

June 24, 2010

Dear Friends,

By now you have all received Dr. Wood's letter, announcing his plan to retire later this year after over 27 years of faithful leadership of our church. In his letter, Dr. Wood referenced the writer of Ecclesiastes who said **"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven"** (Ecclesiastes 3:1). As always, Dr. Wood chose the perfect passage to describe the situation we now face. In reflecting on Dr. Wood's plans and the months to come, I am drawn to another passage in that same chapter, **"a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance"** (Ecclesiastes 3:4), as I believe we will experience all of these emotions as we celebrate his ministry among us and prepare for the next chapter at First Presbyterian Church.

The journey ahead, while new to many of us, is a road well traveled. First Presbyterian Church has had 15 Senior Ministers over the past 187 years and we all know of churches here in Charlotte and elsewhere that have gone through similar transitions. What makes our situation unique is both the length of time that Dr. Wood has served as our leader and the many distinguishing characteristics that bring us together and set our church apart. The leadership of our church is committed to making this a smooth transition, and a time during which we will reflect on both our rich past and our exciting future. We have cause to celebrate the significant accomplishments that have occurred during Dr. Wood's tenure, and we hope to envision together what the future holds for First Presbyterian Church as we continue our witness For Christ in the Heart of Charlotte.

During this season of change, the Session has appointed a Transition Committee comprised of nine members of our church and an Associate Minister who represent many of the different facets of our ministry. This group includes former and current church officers, Sunday school teachers, choir members, lifelong members, young adults, service leaders and a member of our staff. The role of the Transition Committee is to coordinate with the church officers and staff the activities that naturally occur during a transition like this. The Transition Committee has been given five specific tasks.

- Assist Dr. Wood in his personal transition
- Coordinate the celebration of Dr. Wood's Ministry
- Coordinate the overall transition process
- Oversee communication about the transition process
- Propose a slate to serve as the Pastor Nominating Committee to the Session, to then be elected by the Congregation

While we do not know how long it will take to find a new Senior Minister, we do know that per Presbytery guidelines, the search cannot even begin until after Dr. Wood retires. To lead us until a new Senior Minister is installed, the Transition Committee will search for an Interim Senior Minister to serve after Dr. Wood retires. We hope to complete this process by year-end and to have someone approved by Session and in place in early 2011. Per the Book of Order, the search for a Senior Minister is led by a Pastor Nominating Committee. As such the Transition Committee will not lead the search for the new Senior Minister, but will propose a slate of church members to serve as a Pastor Nominating Committee who will be responsible for that important role. Our goal is to present a proposed slate to the Session early in 2011 after which the proposed slate will be submitted to the Congregation for a vote.

We know many of you will have questions about the plans for Dr. Wood's retirement, the transition process and ultimately the calling of a new Senior Minister. Our plan is to keep the congregation informed as much as possible throughout this process via *FirstNEWS*, *Tradewinds*, the church web site, letters, etc. This letter is the first communication to that end. You will find a list of Frequently Asked Questions posted on the church web site www.firstpres-charlotte.org which we will update over time. We also plan on hosting forums and other gatherings in the fall to allow for two-way communication during this important time. In the meantime if you have any questions or thoughts, or simply want to volunteer to help, please feel free to reach out to any member of the Transition Committee or email us at transitioncommittee@firstpres-charlotte.org. As we begin this journey together, we would also ask for your prayers for Dr. Wood, our church and this process.

In Christ,

Frederick W. Eubank, II

Transition Committee Chair

Transition Committee

John Barry, Bob Bradford, Katherine Cooke, Eric Eubank, Mike James,

Garrell Keesler, Lisa Ku, Phyllis Melton, Kay Valaoras and David Williamson