

Thank You For 10 Blessed Years!

I can hardly believe that it has been ten years since I arrived at Vision of Hope MCC. I was fresh out of seminary and full of crazy ideas and a true belief that with God all things were possible. And how true that has been as we have experienced being a community of faith. The last ten years have been so full of blessings and I want to thank each and every one of you for making my life so rich. Each of you has added to my tapestry of life and I am blessed.

In ten years, we have been through ups and downs and yet we have continued to strive to be "led by Christ, empowered to rock the world!" I am honored and privileged to be your lead pastor. We have grown into a healthy church, focused on Jesus Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit, and are a place where God is alive and active. We live our faith out loud and out of the box.

So much comes to my mind as I recall the last ten years. I want to highlight only a few. Our worship is powerful and one reason is that each time we gather we are expectant of God's presence. Each of our worship ministries has its beginning in the last ten years and you make me proud. You know how to worship in truth and in spirit!

Your generosity is amazing. We have never-not been able to do something because of money. Our Benevolence Fund began with a single check I received from Ted Straley's family for doing his funeral service. Since starting this fund, we have never turned a real need away. You make that happen and I am grateful. Our outreach to our community and beyond continues to grow. We transformed Pride from an event to raise money to an event of generously giving so others may know about the love of Christ. Our Christmas project is incredible and again your generosity makes it possible.

I have grown tremendously through our shared experiences and I thank you for teaching me so much about life and love and God. I am thankful for every lesson especially the tough ones from which unexpected blessings spring.

We have grown up together as a community of faith and it is good. I am so thankful for your willing to support our additional staff - Jen, David and Mykal. Each of them brings unique gifts to our work together and makes us together so much more than we are alone. I am thankful for the ways they

encourage me, support me and take me to task when necessary with love and grace. We are very blessed to have them as part of our family. I am very grateful for our board of directors who works very hard as well as each leader who gives so much of themselves. Each of you makes me a better pastor by all that you do. Thank You!

I am most proud of our faithfulness in stepping out with a new campus in York and a new campus in Reading. We have discovered wonderful people looking for a place where they are fully accepted and fully able to participate in a community of faith. Your generosity makes this possible and in doing so we are changing lives for Christ.

As I look back 10 years, it fills me with excitement about where God will take us in the next 10. I am confident that God has much more in store for each of us as individual and as a community of faith. Whether you have been here one day or since I arrived, I am grateful for your presence in my life and for walking this journey together.

In closing, I would like to thank Denise. Your love and support enables me to live out loud this call to ministry and I am very blessed. Your encouragement reminds me of our higher calling and your challenges make me a better person. I do not say it enough although I think about it often, you are a very special gift from God. You bless me and make my life rich. Thank you for loving me!

May God continue to bless each one of us and we journey together.

Peace ... Pastor Deb