

## Urgent Prayer Request & Life of the Church Article...

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Date: Friday, February 12, 2021, 11:28 AM EST

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# The Life of the Church

From Pastor John

February 12, 2021

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## URGENT PRAYER REQUEST

*Michael Etcheto*, the grandson of *Barbara Etcheto*, sustained a serious head injury last night when he was hit by a truck while walking. He is in ICU at St. Francis Hospital in Hartford. Please pray earnestly for Michael, his mother Jenny, Barbara, and the entire Etcheto family.

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Dear Church Family,

I continue to remember all of you as the unprecedented challenges of the previous year spill over into the new year. I acknowledged in last Sunday's sermon that we all suffer from "pandemic fatigue," but this is not the time to become less vigilant in our efforts to preserve our own safety and health and that of others. At long last we are seeing light at the end of the tunnel, but as long as we are still in the tunnel, let us continue to guard our steps.

Many of you have expressed concern for me during the pandemic because of my age and pre-existing medical conditions, and also because I have first-hand contact (albeit limited) with church members. You should know that I am tested weekly for COVID (so far, so good) and had my first vaccination on February 11. I pray that all of you will have access to the vaccine as soon as possible.

Speaking of my age (not my favorite subject!), by now all of you should have received a letter from the Staff-Parish Relations Committee about my retirement at the end of June. *The United Methodist Book of Discipline* mandates that pastors retire from full-time ministry and leave their

current appointments at age 72. I accept this change as a reality and look forward in many ways to this next phase of my life. At the same time, I feel sadness about leaving you because I deeply cherish our relationship, and because we will be completing our time together and saying our goodbyes under less than ideal circumstances. Both your future and mine will be shadowed by uncertainty. Like Abraham, we will be called to a place that we do not know; but also like Abraham, we will go forth in faith that God will meet us in that new place, and that it will be a good place.

In our last church newsletter and worship service, it was announced that we will not be meeting in the sanctuary on Sunday, February 14. You may wonder why. Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton has provided a “respite” week for NYAC clergy, which began with a virtual version of the annual Bishop’s Convocation and will conclude with a service this Sunday produced by the Conference staff. The purpose is not simply to grant pastors and other worship leaders a “day off,” but also to allow thousands of United Methodists in our area to worship together at a moment when we are all vulnerable and in need of God’s grace. I hope you will be among them. Simply go to WUMC’s website, where you will find the link to the NYAC service on Sunday morning.

Be well and know that you are loved.

Grace and peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John".

Woodbury United Methodist Church

Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors

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