

November 28, 2023

Dear members and friends,

It is with a mixture of emotions that I write this letter to you today. After much reflection and prayer, I have accepted the position of Director of Youth Initiatives for Together Lab, a ministry that equips faith-based justice movements throughout Oregon. I will deliver my last sermon at Westminster on December 17. My last Sunday in worship will be December 24. I will begin my time at Together Lab in January.

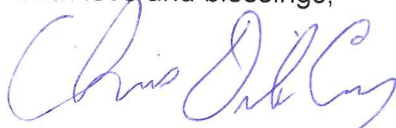
In this new role, I will be answering a call to go into full-time community organizing, activating and accompanying teenagers, caregivers, and other youth stakeholders throughout Oregon toward a world of justice and thriving for all. I will also be managing a new statewide initiative partnering caregivers, youth, and mental health professionals toward a holistic approach to teenagers and mental health. This new role probably won't surprise anyone who knows me, and it does feel like a true call.

I am so incredibly grateful for Westminster and for all the support and love you have shown me these years. We have been together through a time of incredible turmoil and disruption within our larger community. My family and I flew across the country in 2020 from the epicenter of the COVID-19 outbreak in New York City toward unprecedented fires to meet a congregation and metro area encountering national unrest, a historic racial reckoning, and a housing crisis, all while having to build relationships and ministries over Zoom and livestream because of lockdowns. It's been... a lot!

Through all of it, you have embraced me and cared for me, nurturing my wellbeing and growth; we've laughed and cried together through all the ups and downs we've experienced. I am so incredibly grateful for the ministry we have been able to do together, and you allowed me in my leadership to have us walk together through unknown yet exciting and fruitful paths. It was historic that you called your first person-of-color pastor in 130 years, and together we made history in the spirit of Land Back for indigenous communities through Barbie's Village. And my heart is clearly with the teens whom I have been able to accompany through these topsy-turvy years, having deep conversations with them all about spirituality, school pressures, God moments, Bee Movie, Chipotle vs. sandwiches, a billion lions vs. one of every Pokemon, Air Horn apps at inappropriate times, and the rules of Spicy Uno and Infection Tag.

My family and I will be staying in the metro Portland area, so I suspect we will be seeing each other around. You have deeply impacted and touched my life, and you are very special to me. I know that Westminster will continue to thrive, and my prayers will continue to be with you. Thank you from the depths of my heart for allowing me to serve alongside you and be a part of this beautiful community. I am forever grateful for the privilege of being your pastor.

With love and blessings,



The Rev. Chris Dela Cruz



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