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November 28, 2016

Dear Covenant Partners

By now, you all know that Dr. Jenkins has announced his retirement. I know this is hard news to hear. I grieve over the thought of Barry leaving us, but my heart fills with joy when I think back over Barry's faithful and Godly ministry at First Presbyterian since 2005.

The Session is committed to keeping our Covenant Partners informed and involved as we navigate the transition to new senior pastoral leadership. In that regard, I want to report on several preliminary steps we have already taken in connection with Barry's announcement.

First, we have been in touch with our Presbytery's Ministry Partnership Team (MPT). The role of the MPT is to come alongside our church to help and to facilitate the process we are about to begin. A team from the MPT is meeting with the Session on December 13, 2016. This meeting will be the first step in the process which will ultimately lead to formation of a Pastor Nominating Committee.

Second, we are in communication with two fellow ECO churches in our Presbytery that have already begun the process of searching for a new senior pastor. One pastor has accepted another call and another is retiring. ECO gives the individual church considerable flexibility and latitude to implement a process that works best for it, depending on its specific circumstances. So, while our path to finding a successor to Barry may differ from the paths being taken by these other churches, we have nevertheless agreed to share information and best practices.

There will be a time to celebrate all Barry has done for our church and there will be a time to say goodbye. What can you do in the meantime? First, pray for Barry and Susan. Speak words of encouragement and gratitude to them. Remember all they have meant to this church for the last 11 years. Second, pray for this process. It will involve transition and change, but God is in control. Third, pray for First Presbyterian Church. Just as the Lord sent Barry to lead and guide our congregation, He will provide another senior pastor so that we can continue to serve and glorify Him

Barry's time with us will be coming to a close, but his ministry here will continue even after he is gone through the many lives he has touched. We know the Lord has great things in store for Barry, and for us, yet!

Joe McLean, Clerk of Session