
First Presbyterian Church Lancaster, PA – Letter to the Congregation

January 24, 2020

Additional Congregational Meetings Set for Sundays February 2 and 23

Dear First Presbyterian Members and Friends,

I'm writing on behalf of Session to highlight the important activities from our January 19 Congregational Meeting. In addition to approving the 2020 Terms of Call for Transitional Lead Pastor Daniel Snyder, we also established the process by which our next installed lead pastor will be selected. Earlier in the week, Session had met and discussed options with The Rev. Dr. Erin Cox-Holmes, Executive Presbyter, who also attended and helped moderate Sunday's meeting.

As explained last Sunday by Elders Susan Moedinger and Chuck Manners, Session chose an option that allows potential consideration of Pastor Snyder as our installed lead pastor. The first step in this process is seeking the congregation's advice through a simple survey we will take together at a **Congregational Meeting set for Sunday February 2, at 10:00 a.m.** in the Sanctuary. Provisions are being made to administer the survey to those who are unable to attend the meeting and those details will be communicated soon. We do encourage your attendance at and participation in the meeting, if possible, because there is no substitute for hearing the discussion first-hand.

Through this survey, Session will be looking to see if there is a strong majority in favor of one of the following three statements:

- I believe that Transitional Lead Pastor Dan Snyder should become our next Installed Lead Pastor, and that we should select him *without conducting a search* for this pastor.
- I believe that the First Presbyterian Church of Lancaster *should conduct an open search* for our next Lead Pastor, and that Transitional Lead Pastor Dan Snyder should be invited by the Session to apply for the position.
- I believe that God is calling the First Presbyterian Church of Lancaster and Transitional Lead Pastor Dan Snyder *into different futures*, and that we should go in a different direction for our next installed Lead Pastor.

The survey results will help determine what happens at a subsequent **Congregational Meeting scheduled for 10:00 a.m. Sunday February 23**, also in the Sanctuary.

At the February 23 meeting, we will either:

- Call for a congregational vote to request that the Presbytery install the Rev. Daniel Snyder as our new lead pastor; OR
- Elect a Pastoral Nominating Committee to begin a search for our next lead pastor

That may seem like a lot of meetings and a lot of steps. It is, however, in keeping with the polity of our church, makes sure your opinions are heard, and is the best process available to move from our time of transition to a time of being fully settled with the lead pastor position.

Other highlights of last Sunday's meeting include:

- An optimistic look ahead from Elder Jesse North, who spoke about the work of the *Envisioning our Future* team and the “God-sized dreams” developed by the congregation
- Hopeful and confident reflections from Pastor Snyder on his sense of the church's readiness to move ahead with important ministry and mission
- A joyful Children's Ministry report from Katie Sina Kindig and Ashley D'Onofrio featuring the children's choir
- Special recognition by Personnel Committee Co-Chairs Cindi Hendricks and Geoff Eddowes of three staff members – Mark Williams, Matt Weaver and Sarah Sgro – each for service to the church of more than ten years
- Words of gratitude by Elder Eddowes for the excellent work of Pastor Snyder during this year of transition (evoking a standing ovation)
- A careful review of 2020 Operating and Capital & Maintenance budgets by Jim Kiscaden, Treasurer (the operating budget calls for no use of unrestricted reserves)
- An enthusiastic “thank you” from Brian Rutter, Chairman of the Gratitude Team (2020 dollars pledged are up about \$18,000 compared to 2019)

It's a wonderful time to be part of First Presbyterian Church. We look forward to being in frequent communication with you over the next month, as we explain each step of the way forward. Please mark your calendars for the important congregational meetings on February 2 and 23.

Yours in Christ,

Elder Bob Gray,
Clerk of Session