

From the Pastor and Clerk of Session:

May 2012 Newsletter

Last night (April 24) during the stated meeting of the Session, your elders experienced a powerful movement of the Holy Spirit. Several elders said they had never experienced God's presence so strongly in a Session meeting. We wish the entire congregation could have shared this with us. We gathered last night to deal with two issues:

- ♦ How to respond to the Presbytery Response Teams (PRT) request that we postpone our congregational vote on dismissal in May; and
- ♦ To which reformed body we would seek dismissal.

Regarding the request to postpone the May congregational vote, the Session had three options. 1) Disregard the request and vote in May which would create a "less than gracious" relationship with Presbytery; 2) postpone the vote until the Fall when school resumes; or 3) proceed with a vote as soon as the PRT meetings with the Session have occurred. Since we want to be gracious in our dismissal with the Presbytery we agreed to postpone the vote, but felt it was important to hold the vote sooner than later. We have, therefore, set **June 24th** as the date to act upon the Session's recommendation to seek dismissal from the PCUSA. We realize this is during summer vacations, but we believe this vote is of such importance that our members will make every effort possible to be here on that day. There will be a joint worship service at 10:00 and the congregational meeting at 11:00. Within the next week, you will receive a phone call from one of the officers to help explain this in more detail. **Please mark your calendars for June 24th!**

Regarding the denominational option, after a year of research, discussion and discernment, every elder was asked to share from their heart any questions they might have and how they felt God was leading our Church at this time. As each elder shared, God's presence was being felt by everyone! Only a few times in my ministry have I felt God's presence so strongly in a meeting. After everyone finished speaking, we had a moment of prayer and the Session voted 20-0 to recommend dismissal to the Evangelical Covenant Order of Presbyterians (see the ECO insert). Following this vote we stood together, sang the Doxology and praised God for what we had just experienced.

The dismissal process has been challenging and difficult, but your Session feels that God is at work leading this congregation. We realize that in a large congregation, not everyone will agree with every decision, but please know that all of these decisions have been made with great prayer and the seeking of God's will. We felt God's presence last night, and we are excited about our future as we look forward to the "new thing" God is doing at First Presbyterian.

In Christ,

Barry Jenkins and Mike Lavespere