

From Pastor Kevin:

Dear Fellowship of Exeter CRC:

My family and I have for sometime now been discussing my ministry work here at Exeter CRC, and in conversation and prayers, we have come to realize that my time at ECRC has come to a close. In discussion with council and with council's approval, I will be completing my time here on Monday, January 31, 2022. I will lead my final service on Sunday, January 30.

This decision has not been taken lightly and has not been without a lot of prayer. I have recognized that I have a different leadership style and a different gift mix than what is needed at ECRC at this time. Please know that it was without a doubt that God called me here over 7 years ago, and I have been able to use my leaderships gifts in many areas. There have been many blessings as well as challenges and through them all our God has been faithful, and he will continue to be faithful.

This decision to finish my ministry work at ECRC is not on account of a reaction to any specific circumstance that has occurred along the way. It is a decision and desire to finish my work here well, and to ensure that ECRC is taken care of with the next person that God has in mind to be your pastor. My desire is to see the council, the congregation, myself and my family all flourish and thrive.

It is typical for a pastor to finish their call at one church by receiving a call from another church. However, I have not been following up with churches that have made enquiries to me. I have also sensed a strong call out of a full-time church ministry as a sole pastor, and a strong sense of being led to use my gifts in perhaps a denominational ministry or other Christian organizations. I still feel called to participate in ministry work, just not necessarily in a church setting. We are trusting that this is the best way forward ensuring what is best for the leaders, for the church and for me and my family.

We love Exeter, the community and the people. We are sad about this. With a pastor leaving a church, and especially without another call, this could evoke different emotions, and we respect that. My prayer is that we continue to work through this release of call amicably and the best way possible for building up the church and bringing glory to God.

I ask that you please take time to process this and pray about next steps as together we enter into uncharted territory. But we do not do this alone, and we give God thanks for his faithfulness and his leading. I invite Tim to continue to share.

From Tim deWeerd:

Thank you Pastor Kevin.

Council has already shared this with you along this journey, but I will share this now with the Congregation as well:

We, the Council of this church, were saddened with your request to be released from your call here in Exeter, but we know that you and your family have been praying earnestly for some time and we trust that God has directed your path to make this request. We know that our Heavenly Father is always in complete control, and we trust that He will hold you and nurture you along the way. As a Council, we support you fully in this decision and will continue to pray for you, and your family, as you discern God's next plan for you.

I also want to share with you, the Congregation, that Council has already been working with Pastors from our Classis as we plan to present this separation request to the Classis Huron meeting in February. Even along this part of the journey, we have been blessed by the conversations with these compassionate Pastors - with Pastor Kevin, myself and the Council. We remain completely unified.

I have reflected on the nature of Pastor Kevin's request for over a month now, and I have come to realize a couple truths in Scripture. I have already shared that we know that our Heavenly Father is always in complete control - *"that he watches over us in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head."* Members of our Council echoed this confidence when we first learned of Pastor Kevin's request, and we will cling to this truth always. Another truth I have come to realize is that God does indeed call us into service and then calls us out of that service for something else, perhaps with us knowing the next call, and sometimes not. The apostle Paul had calls that moved him from church planting to tent making, back to church planting and eventually to lobbying the government in Rome. I don't think that Paul always knew the next task, but he trusted that God would take him to serve where and how God desired.

We see this same trust in Pastor Kevin and his family, and ask that you continue to support them in your prayers and in your encouragement.