



August 17, 2017

Dear Fellow First Presbyterians,

As Moderator of the Administration / Personnel Committee of Session, I have volunteered to communicate with the congregation on behalf of the actively serving Elders related to "where we are" now two months after Rev. Marie Mickey's retirement from the position of Associate Pastor. So here goes . . .

After Session Elders met on Sunday, June 25, to begin a "visioning process," the congregation's participation in the church visioning sessions this past Saturday (Aug. 12) was nothing short of a celebration of caring and commitment to First Presbyterian Church-Bryan. More than 60 members gathered at the Saturday event and participated in a broad ranging discussion about this church's current and potential ministry. (Decisions on how to staff our church in the wake of our associate pastor's retirement will be guided by defining the church "we are now" and the church "we sense God leading us to be in the future.") Again, thank you for your work and encouragement.

The August 12 morning and afternoon opportunities explored how each participant sees FPC-B in terms of strengths and needs. Words on strengths included: Gospel, generosity, family, faith, outreach, inclusion, care, strength, tradition, facility/building, music, solid leadership (members, officers, clergy), committed people, and many more. Word on needs included membership, staffing, finances, youth, programming, planning for future, and others. The exercise demonstrated that our church, like so many others across the ages, faces challenges, but that our strengths far outweigh our needs.

A second exercise among the five tables of 40 participants in the morning and three tables of 20 participants in the afternoon included participants deciding on a Bible story which describes the current life and ministry of FPC-B. Those passages chosen by the table groups included (respectively): the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37); the call to Peter related to the Gentiles (Acts 10:1-48); the feeding of the 5,000 (Mark 6:30-44); Paul's teachings on generous giving and mission sharing (II Corinthians 9:1-13); Moses and the Hebrews attempting to exit slavery in Egypt (Exodus 14:1-31); the parable of the landowner who shared talents with three employees (Matthew 25:14-30); Resurrected Jesus instructing disciples where to cast their nets for a catch in the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-8).

This church visioning process is ongoing. A written response opportunity to share your hopes and concerns will be made available soon for all who were not able to be present on August 12. Additionally, we will gather for a second phase of this process on Saturday, September 9, to receive more congregational input and begin assessing next steps for our church and its ministry, given the focus of the visioning meetings which are being held. (Attendance at the September 9 event does not depend on having participated in August.)

Please keep FPC-B in your prayers with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love. As we agreed to do, the process is moving without delay.

Gratefully (for the Session),

Bill Watson
Administration Committee Moderator