

Dear Friends,

It is with great apprehension that I make this announcement. After 23 years of employment with the Diocese serving here at Pax Christi and my upcoming 68th birthday, I have discerned that it is time for me to step back from all the responsibilities of this ministry in order to focus my time and energy on my own wellbeing, that of my family, the hobbies that have been put on the back burner for years and the volunteer ministries within the church that I have found give meaning to my life. This has been a very difficult decision to make because you have been such a huge part of my life and so many of you have been incorporated into actually being part of my own family. But -- I will be retiring on June 30th.

I do feel that as the parish begins looking forward to coming back after this past year you need Fr. Pat's leadership to seek new ways of being parish. This new way will include my stepping away to allow Father Pat to build a staff that can walk this next phase of the Journey without the parish looking to me to merely returning to the old ways of being church. As you look to your 27th anniversary as a parish this summer you need to be truly discerning who you are as a parish, everyone taking more ownership and responsibility of what that means, Advancing the Journey as you approach your 30th anniversary in 2024 and honestly look at what other changes and challenges will happen within these next three years.

My intention is to continue as a member of the parish and as long as the pastor wishes, I will be volunteering to provide oversight of the columbarium, helping families with funerals as needed and organizing a Bereavement Committee to learn this ministry so the parish has a functioning committee when the time does come that I may need to step away from the Bereavement ministry. I have found this ministry as the life blood of the parish as we have gathered together to support parishioners and others during times of loss.

I have spoken with Bishop John and offered to continue serving the Diocese as Ecumenical Officer at his pleasure and hope to continue with our local Ecumenical Partners as this parish continues to understand church as all Christian Communities finding ways to pray and serve the larger community together. I have also committed to Dcn. John Brannen,

Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministry, to continue helping him coordinate the diocesan participation in the National Catholic Youth Conference of which Pax Christi has served as the coordinating parish for those biennial events. So I will have plenty to do!

I appreciate all the support I have received from you throughout these many years and I wish you the very best as you maneuver through the upcoming years. It is very difficult to present this news at a time of no hugs and kisses, but please know that I offer this with Love and....

In Christ's Peace,
Melissa

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