paid as normal. We have received a grant from the Blue Ridge District to help fund worship plans and pulpit needs during this time. The SPRC is currently working with the Staff to develop plans for this coverage including pastoral care needs as well.

Please join me, the SPRC, and the Staff in praying for Wes and Linda through this critical time of renewal and rejuvenation of mind, body, and spirit.

If anyone has questions, comments or concerns, don't hesitate to reach out to me directly or to anyone else on the SPRC.

I hope everyone has a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year!

Thanks,

TJ Knapp
Chair, Skyland UMC SPRC

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