

A Special Edition of Steeple to People



Eyes on Christ

Keeping Our Focus During this Time of Transition



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus, Perfecter of Our Faith

*Elder Chuck Manners
on behalf of the FPC Information Team and Session*

To help keep our attention on what's most important during our time of pastoral transition at First Presbyterian, church leaders have crafted a guiding theme: "Eyes on Christ – Keeping our Focus During this Time of Transition."

This special transition edition of Steeple to People introduces this theme and aims to offer clarity into our current moment and provide insight as to how we, as a congregation, grow together in the months ahead. We'll continue to use this theme in our communications around transition-specific elements of our church's life.

The phrase **Eyes on Christ** is adapted from Hebrews 12:2: *And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith* – wherein we are called to follow Christ faithfully. So, in keeping our eyes on Christ, we embrace the ideas that we are complete in Him (we lack nothing) and that we look to Him to lead (He has already made a path for us).

This is a rare time of discernment and preparation, during which we are fully loved and equipped by the word of God, presence of Christ and power of the Holy Spirit. It may take anywhere from 12 to 24 months for us to finalize our pastoral staffing model. (See process timeline on page 4).

That doesn't mean we hit 'pause' for all the other work of the church. Not at all. There's simply too much great work occurring, which cannot wait. Our vital ministry continues – fully – as does God's faithfulness to us. With our "eyes on Christ," our individual and collective priorities are in order. We can discern together the path Jesus has created for us, confident he has been, is now and will be with us. This is paramount.

Our ministries benefit many – both inside and outside of FPC. The most important one is discipleship, and the leadership of the church wants to make sure we continue that emphasis during this transition period. Reminders to keep our eyes on Christ will re-enforce this priority within our congregation.

Other information in this special issue includes key areas of work by our Transitional Lead Pastor, Dan Snyder, plus opportunities to meet and talk with Dan and other church leaders in a series of upcoming forums. Meanwhile, keep your eyes on Christ, pray for our church leaders as they guide us through this time of transition, and keep sending your suggestions to suggestions@fpclive.org.

A Time of Transition: Here's What I'm Working On

*Rev. Dan Snyder
Transitional Lead Pastor*

I so appreciate the offers of support and help I have received from so many of you over the last couple of months. What a privilege it is to be your pastor!

And what a joy it is to work alongside our terrific staff and generous volunteers including our Elders, Trustees, and Deacons.

There is a lot going on and, yes, I am busy, but it's satisfying and important work. With significant and important work comes the need to set priorities. I've realized that I need to focus on a handful of key areas this year in order to achieve significant results that will benefit the entire church as we move together through our time of transition. So, I've established five Key Result Areas (or KRAs if you like acronyms), that I'd like to share and will be reporting about to Session.

As First Presbyterian moves forward, I think it's important that you all know where I'm focusing my time and energy in 2019. You don't need everything on my "do list" or my calendar, but these key areas are critical for all of us. I also want to point out these are my personal objectives as transitional lead pastor and do not supersede our three main, church-wide priorities, which are:

- Ministry to Children and Families
- Ministry of Hospitality and Connecting
- Ministry of Gratitude and Generosity

My own Key Result Areas follow.

1 Developing Staff

My vision is a staff that leads the way by exemplifying the qualities of Jesus Christ that we value most as a congregation. Their enthusiasm for their work is derived from a communal Life-with-God attitude as well as a clear understanding of this church's mission and their part in it. There is a culture of leadership growth within the team as each person is learning, teaching and encouraging the team to keep advancing. We are working toward improved:

- Role Clarification
- Collaboration
- Radical Candor
- Embracing of Values: Gratitude, Humility, Engagement (Compassion, Kindness, Gentleness, Patience)
- Professional Growth

2 Clarifying Processes

My vision is a church with consistent ways of making decisions and making the right people aware of the outcomes so that effective action can be taken. People will be fluent in the path toward becoming leaders in the church. Within these processes, participants are free to evaluate effectiveness because they understand the value of 'acting together.' We are cultivating better:

- Decision Making
- Reporting Relationships
- Nomination Process
- Paths to Leadership

3 Enhancing Our Practice and Experience of Worship & Hospitality

My vision here is a church where all generations are invited to give themselves fully to worshiping Jesus Christ as inspired by the Spirit of God. Each worshipping community has an identity formed by common worship practices consistent with our Reformed heritage. Each person is growing in their knowledge of God in Christ because their practice and experience of worship is full. And together, we are deepening our knowledge of the importance and relevance of worship to faithful living. The intentional practice of thoughtful hospitality becomes an outward expression of this growing-in-worship community. We are emphasizing:

- Intergenerational Participation
- Congregational Involvement in Planning/Improving
- Worship Education
- Readiness, Authenticity, Reverence, Encouragement
- Clarifying Identity
- Practicing Hospitality

