



January 18, 2024

Dear Epworth family,

Thank you so much for your grace and your expressions of care since my diagnosis with vocal nodules. I so appreciate your prayers and support. Our community is indeed a gift.

The vocal therapist said that I would heal much more quickly and completely if I took three to four weeks of vocal rest. So, with the approval of the Staff Parish Relations Committee and the District Superintendent, I am going to rest my voice. Vocal rest means no speaking, singing, whispering, or laughing, which is hard for me! I have realized in just this first week how much I talk to myself—out loud!—and sing to myself. But I am learning as I heal.

While I am healing, I have wonderful people who will fill in for me. Bo will take most of the preaching responsibilities. Our Belonging Minister, Gwen Osborne, will share the welcoming responsibilities with our Lay Leader, Todd Popham. We have a large cadre of retired pastors who have offered to help in any way possible. And, as you know, we have a plethora of people to pray, read scripture, lead children's time, and help with other parts of the service.

I plan to attend worship except for this Sunday, January 21. I will be in Pittsburgh for a Northeast Jurisdiction Committee on Episcopacy meeting from Saturday through Tuesday evening. They also know that I am on vocal rest. I will participate through an app on my phone which translates text to speech and through a notebook I carry. Presuming all goes well, I plan on returning to full speaking duty on February 11. For now, text or email me if you need to talk.

Thank you for your understanding and grace. I love serving at Epworth and being part of this beautiful community. I cannot wait to participate fully again soon. I love you!

Grace and peace,

*Vicki*

Rev. Dr. Vicki Gordy-Stith