



May 12, 2011

Dear Church Family,

The Session of First Presbyterian Church is deeply concerned about the recent vote by a majority of presbyteries within our denomination to remove the “fidelity and chastity” ordination standard from the Book of Order. This standard states that officers...*“are to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness”*. We believe this vote will have profound consequences for our denomination. While there will be little or no immediate impact on how we conduct ministry at First Presbyterian Church, we are in the process of networking with other like-minded churches to determine the best way forward. This process will likely unfold over the next several months.

In January, the pastors of six of the nation’s largest Presbyterian churches distributed a letter with their perceptions on what is fundamentally broken in the denomination and calling for radical change. This group, known as “Fellowship PC(USA)”, is sponsoring a gathering of pastors, elders, and other Presbyterian leaders on August 25-27 in Minneapolis, MN. Our church will be represented at this meeting. We will also be attending a meeting of South Carolina Presbyterians in Columbia next week for the purpose of sharing ideas and seeking the Spirit’s guidance.

We wanted you to be aware of this information from us and not the news media. We will be posting additional information as it becomes available under the Denominational Issues link on our web page.

Your staff and elders welcome your questions and covet your prayers.

In HIS Service,

Mike Lavespere,
Clerk of Session