

Good morning,

We know some are anxious about what will happen now that Ryan has moved on to his new call. Know that your Session also has concerns but that we see our church's faith, devotion and commitment as strong. We are pursuing that which we learned through our transformation study: that we are a welcoming church who desires to be an inviting church. From the information we collected working with you, we established a defining statement that says, "We are a church that invites and connects seekers to know, grow and serve Jesus together." We want to do more than just welcome people. We want to connect them so they can grow and learn as they serve with us here and around the world.

Owing to your generosity, we are in a solid financial place to continue what together we have started and to launch the new things God is calling us to do. Our church is seen in the Presbytery as one of the few that are growing. Our Executive Presbyter, the Reverend Ruth Santana-Grace, recently said that she is excited to see where God will lead us.

How about you? Are you excited for this new time? Are you ready to see what God has planned?

Your Session shares in both the excitement and the natural anxiety that comes with the unknown. Change is always hard. Know that we understand the call we accepted to serve this community and we are ready to work beside you as we listen to and then follow God's lead. With his guidance, we will do great things together.

"But what has been done?" I have heard that question. Let me share a few of the things set in motion:

Concerning Preaching and Worship:

The pulpit will be filled using our recently established preaching team. The team consists of members of the congregation who feel they are being called to proclaim God's word. The team expects to fill the pulpit with different members on subsequent Sundays. Rev Don Kazen, Rev Don Price, staff members, and several Elders have joined this team and it is the team's hope that God will call others to join them. Outside guest preachers may also be called as need arises. In fact, our Executive Presbyter, the Reverend Ruth Santana-Grace, the one who said she is excited for our future, has agreed to preach one Sunday in December.

Our Session Worship team will have the responsibility for all worship planning. In conjunction with the Preaching Team, they will plan the scripture, liturgy, music and prayers for all worship services with the support of Pastoral Assistant, Don Kazen and our music directors, Mike, Chris, Dan and Kenedy.

Speaking of planning, the Worship Team and Session decided that for Christmas Eve, as we did last year, there will be 3 services:

- 3pm Children & Family Service,
- 5pm South Ridge Service, and
- 9pm Traditional Service.

Concerning the staff:

Each staff member has been linked to an elder so that each staff member has a partner that can help to form answers to the questions of ministry direction. In most cases, the elder is the elder responsible for that ministry and is already working with the staff member. Elders Aemisseger and Ingram, who have been attending staff meetings since Ryan announced his plans, will continue to be in attendance at staff meetings. While we recognize this is not an ideal management model, we are confident our decision will help us through until we have the Transitional Pastor in place, at which point, we will revisit this plan.

Our Pastoral Assistant, Don Kazen, has agreed to take more hours to help in the transition. These extra hours will mostly involve the planning of worship, going beyond his normal duties of leading worship and pastoral care.

While not a staff position, Don Price has agreed to accept the Presbytery's request that he function as the Moderator of Session Pro Tem. While there is no official term for this office, Don will serve until the Transitional Pastor is in place or until such time as is deemed appropriate.

What about Pastoral Care? Pastor Don Kazen has been and will continue to provide Pastoral Care to the congregation. Pastor Don Price has also volunteered to assist with pastoral care. If there is a need, please reach out to the office and one of the Dons will be in touch.

Concerning the Transitional Pastor Job Description:

As you may remember me saying, we are required to provide a Transitional Pastor Job Description to the Presbytery. On review of what others have done, we asked the Session Personnel team to provide the FPC Ambler flavor. The job description was approved by Session, sent to the Presbytery Commission on Ministry, and has been approved by the Commission. You can view it on our website as it was posted this past Monday.

Concerning Elder teams needed to interview Transitional Pastor Candidates and to write the required Mission Study:

Elder volunteers Belser, Ferrarello, Gruwell, and McClure will form the interview team for the Transitional Pastor. With the approval of the job description, the team has already received interest in the job and Elder Belser reports that the team conducted an interview this past week. When they arrive at their choice, the Session will review and approve. The Commission on Ministry will also need to review and approve.

Elder volunteers Aemisseger, Diianno, Graven, and Kim will form the team to work with AE Sloan to write the Mission Study. They have already started that work with a meeting with AE Sloan. They will continue the work this week as they meet again. It is their belief that the Mission Study should be in hand before the end of the calendar year - and we hope it will be in hand sooner - not that we are rushing the process. As said earlier, the work we have done makes this work easier to accomplish.

While finding our Transitional Pastor and writing the Mission Study are our priorities, Session is also working to define the parameters for the Pastoral Nominating Committee. Once we have received the approval by Presbytery, the Session will call on the Nominating Committee of the Congregation to find and present nominees to form the Pastor Nominating Committee. When ready, a Congregational meeting to elect these nominees will be called. Perhaps this will happen early in the New Year. We ask that you pray that God would call volunteers to serve with energy, vision, and a will to follow Him.

Concerning costs:

Expecting that there will be costs that must be covered during this process, the Session decided to move \$50k of the funds we recently set aside for the kitchen project to the Session Reserve Fund. Consulting fees, advertising, moving costs and other ancillary fees will come from these funds. Any unused portion will be returned to the Kitchen project.

We continue to seek your input regarding your hopes, dreams and needs. As we work together, may we be listening for what God has planned for FPC Ambler.

When you have questions, please speak to one of the Elders. We wish to hear from you.

In closing, these notes from which I am reading will be posted on the website next week.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers.

Presented by Elder Ruhf
15 September 2024