

**First Presbyterian Church**  
**A Vibrant Community of Faith For Christ in the Heart of Charlotte**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

- **Why is Dr. Wood announcing his retirement now?**

After much consideration and prayer, Dr. Wood has decided that the end of this year is the right time for him to retire. He will turn 67 years old this summer, has served our church well for almost 27 years and has been a full time minister for over 40 years. Fortunately, his health remains strong. He now wants to spend more time with his family and to continue to respond to his calling through teaching, studying and writing. Dr. Wood decided to announce his retirement at this point to allow for a smooth and orderly transition. Our church is in great shape – we are blessed with strong leadership and the focus needs to be on long range planning for the next 10 years.

- **What is Dr. Wood going to do when he retires? Will he preach at another church? Will he stay in Charlotte?**

Dr. Wood will continue his involvement with the Presbyterian Church through teaching, writing and lecturing. Furthermore, he intends to continue his service to Presbyterian organizations including the Foundation for Reformed Theology where he currently serves on the Board of Directors. It is not Dr. Wood's intention to accept a call to another church as Senior Minister. However, he may serve as an interim at other churches from time to time. Dr. Wood plans to remain in Charlotte where he can be close to family and friends.

- **When is he going to retire? When will he preach his final sermon at First Presbyterian Church?**

Dr. Wood's retirement will be effective December 31, 2010. He plans to preach his final sermon on Sunday, November 21st.

- **How will we celebrate Dr. Wood's ministry? How can I participate?**

There will be multiple opportunities for members of the congregation to express their appreciation to Dr. Wood. A celebration event will be announced at a future date and a committee will be organized to work out the arrangements. Communication for these activities will be delivered from the pulpit, *Tradewinds*, and *First News*. Please contact the Transition Committee at [transitioncommittee@firstpres-charlotte.org](mailto:transitioncommittee@firstpres-charlotte.org) if you would like to be involved.

- **Who will lead our church in his absence? Will we have an interim Senior Minister? When will that person start? Who will decide who we hire as an interim? Why can't our existing ministers fill in until a successor can be called? Who will work with and manage the Associate Ministers and other senior staff members once Dr. Wood retires?**

In the Presbyterian Church, when the Senior Minister leaves, it is commonplace for the Session to appoint a Transition Committee to search for and appoint an Interim Senior Minister to serve as the church's leader while the Pastor Nominating Committee is working to identify and call a new Senior Minister. It is the committee's hope that an Interim Senior Minister can be identified and recommended to the Session by the end of the year, to join us in the first quarter of 2011.

First Presbyterian Charlotte is blessed with a strong ministerial staff who will work with the lay leadership of the church, and the Interim Senior Minister, to ensure all worship and other programming will continue as normal. The current ministerial staff will continue in their current roles and will assist the Interim Senior Minister as they do today. Our current Associate Ministers need to remain focused on their existing responsibilities (e.g. Christian Education, Service, Congregational Care and Evangelism) to keep the current programs of the church running smoothly. The Interim Senior Minister will work closely with the Personnel Committee of the Session to provide ongoing management and leadership to the ministerial staff.

- **Why is there a Transition Committee? Who chose this group? What is their role? Will they choose the new Senior Minister? Who do they report to during this process?**

A Transition Committee was created at the recommendation of the Personnel Committee and the approval of Session. The primary purpose of the committee is to assist Dr. Wood in his personal transition, coordinate the celebration of Dr. Wood's ministry, coordinate the overall transition process with church officers and staff, oversee communication about the transition process and ultimately to propose a slate of nominees to serve on the Pastor Nominating Committee to the Session and the congregation.

The Transition Committee was selected by the Personnel Committee which was intentional about including individuals who would represent all constituencies of the greater congregation. This committee will NOT select the new Senior Minister. A Pastor Nominating Committee, elected by the congregation, will search for and recommend a candidate to the congregation for the permanent position of Senior Minister.

The members of the Transition Committee are John Barry, Bob Bradford, Katherine Cooke, Eric Eubank, Mike James, Garrell Keesler, Lisa Ku, Phyllis Melton, Kay Valaoras and David Williamson.

- **What is the role of the Session, the Diaconate and the Personnel Committee during this process? What is the role of the Presbytery?**

The primary role of the Session, Diaconate and the Personnel Committee will be to provide leadership, stability and continuity during this process. Presbytery will have to approve the recommendation of the Pastor Nominating Committee before a recommendation will be presented to the Congregation. Presbytery does not choose the Senior Minister. However, they are involved in the process and can provide constructive advice which they believe will serve to maintain the strength of this church for the congregation, the Presbytery and the community at large. The Presbytery is aware of our proposed process and will receive periodic updates from the Transition Committee.

- **Who decides who will become the next Senior Minister and what kind of process do they go through to choose someone?**

Ultimately, the congregation will decide on the next Senior Minister for First Presbyterian Church. The Pastor Nominating Committee will be responsible for conducting the search for a new Senior Minister and will come up with a formal process which will be shared at a later date after that committee has been elected. Once a new Senior Minister candidate has been identified, the Session will call for a Congregational Meeting at which point the members of the congregation will receive a report and recommendation on the Call for the new Senior Minister from the Pastor Nominating Committee. The members of the congregation will then vote on the recommendation for the new Senior Minister.

- **Who chooses the Pastor Nominating Committee? When will they be elected?**

The congregation will elect the Pastor Nominating Committee. The Transition Committee will gather nominees for this committee and submit a slate to the Session. Once the slate is approved by the Session, a Congregational Meeting will be called, most likely in January, 2011, at which point the congregation will elect the committee. According to guidelines established by Presbytery, this committee cannot begin its work until Dr. Wood is no longer fulfilling his duties and is officially retired.

- **How can I nominate someone for the Pastor Nominating Committee?**

If you would like to nominate a member of the church to serve on the Pastor Nominating Committee, you can direct your recommendations to any member of the Transition Committee, the Personnel Committee or the Session. You can also submit recommendations to [transitioncommittee@firstpres-charlotte.org](mailto:transitioncommittee@firstpres-charlotte.org).

- **Will our existing Associate Ministers be considered for the Senior Minister position? Will past Associate Ministers be considered for the position? I know someone we should consider for the position, who do I call?**

Per the Book of Order, current Associate Ministers of our church may not be considered for the Senior Minister position at the church they currently serve. The Presbytery is currently researching whether or not this provision applies to past Associate Ministers that served under Dr. Wood as well. In any event, the Pastor Nominating Committee will complete a thorough national search for our next Senior Minister. If you have a recommendation, please forward that information to the Pastor Nominating Committee once it has been formed. Prior to that committee's appointment, the Transition Committee will collect names and recommendations to pass along to the Pastor Nominating Committee once it is approved by the Congregation.

- **If you have any other questions or comments regarding the plans for Dr. Wood's retirement, the transition process, etc please forward them to the committee at [transitioncommittee@firstpres-charlotte.org](mailto:transitioncommittee@firstpres-charlotte.org).**