

Prayer of Gratitude for Sharlande Sledge's Ministry at Lake Shore

The following prayer was offered in worship by Sandy Londos to celebrate Sharlande's 25 years of ministry with us.. Sandy was the chair of the search committee (which also included Marilyn Carden, Jo Pendleton, Jerri Carey, Bill Johnson, and Bill Moore) when Sharlande came as Associate Minister to Children on June 1985 and Roger Paynter was pastor.

Lord,

On this beautiful morning when we've rejoiced in astonishment of all your gifts, from the creation of this earth, to the expansiveness of your love, we humbly give thanks for your gracing us with Sharlande. How different our lives would be—would have been—without her.

Individually and collectively, when I think of my Annie, and the Powells's Carrie and the Bellingers' Jill, three little girls born within five days of each other all hitting Sharlande together her first year here. How incredible a mentor and leader she has been, not just for them but for all the children who are now adults who have passed through this church and are making the world a more beautiful place.

Sharlande has shaped us. She has been our rudder and our guide throughout our journey in this place. And holding us together between our beloved pastors. And showing us that your love is all that matters. More than anyone I know she has modeled the love of Christ.

You set her down in our midst and we have been changed. We have been led, shaped, fed, and hugged. She taught us and continues to teach us your love. We've seen the face of Christ in her example, in her being. Our souls have been touched in ways only you know we needed. Through Sharlande you have expanded us and we have more fully felt your love, compassion, strength of spirit and gentleness of care.

Thank you above all, Lord, for leading Sharlande and guiding her to stay here with us for twenty-five years.

In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen.

