

April 13, 2022

Beloved Family and Friends of The Sanctuary,

This month marks twelve years since God gave me the vision for The Sanctuary during a silent retreat that I attended after Easter. In those early moments, I remember feeling so excited by the possibility of the church I was pastoring becoming an intentional Christian retreat and spiritual formation center (as an extension of the church). I also remember thinking that it seemed like such a far-off idea and the likelihood of it happening seemed remote. I knew then as I know EVEN MORE today that God IS the God of the IMPOSSIBLE, and I certainly could not have imagined how God would accomplish this.



Sanctuary

Christian Spiritual
Formation &
Retreat Center

at Woodville

www.SanctuaryAtWoodville.org

Four years after that date in April of 2010, The Sanctuary at Woodville was launched in 2014 as a church which had the extension of an intentional ministry as a Christian Spiritual Formation and Retreat Center. Our purpose from the beginning was to be Kingdom of God focused, not merely about “our church.” We longed to be a gathering place for God’s people throughout the Kingdom (crossing all denominational and organizational boundaries) to come to The Sanctuary and receive “sustenance for their souls” increasing their intimacy with the Triune God. God has and is doing this through so many avenues such as individual quiet days, small group retreats, individual and group spiritual direction, practicing together various spiritual disciplines (like Visio Divina), dialogues around relevant cultural topics,

conferences, seminars, ongoing Kingdom prayer opportunities, exploring how God speaks to us through our own creativity, international student events to encourage Gospel interaction, partnerships with The Pilgrimage (online spiritual formation), Love Unconditional (mission to the Dominican Republic) and Mobile Food Pantry (a Hopkinton Christian Service Connection effort), supporting other joint community efforts of area churches and SO MUCH MORE!!!

And once again, God is doing something new! **God has clearly led me through the process to take a new job as the Pastor of Group Life at a church across town, Faith Community Church in Hopkinton, beginning in mid-June. In doing so, I feel God is calling me to step away from my pastoral duties at The Sanctuary.**

For the last eight years, Faith Community has contracted with me part-time to offer individual spiritual direction with staff members as well as opportunities to offer regular soul-care events and even lead small groups around practicing spiritual disciplines. It is an AMAZING story about how God has been unfolding this “new thing” of my becoming one of their pastors, and I am very excited and curious to see what God will continue to do in our broader community.

This is a new and exciting season for The Sanctuary, and you will hear more about that vision in the coming weeks. One of our hopes and beliefs is that my new role at Faith Community Church will help to encourage even more Christ-followers to use the offerings at The Sanctuary’s Christian Spiritual Formation and Retreat Center to grow deeper in their intimacy with the Triune God. **Elizabeth, Gethin and Bill will continue to lead The Sanctuary and I will continue to serve on the Board of Directors at The Sanctuary.** All four of us here on Staff have seen this transition as a movement of God and we feel excited about the new possibilities! We have truly worked as a team throughout our eight years together, and I look forward to watching how God will move and work through them in their continued leadership. They will share in the leadership of our weekly Sundays at The Sanctuary worship services and will be asking other ministry leaders to contribute. I will be attending Sunday worship services at the Hopkinton and Framingham campuses of Faith Community Church. This reminds me of what it must have been like when God sent out the disciples in the early Church. The disciples remained connected with their sending Church (Jerusalem) while going out and loving and serving other communities of believers. The Sanctuary at Woodville and Faith Community Church in Hopkinton are actually located on the same main road through town but on opposite ends. I love how God is continuing to bond us together in the Kingdom and the local community!

What an honor and great privilege it has been to steward God’s work at Woodville Baptist Church and into The Sanctuary at Woodville for these thirteen years! I have been humbled by this opportunity and through seeing what God has done. I encourage you to continue offering your prayers for and financial gifts to The Sanctuary while also taking part in the wonderful events there. Among others, Creative Contemplation with Christ, our bi-annual Walk Whitehall fundraiser and Pastor Dick Germaine’s art show are all coming up within the next month. For more info, visit www.SanctuaryAtWoodville.org.

May you have a deeply reflective Holy Week and a wonderfully celebratory Eastertide!

You are Christ’s Treasure,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rev. Dr. Laurel G. Coolbaugh". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Rev. Dr. Laurel G. Coolbaugh