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## Letter from the Moderator

As you now know, after a period of prayer, Dr. Gentle has discerned that now is the time for him to bring an end to his ministry at National City Christian Church. Also, Rev. Miriam Gentle has accepted the call of a congregation in Washington state, which will provide him an extended sabbatical to rest and recharge after his fourteen years of faithful ministry to, and with, us and the Foundation.

There is never a perfect time for the change that comes when a pastor says goodbye to their congregation, and we will miss Dr. Gentle's presence and leadership. However, calling a new minister is an opportunity for National City to continue embracing the changes that have begun with the Epiphany process.

That said, you have questions. Well, we have some answers! Dr. Gentle has already stated that his last Sunday with us will be February 23rd. This will give us time to celebrate and thank him properly as we head into the season of Lent. Further, there have already been some discussions with our regional minister, Rev. Allen Harris, and Rev. Dick Hamm from the Foundation board regarding how we can proceed until we can identify an interim minister. Initially, for the first two Sundays of Lent, Rev.'s Baines and Goines have already graciously agreed to preach.

In light of all of this new change, we will postpone the Annual Meeting one week to February 2nd, which will permit both me and Rev. Harris to attend. Likewise, the delay will permit the Congregational board to work with Rev. Harris on the answers to the questions that have not been answered here.

In Christ,  
Alan S. Williams

*See Dr. Gentle's letter to the Congregation on Page 2.*

## Fond Farewells to the Gentles

After 14 years as our Senior Minister, there is no one way to say farewell and best wishes to Revs. Stephen and Miriam Gentle as they begin this new chapter of their lives together, so let's celebrate many ways together!

On Sunday, February 9, join us for a Brown Bag Lunch and Christian Bible Study that Dr. Gentle will be leading on Philippians. Bring your favorite sandwich, soup, etc., and also bring a typed or handwritten personal message/letter that you would like to share with Dr. Gentle.

Before the study begins, we will have a time of sharing and thanksgiving from personal tributes to our Senior Minister for all that he has given to this church and our lives together.

On Sunday, February 16, our regional minister, Rev. Allen V. Harris, will be preaching at the 10 a.m. worship service, so please join us immediately afterwards in Howland Center for a fond farewell Sunday Brunch, featuring all of Dr. Gentle's favorite food creations. (I have been assured jambalaya and jerk chicken will be on the menu!) So please plan to join for great food and fellowship - plus some interesting surprises as well.

And then on Sunday, February 23, immediately following the 10 a.m. worship service, join us for a grand farewell party in the main Visitors' Mezzanine and Atrium outside of the Sanctuary as we send National City's best wishes and Godspeed to two faithful servants of the risen Christ, Revs. Stephen and Miriam Gentle!

- Steven C. Baines



**National City  
Christian Church**  
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

5 Thomas Circle, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 232-0323  
Fax: (202) 797-0110  
sgentle@nationalcitycc.org

Stephen W. Gentle  
Senior Pastor

January 23, 2020

Dear friends,

*"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens." Ecclesiastes 3:1*

After a season of earnest prayer, I have discerned that it is time for me to say goodbye as your senior pastor. My last Sunday will be February 23, 2020.

Thank you for the sacred privilege of serving as your pastor for 14 years. Truly, it has been a great joy to serve alongside you and to share so many meaningful moments together.

Why now? Two reasons: (1) National City Christian Church is poised to move with strength and vitality toward its centennial celebration over the next 10 years because of the Epiphany process and the new building assessment. The time is right for new and energized leadership in the role of senior pastor to guide the congregation and the Foundation into your exciting future; and (2) I have discerned that in our time together I have given my best efforts to our ministry and now is the time for me to take an extended sabbath rest.

In March my wife and I will be moving to the state of Washington, where Rev. Miriam Gentle has received the call to serve a congregation as their pastor. Please pray for her and Northwest United Protestant Church (Disciples of Christ) in Richland, Washington.

Please know that our hearts and prayers will continue to be with all of you. While we will not be able to be with you physically, our loving thoughts will be with all of you in the months and years ahead. Miriam and I will financially support the next phase of the capital campaign, and one day – the good Lord willing many, many years from now – we will be inurned in the Columbarium at National City Christian Church.

I am so grateful for the congregational and Foundation leadership that I have enjoyed working with, through these many years, as well as the amazing and dedicated staff of National City Christian Church. All of these committed leaders will need 100% of your support as National City Christian Church moves boldly into the future together. Additionally, Capital Area Regional Minister Allen Harris will offer his excellent guidance and pastoral support in this time of transition.

Thank you for your love, prayers, and support as my love, prayers, and support will continue with all of you.

