



Dear Covenant Partners and Friends of First Pres,

On August 17, Peter Barnes shared with us his intention to retire at the end of the year. Session has spent the subsequent weeks learning about the process in ECO to call a new senior pastor and the resources available from the presbytery during this season of transition. Selection of a new senior pastor will take deliberate and prayerful discernment. We expect the process may take 12-18 months from the start of the search process. Therefore, Session will engage a transition pastor to provide leadership between Peter's retirement and the arrival of the next senior pastor.

We recently met with the Rev. Dr. Ray Cobb who will serve as our Ministry Partnership Team liaison to the presbytery. Ray is currently transitioning into retirement after serving for 34 years at Triangle Grace Church in Durham. He has already provided meaningful guidance and encouragement. Specifically, Ray has assured us that First Pres will be attractive to a number of highly qualified and talented candidates for both the role of transition pastor and the role of senior pastor.

Monday night, Session approved the appointment of a Transition Team, which will help to select a transition pastor. The Transition Team will be chaired by Eric Hoyle, who also chairs the Personnel Committee. The team includes Dave Anderson, Roonie Craig, Elizabeth Marsh, Virginia Perry and Jim Welsh. Mike Horne will serve as the staff advisory member of the Transition Team.

The Transition Team is initially responsible for developing materials that describe First Pres and Winston-Salem to potential transition pastors. The Transition Team will take advantage of help offered by the presbytery to identify candidates and may also conduct an independent search to identify candidates who may not be on the presbytery's list. ECO trains and supports transition pastors regardless of the process used to identify them. The Transition Team will recommend a transition pastor for Session approval in the next few months.

The Congregational Nominating Committee, chaired by Lisa Dull, is responsible for recommending covenant partners for the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) slate. The role of the PNC will be to recruit and recommend an individual to serve as our next senior pastor. The congregation will vote on the membership of the PNC and also on the PNC's recommendation for senior pastor. The timing of when the PNC will be formed is yet to be determined.

An additional team, led by Elders Ellen Gibbs and Molly Lineberger, is making plans to celebrate Peter and Cyndy upon retirement and to thank Peter for his years of leadership at First Pres.

We see God at work among the covenant partners of First Pres during this season of transition and change. We see God in the faithful service of those volunteering their time and talents and we see God guiding our path through the work of recently completed mission and vision exercises. Peter preached the first of a three-sermon series this past Sunday to introduce the outcome of these exercises and Session will invite covenant partners to participate in listening sessions at the conclusion of the series to hear your thoughts on what God has in store for First Pres. In the meantime, please feel free to contact any of us with questions, or email pastortransition@1stpres.com. If you were not able to participate in worship this past Sunday, we encourage you to listen to a recording of the sermon on the First Pres website.

We are committed to a purposeful and transparent transition process. We are grateful for your prayers for our church and welcome your questions.

Yours in Christ,

The Session of First Presbyterian Church

