

Sermon Title: **My Re-Appointment to Gilroy UMC**

Bible: 1 Corinthians 3:4-9 & Psalm 126:1-6

Where & When: Sunday Service at Gilroy UMC on July 7th, 2019

Audience: about 35 English-speaking Church Members

## **Opening Prayer**

Gracious God, thank you so much for re-appointing me to Gilroy United Methodist Church for one more year. It has been a great blessing to me to serve this congregation. And I hope to see one more great year. Please guide and lead me according to your will, Lord. In Jesus' name.

Amen.

## **1. El Camino Real District Appointment at 2019 Cal-Nev Annual Conference**

I want to show a couple of videos from the 2019 Cal Nev Annual Conference. At the conference, our bishop Minerva G. Carcaño and our District Superintendent Shinya Goto officially announced the appointments in our District, the El Camino Real District. Last year, my tears ran down from my cheeks, when my name was called. You can hear and see some pastors and some churches that you know. Let us watch the first video:

<https://youtu.be/mgpuLxMSMe0>

The second video is about the time of blessing by the bishop: [https://youtu.be/8VM6\\_m9OuIU](https://youtu.be/8VM6_m9OuIU)

It is a great joy and honor to be re-appointed to Gilroy UMC, and to be blessed by our bishop. But, what I really want to do is to be blessed by our congregation. Our church was established in 1853. This year our church is 166 years old. There have been many pastors; about 125 pastors have served this church. I am one of about 125 pastors. But I want to be the pastor to you, because you are not one of many congregations. You are **the one** congregation to me. That's why I asked BC to lead the Celebration of Re-Appointment, for me to be blessed by all of you as your pastor. Thank you so much for accepting me as your pastor again.

## 2. Challenge

Our Cal-Nev Annual Conference has many challenges. These numbers illustrate just one of them:

Statistics:

Membership stands at 69,704, down 1300 from the previous year.

Worship attendance stands at 26,349, down 1,273.

Church school attendance stands at 5,691, down 295.

Professions or reaffirmations of faith for 2018 are 1,147, down 99 from 2017.

Adults and young adults in small groups for 2018 are 15,742, down 1,849 from 2017.

Worshippers engaged in mission for 2018 are 17,583, down 6,722 from 2017.

We cannot deny these continuous downward trends. Our Gilroy United Methodist Church is not an exception. Even though some numbers were missing and not that accurate, in 2017, our total membership was 95, and in 2018 it was 77. Our church worship attendance was 33 in 2017, and 31 in 2018.

In our Cal-Nev Annual Conference, the age considered to be Young Adult used to be 19 through 30 years. But I was told that now it is 19 through 35 years, because church members are getting older, and because it is difficult to recruit young adults, the so-called millennial generation. Unfortunately, these are just a few examples.

### **3. Hope**

Nevertheless, I see hope. Do you see any hope in church? I see the hope, because we are here. Above all, we are not insane. “Insanity is doing the same thing, over and over again, but expecting different results.” We expect different results, and we want to do different things. We are brave enough to change ourselves, challenge one another, and transform the world. I hope that you pray for the Vision Team. Lisa, Janet, and I will serve as co-chairs. The Vision Team members are the servants to help us to discover God’s Vision and set up the 2020 goals of our church. Of course, we need other leaders, and we need each of you. When we follow God’s vision, the Vision Team, our leaders, and you and I will make the change.

In today's scriptures, some people planted, some people watered, and some people enjoyed the fruit. Who do you want to be? The one who plants? The one who waters? The one who enjoys the fruit? The one who sows in tears? The one who will reap with joy? I want to taste the gorgeous fruit at the end. I want to harvest with shouts of joy. However, change doesn't happen overnight. In many times, it is a slow process. "Change is hard at first, messy in the middle, and gorgeous at the end." I am okay to take care of the first and second part. I confess, "Anywhere, Lord, anytime." I am here, Lord, to make a change. I am here, Lord, to sow in tears. I am here to go out weeping. That's because, I believe, tears and weeping is not the end. "Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy." "He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him." So, Lord, please show me your way and your vision! I am ready and waiting for the Lord. Are you ready for God's vision and God's way? Let us follow God together!

### **Closing Prayer**

Gracious God, I am here. We are here, Lord. Please use me for your vision. Please guide and lead us, according to your will. In Jesus' name. Amen!

### **Possible Questions**

1. What challenge or hope do you see for Gilroy UMC?
2. Will you support this church with your prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness? How?