

Pastor Scott Duffey to Retire Later This Month

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Scott Duffey Pastor Scott Duffey, left. Photo source: <http://www.stauntonbrethren.org/contact.html>

Pastor Scott Duffey will be retiring from Staunton Church of the Brethren at the end of this month after 40 years as an ordained minister.

Upon graduation from Bridgewater College, he opted to wait a year before entering seminary as his future wife, Becky, was finishing her degree at Madison College. During this gap year, he was licensed in the Mid-Atlantic District and placed in ministry in the Shenandoah District by then-District Executive Stan Wampler. He served for 14 months at Salem Church in Stephens City as a student minister.

Pastor Duffey grew up in a Christian family who was active in the Hagerstown (Md.) Church of the Brethren. One day while sitting in the pew, he felt a clear call to ministry. He said the thought occurred to him, as he was listening to his pastor, Dr. DeWitt L. Miller, “I could do this...” He was in ninth grade at that time.

During this same period, another young man in the Hagerstown congregation was sensing the call to ministry, as well. The two teens decided to meet with their pastor to find out more about ministry. After that meeting, they both knew they would be in set-apart ministry one day. The other teen in that meeting was the 2020 Annual Conference Moderator Paul Munday.

Pastor Duffey believes one of the most important roles he has as a pastor is to help others discern God’s call on their lives for the ministry. He says, “...ten to twelve people have been called out” during his ministry. Pastor Duffey’s advice for those considering going in the ministry is, “Do a lot of praying because it’s a hard time to go into ministry.” He observes, “The church [universal] is in such a period of transition.” For example, there are conflicts and many churches have moved to part-time ministries. “You will need a strong foundation and be clear about your calling,” according to Pastor Duffey, and “You need to count the costs well.” His final word of advice, “Preparation is key. Put in the time to do it right,” he said, “The [S]pirit is also in the preparation.”

Reflecting on his life in the set-apart ministry, Pastor Duffey recalls his favorite memories are the baptisms he has performed over the decades. As a student minister, he baptized 14 people when he served at Salem. There were other good memories, as well. Pastor Duffey remembers there were many great opportunities over the years, including serving at the national level on Standing Committee and as a member of the Program and Arrangements Committee for the Annual Conference. Once, he was

selected to be the music director at Annual Conference. It must have left an impression because he has also been tapped to be the music coordinator for the 2021 Annual Conference in Greensboro.

In his spare time, Pastor Duffey is a musician and songwriter, performing with the Bittersweet Gospel Band. The group has had two music videos produced by Annual Conference Moderator-Elect David Sollenberger. They have also recorded five new songs, which will be coming out this spring as downloads and on CD. The band performs at various Churches of the Brethren and other denominations to reach youth and break down cultural barriers.

Pastor Duffey will continue to tour with the Bittersweet Gospel Band, but in the weeks immediately following retirement, he will take a "Sabbath" and travel with his wife Becky to explore some of the nation's great parks. They do not have plans at this time to move because they are already strategically located between their two sons and their families. One son, Tim, and his wife Audrey Hollenberg Duffey are co-pastoring at Oakton. Their other son, Andy, is pastoring at Antioch Church and lives in Rocky Mount, N.C. with his wife Courtney, a kindergarten teacher.

As for what the future holds, Pastor Duffey will return from his Sabbath and "... will see what happens." He cites Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope," with the expectation that God will have more ministry for him in the future. "Even though the Church is in a period of transition, the Church will survive because it's God's Church. It may not look anything like this or what we've experienced in the past, but the body of Christ will continue the work on this earth." In the final analysis, Pastor Duffey says, "Thank God it doesn't depend on me." He encourages everyone to remain hopeful and not to spend too much time in despair.

Written by Brenda Sanford Diehl for The Shenandoah Update, 12-12-2019.