4 Engaging Resources and Volunteers in the Church's Mission

My vision is an identity for mission that is built upon what has drawn the people of this congregation to serving together at FPC. We care for our city with special attention to the arts, support of education for all, an active care that comes from a concern for the well-being of vulnerable people in our neighborhoods. We are actively involved in taking the Good News of Jesus Christ to the World. People know the paths for involvement in this mission and are inspired to progress together in

hope that this mission expands. We are working towards:

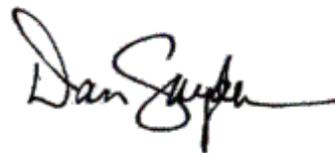
- Clearly Communicating Needs and Paths to Participation and Giving
- Ongoing Growth in Transparent Financial Accountability
- Creating an Inspiring Mission Story
- Involvement Opportunities that Honor all Spiritualities

5 Fortifying the Congregation through Communication and Care

My vision is a congregation that cares for one another because tangible needs are freely, clearly and appropriately made known. These needs are received, acknowledged and met with compassion through the network of Care Teams and the for-one-another attitude of individuals. There is a culture of direct, open and humble communication based upon our unity in Christ and our relationships with one another. Our congregation leads the way in society by modeling and teaching ways to make decisions about challenging and diverse topics. Our stance is one of:

- Transparency: Two-way Communication
- Healthy Conflict Processes
- Improving Trust in Church Leaders
- Welcoming Ideas and Critique
- Developing the Listening Skills of Our Community

I want everyone to know how much I appreciate this tremendous opportunity to serve our congregation during this time of transition. There is much to do, but it is all work that I enjoy. As you pray for me, pray for the many volunteers who are also learning to work in new and expanded ways. Together we will all keep our eyes fixed on Christ as we follow Him on our journey.



Typical Process Steps for Pastoral Transition

Calling a Transitional Pastor

The Elders of FPC appointed Rev. Dan Snyder to serve as Transitional Lead Pastor for a period of 12 months (Jan. 2018 – Jan. 2019). Transitional Lead Pastors are tasked with strengthening and equipping leadership and staff and helping the congregation renew its sense of identity and purpose.

A Time for Healing

Through personal conversations, small group listening/discussion (such as the Forums noted in this publication) and focused care, enable God's Spirit to bring about healing, clarity and direction.

Fortifying & Preparing

Emphasis is placed on strengthening and equipping Leadership and Staff, undergirding ministries and communicating clearly with the congregation. Strong focus is applied to critical development areas (see previous page for a window into Pastor Snyder's focus areas).

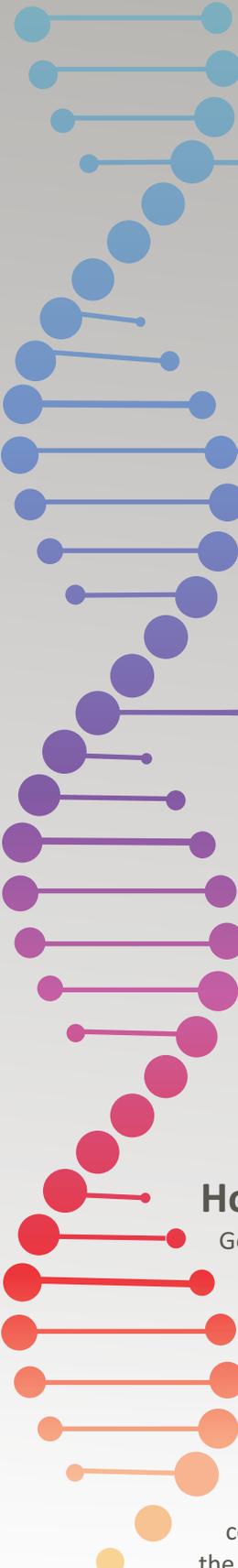
We
Are
Here

Surveys and Assessment to Uncover Our Vision

Understanding who we are as a congregation and church today, and where we want to be post-transition, requires discovery. Engaging outside expertise to help conduct a congregational survey and, possibly, other assessment and evaluation tools, may help us to uncover who God is calling us to be and how we are to prepare for that. Our vision, values, priorities, and the needs around us will guide this process as we plan to select FPC's next pastor.

Mission Information Form

This compiles the findings of the Congregational Survey and is used as a tool in the pastoral search. The MIF communicates to prospective pastors who we are right now as a church.



Electing a Pastor Nominating Committee

Who is God calling to lead the search for FPC's next pastor? Determine what gifts, skills and commitment are needed, pray for guidance and elect the committee in a Congregational Meeting.

Searching for a Pastor

The Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) reviews applications from potential candidates, interviews pastors and discerns who God is calling to be FPC's next pastor. They then make a recommendation to the congregation at a congregational meeting.

Calling and Installing a Pastor

With the proper approvals in place at the Presbytery level, the congregation hears the PNC's report and elects the new pastor.

