

# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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*For Christ in the Heart of Charlotte*

*4-3-11 Minute for Mission*

Handel's words have just reminded us that God is Lord and that we should trust in him. As a response to worship, I give thanks to God during this Lenten season for the gifts of grace, love, music, family, and *this* church community.

Knowing that we haven't had a PNC oriented minute for mission in over 27 years, this could take a while...but I will keep my comments brief and centered on 2 key topics:

- 1) Our biblical foundation, and
- 2) Our process

First Presbyterian is not just a charitable organization that upholds good morals...but a Christian church community, which should recognize *Christ* as the head of the church, with scripture as our foundational compass to navigate this transition.

With this belief, we must then acknowledge that the PNC's efforts will not mimic a typical, *corporate* search process, quickly turning towards a flood of resumes with a primary focus on the *human* element. This is not a time for human agendas, or to be in a hurry. *Instead*, this is a time to consider what *God* wants and has planned for *this* church, founded in *this* place 190 yrs ago. This foundation places the emphasis on *God's* sovereignty and not on *our* human will.

There is also a practical process we will follow. In our six weeks together thus far, the PNC has attended orientation sessions with the Charlotte Presbytery and with Roland Perdue, along with a two-day retreat. These sessions helped to build a firm foundation on the rocks of scripture, devotion, and community, while also understanding the Presbyterian way of calling a pastor.

The second phase of the PNC's work is a congregational self-study. This very important step will allow our congregation to *review* and *refresh* the thinking in our last long range plan, and it is a step required by Presbytery. The PNC's goal of this self study is to prompt meaningful discussion while listening to the congregation's feedback. What is God calling us to be? How is he working to shape us and how is he calling us to serve? This is a chance to look into the mirror, to discuss our identity, history, culture, mission, and vision.

The self-study will include the 2 key initiatives of engaging the congregation in multiple small group forums and a congregational survey. We will likely complete these efforts during the months of May through August. We'll provide many opportunities for biblical reflection to help guide discernment. The PNC will summarize its discoveries, the specifications of the Sr. Minister's role, and the qualifications of an ideal candidate. Ideally, we'll launch the search by the end of summer.

The PNC will work with Roland, our associate ministers, officers, staff, and the transition committee to ensure connectivity and communication. We will be very intentional in providing the congregation with frequent communication through multiple methods, and will post updates on the transition section of our website.

In closing and as we continue our worship, I ask for your help in three areas:

- 1) Pray for our church and the PNC during this transition and discernment process.
- 2) Engage in scripture and opportunities for discussion and feedback
- 3) Love and support one another and our staff while enjoying this journey

Psalms 46 advises us to "be still and know that I am God." The psalmist then concludes with a statement reminding us why we should be still and listen, "for the Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge."

Thanks be to God.

Scott Angel  
PNC Chair