

PUMC Member News



Princeton UMC

I don't know if anyone there still remembers me, so I would like to re-introduce myself. My name is Ben Burt, better known as that little hooligan son of Fred and Vivian Burt. For the most part, I have not been a physical part of your congregation since 1997, when I went off to college. However, my name remained on the roll of PUMC from many years after I left.

After I left Princeton I struggled to find a church home and I never wanted to move my membership. I never encountered a place as welcoming, comfortable, and beautiful as PUMC. After many years of searching I found my way to Bethany UMC in Summerville SC, and I moved my membership there. While Bethany was not PUMC, it was my new church home.

If you are still reading this then I thank you, and I bet you are wondering what the point of this journey through memory lane is all about. Well it was during my time at Bethany that I discerned God's calling on my life to enter the candidacy process for ordination as an Elder in The United Methodist Church. As a result I spent three years attending Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary (the only UMC recognized seminary in SC) before I graduated with a Masters of Divinity.

After graduation I was commissioned by the Bishop of the South Carolina Annual Conference as the pastor at Epworth UMC on James Island SC. I have spent the past two years under appointment at Epworth as a provisional Elder. I am sending you this letter to inform you that I am up for ordination as an Elder in full connection at the South Carolina Annual Conference on June 2nd. The service will commence at 7pm. Please know that you are all invited to this ceremony, but I realize this is a tremendous distance to travel for someone who you haven't seen in a long time.

Moreover than your presence at this service, it is important to me that you know you are invited to be there. To some end you will already be there, through all you poured into me. You, Princeton United Methodist Church, are the reason I am where I am today. Sure, from a theological perspective we can say God would have gotten me to where ever God wanted me, regardless of my or other's actions; God got Jonah to Nineveh. However, I believe God wanted me to be nurtured by Princeton UMC.

You all are an amazing congregation. Even though I was just a punk kid, who didn't listen (and my wife might agree that I still don't listen), you all poured the love of Christ into me. You nurtured and taught me the tradition of the Church. You let me experience the community of love that Scripture calls the Church to be. It was what you all instilled in me that God used to draw me deeper into service. I do not know if I would have the same love for the Church if I had not had such an amazing childhood within your walls.

I do not know what children are in your nursery these days, but I am happy for them. Those kids might grow up to be doctors, lawyers, or even bishops. No matter what they grow up to be I am sure they will know an amazing God through the loving community of PUMC.

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It is strange that I have been rehearsing what this letter will say for the past 6 years, ever since this journey towards ordination began. Now that I am trying to put on paper much I love, miss, appreciate, and celebrate who you all are, I am at a loss for words. All I can say is thank you. Thank you, thank you, thank you, for all that you are and all you do. I am a living testimony to the amazing way you all introduce people to Christ.

I have been blessed with many things, all of which I do not deserve. Chiefly amongst my blessing that I count are my loving family. I was blessed with a loving family at home, and a loving Church family at PUMC. I thank God for you and I know you are still doing amazing things for the Kingdom of God.

Peace,

Rev. Benjamin O. Burt Sr.

Should anyone wish to contact me, here is my information:

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Burt Family: Fred, Eric, Vivian
& Ben (red sweater).