Questions

we are hearing thus far:

How long will all this take?

Good question! The process outline above could take 12-24 months depending upon several factors. Although the process is detailed, it is very Presbyterian in that it will involve a lot of voices and perspectives. Be on the lookout for ways for your voice to be heard.

Is Pastor Snyder eligible to be FPC's next Lead Pastor?

As Transitional Lead Pastor, Dan is eligible to apply for the Lead Pastor position as early as January 2020. Dan and the Session are supportive of the Bylaws of First Presbyterian which state that Dan will not be eligible to return to an Associate Pastor position in this church after having served as Transitional Lead Pastor. Dan has expressed his gratitude to this congregation for this tremendous opportunity that positions him for a good future no matter the outcome.

If you have any further questions, please consider attending an upcoming Listening Forum (see p. 6), or contact any member of FPC's Session or Personnel Committee, or the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Donegal, Rev. Michael Wilson.

New Listening Forums Announced

Forum Series Will Offer Opportunities for Dialogue and Information Exchange

by Brian Rutter

A time of transition can bring about a variety of thoughts and emotions. Often, these come in the form of opportunities, new ideas, excitement, and, for some, a bit of anxiety. A transition can also lead to questions, a desire for more information, and the need for a way to open up dialogue. During these times, good communication and transparency among all of us is of great importance.

Recognizing these needs and the interests of this church community, FPC is pleased to introduce a series of Listening Forums designed to help answer questions and open dialogue and discussion. The new Forums will take place in late March and early April (see sidebar for schedule and locations).

When you attend, you'll have the opportunity to join Pastor Dan Snyder and FPC leaders, including Elders, Deacons, and Trustees, for a discussion about the next 18 months in the life of our church. Any and all questions, observations, and suggestions will find a welcome place in these forums.

These new Listening Forums offer all of us the opportunity to come together, ask questions, get answers, and discuss ideas about the important matters related to First Presbyterian. We hope to see you there.

SCHEDULE

Listening Forums for Dialogue and Idea Sharing

1 Tuesday, March 19

6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Long Community

(Home of Ken and Sandy
Greenwood, Kirkwood, 3214)

2 Tuesday, March 26

6:00 PM - 7:00PM

Homestead Village

(Gathering Nook)

3 Tuesday, April 2

6:00 PM - 7:00PM

Willow Valley Communities

(North Activities Room)

4 Tuesday, April 9

6:00 PM - 7:00PM

at First Presbyterian Church

(Chapel)

Worship Spaces Returning to Normal

by Kenton Glick

We can all appreciate a return to the familiar as our Sunday morning services move back to their regular worship spaces on March 17! The Early Worship Service returns to the Sanctuary and the Cherry Street Worship Service is back in Shirk Hall.

The HVAC renovation that prompted the worship service moves is wrapping up close to the original target date, despite some unexpected setbacks primarily caused by winter weather. The Cafe and the Kitchen are the final spaces slated for installation. Tying all lines together and testing will be the final phase. This helps First Presbyterian address what was becoming a critical problem with a heating system that was reaching its fail point. We will be able to heat and cool the building with maximum “green” efficiency.

The Cherry Street space will now be sporting a new ceiling, with a more contemporary feel with exposed ductwork. One of the several blessings of the new HVAC system is that the children’s area will now be fully air conditioned as well as heated – meaning that space can be used year-round for the kids!

Worship Elder Tricia Wilson reports that the experience for attenders in moving to a new space was surprisingly positive for some. In both services

that switched their space, some naturally preferred their regular space, while others found aspects they liked better in the new space. “In the early service, some liked the intimacy and closeness of the chapel,” she notes. “In the Cherry Street service, others liked the spread out feeling and awe-inspiring beauty of the main sanctuary.” Those experiences gave leadership good feedback that could possibly enhance future services.

There is one additional, temporary change taking place in the Early Worship Service. During the six weeks of Lent (March 10-April 14), as previously announced, the early service will begin at 8:15 a.m. and last 45 minutes to 9:00 a.m. It will also take on a more contemplative style but still include a full sermon. All of this will be evaluated at the end of six-week trial period. With this temporary schedule change, Pastor Dan will be better able to logistically handle three services as the only pastor on duty that Sunday.

“Now I won’t have to feel like I have to duck out early on the first service, or miss out on Cherry Street’s prayers!” he says. With the completion of the HVAC project, and some experimentation with the logistical challenges of a single pastor conducting services, First Presbyterian is working to simplify aspects of our transition time and make worship a priority for all.



Learning to Keep Our Eyes on Christ

If you would like to grow in your ability to focus on Christ through all of life's transitions, consider becoming part of First Followers. First Followers is a year-long discipleship program that teaches participants how to care for their souls and

become their best selves for the world. Created here at FPC, First Followers forges close community and renewed vision for your life's purpose. Visit www.fpclive.org and click the First Followers tile.



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