My deepest appreciation,

  
Stephen Gentle

# February Birthdays

- 4 Sara Imhulse
- 5 Matt Cahill
- 6 Denise Ross  
Glen Gerada
- 7 Erin Hedlund
- 9 Paul Heffron
- 13 Dick Gesell
- 14 Robert Ross
- 16 Carolyn Gesell O'Sullivan  
Alia Waheed Ky
- 17 Bill Stewart  
Holly Ahlbin
- 20 Nett Brown
- 21 Ken Brooker-Langston
- 22 Lorraine Budd
- 24 David Robeck
- 25 Melissa Wilson\*
- 26 Perry Ives
- 27 Lynne Morgan
- 28 Linda Sharp

# March Birthdays

- 5 Jeff Jeffrey
- 7 Loretta Tate
- 10 Rick Oettinger
- 11 Michelle Jezycki
- 13 Phillip Gentle
- 16 Aixa Diaz  
Peter Morgan
- 19 David Albee
- 23 Enid Maitland  
Bettie Moores
- 24 Jim Gentle
- 26 Norman Kruse
- 30 Loretta Franklin

*\*Indicates Student  
For additions or changes,  
contact Kathleen Swihart  
at kswihart62@gmail.com*

## Upcoming Sermons and Events

### Sunday, February 2

"Blessed" from Matthew 5:1-12

Dr. Gentle preaches a message regarding the blessedness of our community in Christ Jesus, with some thoughts on his spiritual journey.

**Annual Meeting** immediately following the 10 a.m. worship, in the Sanctuary. Regional Minister Allen V. Harris will share the next steps for the congregation as it looks to the future calling of a senior pastor. No lunch is scheduled.

### Sunday, February 9

"Let Your Light Shine" from Matthew 5:13-20

Dr. Gentle preaches a message of hope as we shine God's light and share God's love, giving God the glory.

**Brown Bag Lunch and Bible Study** with Dr. Gentle teaching on Philippians 2 and 4: "Be of the same mind in the Lord: The mind of Christ." At 11:30 p.m., in the Howland Center.

### Sunday, February 16

Pulpit Guest: Allen V. Harris is the Regional Minister for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Capital Area. Rev. Harris will lead National City in worship as we ponder the future of our congregation.

**Celebration Brunch and Fond Farewell** at 11:30 a.m. in the Howland Center, featuring Dr. Gentle's favorite foods. Donation for brunch is \$12.

### Sunday, February 23

"God's Glory Revealed" from Matthew 17:1-9

Dr. Gentle preaches his last message as Senior Pastor of National City Christian Church. Join us for a time of thanksgiving and celebration!

### Music at Midday in February

Music at Midday will resume in February. Concerts are in the Sanctuary on Fridays from 12:15 to 1 p.m. and are free. Donations are accepted.

**February 7: Organist James D. Hicks** (Califon, New Jersey) will perform organ works of Danish composers Gottfred Matthison-Hansen, Christian Præstholm, and Benna Moe.

**February 14: Chuyoung and Erik William Suter** will present a Valentine's Day performance of the lovely romantic Piano Concerto No. 2 of Sergei Rachmaninoff with piano and organ.

**February 21:** Washington, D.C. pianist **Natalia Kazaryan** will perform works of Olivier Messiaen, Ludwig van Beethoven, and Maurice Ravel.

**February 28: Samantha Scheff** (Asbury Park, New Jersey) will perform a program of French organ music, featuring works of Marcel Dupré, César Franck, and Louis Vierne.

## Call-In Prayer Time on Saturdays

If you would like to join our weekly prayer, you are invited to call in on Saturdays at 8 a.m. for community prayer. Call 712-775-7031 and use code 371015. If you have questions regarding the prayer line, contact Loretta Tate.

### Lenten Devotional Deadline February 10

Rev. Steven Baines is coordinating this year's Lenten Devotional, with a deadline for devotionals of February 10. This year's overall Lenten theme is *"Become a Beacon -- Living in the Light."*

### Ash Wednesday Service

Join us for a meaningful service of worship on Ash Wednesday, February 26, at 7 p.m. An imposition of ashes will be shared in the Sanctuary with anyone who would like to receive them. Come and share in our spiritual journey together at the beginning of the season of Lent

### Lenten Study Groups To Begin February 29

Lent is coming! In addition to reading the daily meditations be sure to attend a Lenten study group or form a Lenten study group in your area.

Groups are currently planned for:

- Outer beltway group of Virginia meeting on Sunday evenings in the Sterling area
- Arlington/Falls Church group meeting on Sunday evenings at the home of Teresa Swihart
- Saturday morning group meeting with Rev. Steven Baines at the church
- Sunday morning 9 a.m. Sunday School class "Pathfinders" in the atrium.

- Teresa Swihart



Food Pantry volunteers filling gift bags for our neighbors in need.

### Christmas for National City's Hunger Ministry

On December 18 National City and the Food Pantry team celebrated Christmas with 240 neighbors participating in our Hunger Ministry. They each received their usual bag of food we hand out each week, but they also received bags of personal hygiene items, gloves, knit caps, socks and a sweatshirt. In true Christmas Spirit we were also able to treat them with mini pies, Christmas candy, and various fresh fruit. There was an abundance of gratitude and smiles!

The Food Pantry team includes Barbara Boward, Deloris Ruddock, Laurese Dancy, Annice Majette, Tony Johnson, Tom and Barbara Kelley, Ellen Crowder, Lorraine Magnussen, Steven Baines and Stephen Gentle.