

## From Our Pastor – February 2016

### GOALS FOR THE INTERIM SEASON

I want to thank you for your very warm welcome, and for all of the many ways in which you have made me feel at home in the life of your church. A special word of gratitude is on my heart for your three former pastors, for in January Doug Wright, David Glenn Walker, and Dick Zabriskie helped me provide devotion and leadership training for our deacons and elders. I came away thinking that the four of us make a pretty good team, and I value their encouragement and pastoral experience. What a treasure they are in the life of our church!

We set some goals during our leadership retreat for the interim season, and I'd like to share them with you now so that we can all set our hands to the work that we believe God has set before us.

1. **Membership Growth!** Beyond the comfort levels of this *the friendliest church in town* there are people whom God has already prepared for our congregation. They just need to be discovered and invited, welcomed and integrated into our family of faith. We will be working on strategies to do that in coming weeks, but in the meantime you will see the Deacons and Elders *working the coffee hour* to make sure that our visitors are successfully integrated into the fellowship of the congregation.
2. **Financial Sustainability!** Our church is blessed with an endowment, made possible by former members who wanted to keep on giving to the church long after God called them home. At the moment we need to draw upon some of the interest of that fund in order to make ends meet. I am sure they would want us to do that; but they also want us to be in a position to do the same, to gift future generations with our gifts. It would also be wonderful if we could use that fund to enlarge our mission and revitalize our programs, and reach out to our community in new and exciting ways. So one of our goals is to cultivate our stewardship to be responsible for our annual budget, and to use our endowment to inspire us to new adventure.
3. **Awaken our Appetite for Mission!** Sometimes in church life it becomes necessary to cut mission spending in order to be responsible for our own parish needs. Every church finds itself there once in a while; but we can still do things to keep the mission spirit alive. We intend to invite the Global Mission folks into our church to share with us stories from the mission field. Many exciting things are happening, and the first step in rallying resources is to catch the spirit of Christ's mission in the world.
4. **Increase Personal Involvement!** A healthy church is one in which there are no spectators, no sidewalk superintendents, because everyone has a job, everyone is part of the overall effort - all working together to accomplish their sacred purpose. The homebound can pray,

those with talents to share can invest them for the benefit of all, and there are endless opportunities for volunteers in every aspect of church life. I have encouraged our commission leaders to create jobs for volunteers to do - to recruit members and affiliate members and regular visitors into the great work of our church, not only because many hands make work light, but also because by those many hands God is able to work along with us.

5. **Evaluate the Program Life of the Church!** In every church it is a good idea to monitor the effectiveness of programs and activities to insure that they are still advancing the goals and objectives of the church, and whether they are relevant to the needs of the community. There is a season to start new things, and a time to stop doing other things, and by that evaluation church life remains exciting and relevant. We have already talked about bringing back programs that were highly successful in the past, and are considering some things we've never tried, trusting that the Lord will guide us every step of the way.

For these goals, and others that will surely follow, we invite your creative participation, and your prayerful support, as our interim season comes into focus at First Presbyterian Church.

With gratitude and praise,

*David*